
THE LUNCHBOX PRESS

NASA Goddard Child Development Center

GCDC's philosophy is to meet children's developmental and individual needs and to create a stimulating environment in which children learn through exploration and discovery.

Upcoming Events

Sep. 5

GCDC Closed Federal Holiday

Sep. 6

First Day of School

Sep. 6

Kick Off Bully Prevention

Sep. 13

Back to School Night (5:30-7:00 p.m.)

Sep. 14

Jump Bunch PE begins

Sep. 15

Fall Picture Day

Sep. 19

After Hours 1st Quarter Tour (5:30-6:30 p.m.)

Sep. 30

Teaching Strategies Gold Assessment Released

Oct. 3

Kick Off Character Counts Trustworthiness

Oct. 6

Tentative Fire Truck Visit

Oct. 18-20

Double Good Popcorn Fundraiser

Oct. 28

Teaching Strategies Gold Assessments Released

Oct. 28

Fall Harvest Festival

In just a few short days, we will begin our 49th school year at NASA Goddard Child Development Center (GCDC). We are entering the year with pride and enthusiasm. We were able to accomplish so much last school year. Among those accomplishments we relaunched GCDC during a global pandemic, hired more qualified and credentialed staff, increased content instruction, addition of Physical Education instruction, revitalization of the parent committee, securing grant funding and improved communication practices.

In this edition of [The Lunchbox Press](#), we introduce our dynamic GCDC's 2022-2023 staff. It is always better when you know just a little more about the person that educates and cares for your child each day. After reading the staff bios, we hope that you will have a better sense of our education, background, and philosophies.

You will also find some important reminders for the month. We know that when parents and teachers work together, children greatly benefit. We have highlighted some of our key reminders. More detailed information about the operation of our program can be found in the GCDC Parent Handbook. Parents can find it on the GCDC website at www.qcdcnasa.org.

If I could offer GCDC parents one piece of advice for the school year, it would be to become involved in your child's education at an early age. It is at this time that you teach your children how much you value their education. One of the best ways of going about this is to allow your child(ren) to see you involved in a variety of ways. Children are very literal people; they learn what is important by how we as adults invest our time. I encourage you to continue to invest time in your child's education for as long as they are students. This is one investment with a guaranteed payoff.

We are excited about the 2022-2023 school year and all that we have to offer your children. This is the best place for your children because we are equally focused on your child's care as well as their education.



Beginning in the 2022-2023 school year, parents must provide a minimum of ten hours of volunteer work, per family, per school year (September – August). Four hours must be completed by December 31, 2022. Four hours must be completed by June 30, 2023. Two hours must be completed by August 20, 2023. In addition to volunteering support to teachers in the classroom, parents may volunteer in other ways in support of the program.

Volunteer Receipt: No matter the type of volunteer work performed; parents are asked to complete a volunteer receipt each time volunteer services are performed at GCDC. Blank receipts can be retrieved from the check-in station at the front door. We ask that you do this even after you have met your ten-hour commitment. Completed and signed receipts should be turned in at the sign-in station located at the front door.

Questions About Volunteer Work:

As volunteer opportunities present themselves in the classrooms, common areas and throughout GCDC, they are posted on our volunteer recruitment site. Parents can inquire about their volunteer hours by emailing info@gcdc-nasa.org

Unmet Hours:

If the volunteer hours are not met, a fee will be assessed at a rate of \$25 per unmet volunteer hour.



FROM THE BUSINESS MANAGER

As we embark upon a new school year, we want to inform our new parents and remind our current parents of some GCDC policies.

- ★ All parents must clock their child in/out daily using the GCDC ProCare Engage App. All parents must download ProCare Engage to their cell phone. When families are within .25 of a mile to GCDC they will be able to complete the daily health screening questions and clock in/out.
- ★ GCDC hours are 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Parents who pick up their child(ren) after 5:00 p.m. will be charged a late pick-up fee.
- ★ Discussions with teachers are encouraged, however, they should be no longer than 2-3 minutes at drop off/pickup as teachers are still working in a ratio status. If a longer, deeper discussion is necessary please schedule a time to meet with your child's teacher that is convenient for you both. Please be conscientious and respectful of your teachers' time.
- ★ Accounts are billed Wednesday of each week. Payments are direct debited from your account on file by close of business each Wednesday. Declined payments will be assessed an overdue payment fee.
- ★ Many families participate in flexible spending accounts. If you need a statement, you can go to MyProCare (different from ProCare engage) through our website at www.gcdcnasa.org to retrieve statements by dates requested. Please e-mail the Associate Business Manager smitchell@gcdc-nasa.org for questions or assistance.

★



School Supply List

- 1 Large Pack of Markers
- 1 bottle of Glue
- 2 Pack Paper Towels
- 1 Composition Notebook (No Spirals)
- 2 Large containers of Lysol Wipes
- 1 Box of Kleenex Tissue
- 2 Boxes of Sandwich Size Ziplock Bag
- (1) 2 Gallon Size Ziplock
- 24 Pack of Crayons

Do not Forget to accept your invitation to Set up your Account to View Your Child's Portfolio.



Invitations are sent out through our online Teaching Strategies platform. You must accept the invitation and, set up your account to receive monthly learning assessments, and Bi-annual report cards. If you need support, please email your child's teacher.



**2022-2023 GCDC Association's
Board of Directors**

Marilyn Tolliver
President

Martha Wawro
Vice-President

Molly Jackson
Registrar

Claribel Ferrolino
Treasurer

James Harrington
Education Advisor

Jeff Steir
Facilities Advisor

Erin Roberts
Secretary

Brad Cenko
Member At Large

Stephanie Arcido
Member At Large

James Debelius
GEWA Operations Manager



Robin Mahoney
GEWA Business Manager

**Meetings
Are Scheduled Monthly.**

Parent Advisory Committee (PAC)

Are typically
scheduled for the 4th
Thursday of each month.
Please keep an eye out for
more information to come
from the GCDC Parent
Advisory Committee.



AmazonSmile is an effortless way for you to support our school every time you shop, at no additional cost to you. Using our Amazon smile link when you shop via Amazon will provide with a GCDC with a donation of .05% of each sale. <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/52-0970966>

MEET THE GCDC STAFF



My name is Ms. Alexis McDonald and I am a Lead Teacher here at GCDC. I've been working toward educating others ever since high school, where I used the child development program to student teach at an Early Childhood Headstart program at Running Brushy Middle School.

I attended Lamar University to promote the American Sign Language skills I developed in high school and tested out of the beginner classes. My experience with ASL now totals six years of study. Using Lamar's education program, I became a JA Volunteer and taught various concepts, including taxes, to elementary school students. As a student teacher I was sent to teach at a variety of schools including Ozan High School and Odom Middle School.

For three years while attending college, on Sundays, I worked with children ages newborn-four years old as the Head of the Nursery. My duties included developing educational STEAM led activities to promote cognitive/gross motor functions and development.

After graduating from Lamar with my Bachelor's Degree, I was hired at Odom Academy as one of two seventh grade ELAR teachers. I taught Honors and On-Level reading and writing, as well as a Reading Improvement Class for a year and a half. During this time, I had experience teaching 504, ESL, ELL, and SPED students. While at Odom I was also the head of their Harry Potter Club and coached the UIL Listening Team who swept the board at competition. I was very honored to be awarded the September Teacher of the Month.

When our school transitioned to online learning to accommodate COVID-19, we went through several extensive trainings that allowed us to finish the year successfully using programs like IXL, G-Suite (Google classroom, sheets, etc.), Study Island, Zoom, NewsELA, and Webex.

Subsequently, when I moved to Maryland, I taught English to students in China online through VIPKid. I was able to communicate successfully and enjoyed working with a range of students from four years old to twelve years old at a variety of learning levels.

I have spent the last year as an Associate Teacher learning under the excellent leadership of our staff and educators here at GCDC. I've had the great fortune of meeting many amazing kids and extending my credentials to better grasp the concepts of early childhood education.

Credentials Include:

90 Hour Child Care Credential
SNAP School Nutrition Certification
Medication Certified

Birthday:

GCDC Anniversary:



My name is Ms. Crystal Glover and I work in the Little Dippers classroom. I am thrilled to be a part of the GCDC family. I will be co-teaching with Ms. Alexis for the 2022-2023 school year. I am very excited to work with your children and look forward to welcoming everyone into our GCDC family community.

As a parent myself, I truly understand this journey called "parenthood". With my 20+ years of experience in the field of education, I learned that children can be fostered with patience, communication, understanding and support. During my tenure in this field, I have received several certificates, accolades, and various

My philosophy has always been "It takes a village to raise a child" and all children learn differently but are taught equally. As an educator I will do all that I can to help your children become their best self, fostered through respect, responsibility, and positive reinforcement. We are looking forward to welcoming your family to the Little Dippers class.

Credentials Include:

45 hours Infant/Toddler Training

Birthday:

GCDC Anniversary:



Hello! My name is Ms. Keyohna Wallace and I am a Lead Teacher here at GCDC. I have over 20 years of teaching experience in Early Childhood Education, with the last ten years here at GCDC. I love being a teacher! One of my greatest accomplishments came when I was awarded the National Terri Lynne Lokoff Teacher of the Year award in 2019. Throughout my career in early childhood education, I have worked in several different capacities. I have been a lead teacher, assistant teacher, substitute teacher, I also worked with adults with special needs in an administrative role. For the past seven years I have spent my weekends working as a Family Living Director, in a residential group home with individuals with developmental disabilities. Teaching allows me to interact with the most innocent beings who are discovering and exploring the world around them using teachers as tour guides.

I enjoy creating inspiring lesson plans and conducting engaging activities with the children. I love to see when the light bulb goes off in a child's head and they begin to demonstrate comprehension. I appreciate an orderly and organized classroom that is exciting, warm and captures the children's attention. My philosophy about how children learn best includes providing a safe environment where children can take the measurable risk to build on their existing knowledge. I use a lot of differentiated instruction to meet children where they are and create lesson plans that come from their specific interests.

I believe that the ultimate responsibility of a teacher is to direct a child to his/her potential intellectually, emotionally, and socially, and equip them with the foundation through a developmentally appropriate and nurturing environment, guiding them through positive character building, by modeling and helping them understand their own purpose as a unique individual.

I am a native Washingtonian, but I love my Dallas Cowboys! In June of 2020, I welcomed my first child Kamiyah and I am enjoying motherhood more than I could have ever imagined. Some of my favorite hobbies include shopping, listening to music, and traveling. I enjoy spending time with my family too. I am a master GCDC Coach and Mentor and take pride in working as a parent liaison. I believe communication is key to a strong partnership. I am looking forward to a wonderful school year!

Credentials Include:

90 Hour Certificate in Early Childhood Education
 Maryland State Child Care Credential Level 4
 Child Development Associate (CDA)
 GCDC Coach and Mentor
 Terri Lynne Lokoff Teacher of the Year
 Birthday: October 10th
 GCDC Anniversary: November 5, 2012



My name is Ms. Chanel Trent. I am a daughter, a friend, a mother and a teacher to many children whom I have taught throughout my career. Over the years I have developed, educated, and empowered the young minds of the future generation as they begin and continue on their educational journey. During my formative years I had the opportunity to volunteer to work with children in order to complete school/community service hours. Unbeknownst to me, at that time, I would truly fall in love with this profession. The children there taught me so much about myself and from that point on I knew I wanted to pursue a career in education.

As a teacher I wear many hats: nurse, easy listener, and nurturer/comforter, developing a special teacher-student relationship in order to reassure a parent that their child is safe and getting the best they can get for their young minds. Although I didn't major in early childhood education, I found my place in the teaching world and my love for preparing children and setting them up for future success along their educational journey.

My teaching philosophy is that no child is left behind; all children are unique and special. Every day we find new and different ways to tweak tasks, make changes to lesson plans, activities, and outings. I strive to inspire children to continue learning and growing towards a brighter future.

Credentials Include:

Bachelor of Science- Theater with a concentration of acting and directing
 45 clock hours - Preschool and birth to age 8
 90 clock hours – Children (birth through age 8)
 120 clock hours – Children (birth through age 8)
 450 clock hours – Children (birth through age 8)
 Child Development Associates - Preschool
 Birthday:
 GCDC Anniversary:



My name is Ms. Leona Wright. I am the Lead Teacher in the Milky Way classroom. I am also a Master Coach and Mentor here at GCDC. I'm excited to be back working in the 3's program again. This past school year I had the opportunity to work as an Associate Teacher in the Pre-K classroom. I have been at GCDC for 8 years, WOW...where has the time gone? In my tenure with GCDC I have been an Associate Teacher and Support Team Leader in the 2-3-year-old program and have taken the lead on many center-wide events and activities.

Early childhood is my first passion. I have been in the field of early childhood education for over 22 years. My experience crosses all age groups. I believe that creating a safe and healthy learning environment helps children to be successful. When there is order and organization, children understand what is expected of them and can rise to the challenges that they face with confidence and reassurance. Another important factor that helps young children navigate and learn about the world around them is promoting and supporting cultural diversity. Inclusion is very important in an early childhood classroom; I believe every student needs to feel like they belong. I appreciate the opportunity to work with families to support/display cultural representations of all of our students in our classroom. In my years as a Head Start Teacher, I learned a lot about developmental milestones and how to plan, prepare and implement activities that support each child's success. Head start structure is based on keeping family involvement at the highest priority.

My personal teaching philosophy includes that all children are unique and must have a stimulating educational environment where they can grow physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially. It is my desire to create this type of atmosphere where children can meet their full potential and trust me as their teacher to learn and grow from their mistakes.

My family is my heart. I am a southern girl with a large family that enjoys sitting around and "chewing the fat" as we call it! I'm originally from Memphis, TN. My husband, children and grandchildren are my motivation and never stop teaching me things about myself. I have 2 children plus a bonus daughter and 4 grandchildren and one new grandbaby on the way. My youngest son has just left the nest to join the military and I could not be prouder of him. In my free time I enjoy listening to music and relaxing.

I look forward to having an awesome school year and impacting the lives of all of the GCDC children!

Credentials Include:

MSDE Child Care Credential: Level 4
Child Development Associate (CDA) GCDC
Coach and Mentor
Birthday: April 7
GCDC Anniversary: July 28, 2014



My name is Ms. Nahara Zoé Nieves Ortiz. I was born in San Juan, Puerto Rico, but I currently live in Washington, DC. I come from a family of teachers where each of the members of this family group has been in charge of leaving a grain of sand in me to become the person I am today. I am eager to help anyone who is in need. I consider myself a responsible, dedicated, honest, sensitive, cheerful person who loves children and animals. I began and finished my education at the University of Puerto Rico. I graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education and aspire to later complete a master's degree in this field.

My mother was a teacher and the person who inspired me the most to enter the Faculty of Education, and it was she who was first to recognize my passion for educating children for a better tomorrow.

During my last year of high school, I took an elective course wherein I was a teacher's assistant in a 2 year old classroom; it was an unforgettable experience and, without a doubt, the reason I decided to enter the preschool program.

I believe a teacher is an instrumental guide in the early development of a child and helps guide them on their path of formation. I am thrilled to have an opportunity to be a part of helping mold the younger generation in their formative years. I have been teaching for 3 years and have worked with children from 2 months to 4 years old. I love what I do, and I hope to continue growing professionally and personally. I'm excited to be a member of the GCDC community/family!

Credentials Include:

Bachelor of Art in Preschool Education
Teacher's Certificate in Early Education Teacher:
Preschool Level by Education Department of Puerto Rico
Training Certificate by Teaching Strategies
Birthday: October 27th
GCDC Anniversary:



My name is Ms. Keisha L. Dyke, and I am a zealous, passionate, and dedicated Early Childhood Educator. I have extensive experience in children’s development from birth through school age. I have been working continuously for over 13 years with young children. I am committed to helping them bloom and grow into individuals that ask questions, seek information, and are not afraid of making mistakes. I pride myself on meeting all standards, regulations, and principal requirements that make up the foundation for a healthy learning environment that promotes young children’s growth and development.

Early Childhood has given me the opportunity to make a positive impact on the lives of many children and families. Each day my philosophy is to put my education into action with my experience when I walk into the classroom and we begin to learn through play. This will be a return to GCDC for me, and I am so excited to be coming back. In my former position here, I worked as a Team Coordinator with every age group and as an Assistant Teacher in the Kindergarten classroom.

I continue to stay abreast and improve my craft as an educator by taking ongoing trainings and communicating with other professionals in my field.

Credentials include:

- 90 Hour Child Care Credential
- Child Development Associate (CDA)
- Birthday:
- GCDC Anniversary:



Hello, my name is Ms. Sadie Gibson, and I am the Lead Teacher at GCDC. I have more than 23 years of experience working with young children. Early childhood development is my first love and passion. I have worked with every age group throughout my career including school age to infants specifically, in my own previous family childcare program. In my role as childcare Teacher and Director, my greatest success was utilizing differentiated instruction. I have a strong understanding of early childhood learning concepts and methodologies. I believe that differentiated instruction is the most effective way to meet the needs of each individual child. I enjoy hearing from my former students who are now doctors, lawyers, speech therapists, bio-engineers, etc.

The most important concept of my teaching philosophy is to be an intentional teacher. I believe an intentional teacher is one who engages in advanced planning, maintains the learning environment, teaches in a developmentally appropriate way and demonstrates leadership in the classroom.

In 2001, I began work for the Prince George’s County Public School System as a substitute teacher. Since that time, I have served as a long-term substitute in various schools and age groups including working with children with special needs.

My hobbies include traveling, cooking, storytelling, movies and arts and crafts. I also enjoy my two rescued Pomeranians—Prince and Egypt.

Credentials Include:

- Alpha Chi National Honor Society
- Psi Beta Honor Society
- CDA/90 hours
- MSDE Credentials Level 6
- B. S. Child Studies
- Birthday: August 31st
- GCDC Anniversary: June 18, 2018



My name is Ms. Lakshini Wijeweera, originally from Sri Lanka, a tiny island in the Indian Ocean. However, I have been a proud citizen of the United States for many years. My husband and I have two wonderful grown-up daughters, Amali and Niroshi. We also have three dogs between us. We are enjoying our first grandchild, Benjamin, who is turning one year this September.

For the past 38 years, I have been a dedicated educator in Preschool, Pre-K and Kindergarten classrooms in Sri Lanka, Canada, and the United States. This upcoming year will be my 25th year teaching here at GCDC. During this time, I have worked in all the classrooms with all age groups.

My teaching philosophy is that every child is a unique individual who is capable of learning. I understand that children have diverse needs and I always strive to take this into account and accommodate each child in my classroom.

In my free time, I spend time with my family and my dogs hiking and taking long walks. I love spending time with my grandson and watching his milestones. I enjoy traveling to different cities all over the world and getting to know different cultures, tasting different food and sight-seeing.

I am excited to start a new school year as the Lead Teacher of the Constellations classroom at GCDC. I am looking forward to working with the new Pre-K students and getting them ready for kindergarten, while providing fun learning experiences.

Credentials Include:

Montessori Diploma and Diploma in Child Psychology
 90 Hour Child Care Credential
 MSDE Child Care Credential
 Child Development Associate (CDA)
 National Geographic Educator Certification
 2018 National Teacher of the Year Award
 Terri Lynne Lokoff/Children's TYLENOL®, Children's ZYRTEC®
 GCDC Master Coach and Mentor
 Languages: English, Sinhala (speak, read, write)
 Birthday: December 11th
 GCDC Anniversary: August 31, 1998



My name is Ms. Kendra Bell. I am the mother of two amazing daughters, Taylor and Chanell, and a grandmother of 4. I appreciate how precious life is and how important it is to live life to the fullest. I embrace each day as a chance to start anew and make a positive impact on the world.

My career in early childhood education started 29 years ago as a volunteer at my children's daycare center, which was also the same daycare I went to as a child! Over the years I have had many titles. I taught toddlers for 10 years and was also an after-school program coordinator for 2 years. I was an assistant director for 1 year. However, the title of Lead Pre-K Teacher, for the last 14 years, has always been my calling.

I pride myself on instilling a love of learning in young minds. My love for learning is just as big as my love for teaching. Over the years my teaching style has evolved and I plan to continue learning new methods to adjust to ever changing cycles of education.

I believe in life there's always room to grow; we should never stop learning and working to perfect our craft. My teaching philosophy is our children are truly the future of this nation. As an educator, it is my job to ensure that I treat each child in my care as an individual as I help them develop the social, emotional and academic skills they will need to move on with confidence to their next phase in life.

The most rewarding part of being an early childhood educator is knowing that I have made an impact on the future of our children. Like any structure we too have to have a strong foundation to be successful and I am honored to be a part of that foundation.

"The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go."
 -Dr. Seuss

Credentials Include:

Associates Degree in Early Childhood Education
 ARC program Washington DC
 Alexandria Child Care Association COR Training
 Alexandria City PALS Training
 Child Development Associate Credential (CDA)
 Birthday:
 GCDC Anniversary:



My name is Ms. Hope Cain and I am the Lead Team Coordinator here at GCDC. My role is to support the teachers in the classrooms with assessments, materials, coaching and mentoring. Additionally, I support the administrative team in the front office with a variety of tasks from scheduling to food service. I am often the voice you hear on the other end of the phone. I like to think of myself as the welcoming committee. I have been with GCDC for 9 years. In my tenure with GCDC I have been the Lead Teacher in most age groups from 2-4 years of age.

I have been in the field of early childhood education for over 20 years. My experience ranges from creating compassionate and engaging environments for children to supporting cognitive development that supports children's learning as they grow. My work in education also includes working as a paraprofessional in the public-school system with children who have special needs and disabilities.

My teaching philosophy includes protecting, educating and nurturing children through their development at their own pace. In my experience I have learned that children can gain more when learning is shared through hands-on exploration and experiences.

I have 2 sons: Deon and Donovan. In our free time we enjoy family travels, amusement parks, and movies. I am a native Washingtonian and have many hobbies. I enjoy reading, journaling, shopping, traveling, and adventure. I look forward to impacting the lives of all the children this school year and continuing to grow as a professional.

Credentials Include:

90 Hours ECE
 Child Development Associate (CDA)
 GCDC Coach and Mentor
 Birthday: November 4th
 GCDC Anniversary: April 29th



My name is Ms. Cheryl Byrd and I am a Lead Teacher. My role is to prepare children for kindergarten. This requires us to work with the whole child from cognitive development to social-emotional development. I truly enjoy serving as a parent liaison to support families with keeping their children safe and happy. After 43 years of employment at GCDC, I have worked with children ages 2-5 in every capacity. I am often the person everyone comes to when a question comes up about the center's history!

My family and early childhood education is my first passion. My experience ranges from creating compassionate and engaging environments for children, to supporting cognitive development that scaffolds children's learning as they grow. My work in education also includes working as a paraprofessional in the head start program. I have also worked with children with special needs.

My teaching philosophy includes protecting, educating, and nurturing all children through their development at their own pace. In my experience, I have learned that children can gain more when learning is shared through hands-on exploration and experiences.

My heart beats for my two sons Corey and Steven Jr., my daughter, Tameka, as well as my 9 grandchildren and great-granddaughter, Anna. In our free time, we enjoy spending quality time together, going on trips to the mountains and family dinners. I am a native Marylander from the eastern shore, and I enjoy going to catch crabs and having a seafood fest. I have many hobbies. I enjoy painting, traveling, and making baskets, just to name a few. I look forward to impacting the lives of all the children this school year and continuing to grow as a professional.

Credentials Include:

90 Hour Child Care Credential
 MSDE Child Care Credential Level 4
 Child Development Associate (CDA)
 SNAP School Nutrition Certification
 GCDC Veteran Mentor
 Birthday: July 20th
 GCDC Anniversary: November 1, 1979



My name is Ms. Elycia Chew and I am the Assistant Director at GCDC. I excited to welcome the new school year! This year is going to be better than ever! I have three amazing children that were all products of GCDC. My youngest son, Ethan, is starting 5th-grade, my son Dylan will be starting 8th-grade this year, and my daughter, Ellyce, is entering the 10th grade. Let's just say my husband and I are always busy! We always try to find time to do things together such as going for walks at the park, fishing, watching movies, kids' sports, or our latest family hobby, boating.

I have completed my 21st year at GCDC and I have worn many hats. I taught kindergarten for 18 years and pre-k for 2 years. I then became the Summer Program Manager for 5 years and an Associate Director while teaching all the way through. Each year at GCDC is different from the last. As professional educators, we must stay current in the latest practices in the field of education. I am currently taking a 45 hr. class called Critical Competencies for Infant/Toddler. This class is very informative on the social-emotional development of toddlers and how we can promote growth and socialization. It is very useful as we connect with children as they return back to the pre-school setting full time.

Throughout life, you learn that there is always room to grow and try new things. Last year I accepted the role as Assistant Director. Every day is a new adventure. I am learning so much about the administrative field of Early Childhood. It is extremely important to work together in a community to achieve a successful outcome. Not only am I greeting and happily receiving new students and parents, but I will also now be a supportive instrument to our staff, Business Director, and Program Director. In doing so, I too will grow and continue to learn from them.

Over the years my love for teaching continues to blossom. My goal is to mentor the staff and make each moment a teachable moment. Sharing developmental strategies with parents which can be used anywhere, at the grocery store or sorting rocks at the beach. I believe it's important to enjoy teachable moments with children.

My teaching philosophy is to acknowledge that children are different and have varied learning styles. Just like explorers, they are discovering new things each day. As a teacher, it is my job to provide a challenging, yet age-appropriate environment that is conducive to the learning and nurturing of today's children. As an Assistant Director, I will meet my staff where they are and provide them with the resources they need to develop their vision as a professional child care educator.

Credentials Include:

Bachelor of Science--Early Childhood and Elementary Education
 National Geographic Educator Certification
 Terri Lynne Lokoff/Children's TYLENOL®, Children's ZYRTEC®
 National Teacher of the Year Award
 GCDC Master Coach and Mentor
 Maryland State Department of Education Credential Level 6
 Birthday: July 5th
 GCDC Anniversary: November 26, 2001



Hello GCDC Families, my name is Schanita Mitchell and I am the Associate Business Manager for GCDC. I have been working in the field of Early Childhood Education for over 20 years. I began this journey in high school and unbeknownst to me, it was to become my passion. Subsequently, I continued my education in Child Development I, II, III. I later attended Strayer University and expanded my career in Business Management. I expanded my education to include Human Resources and Business Administration.

During my time at GCDC, in 2008 I began as an associate teacher working in numerous classrooms. I also served as a long-term substitute teacher, when needed, to ensure the continuity of care for our students. I then took on the role of Lead Team Coordinator providing assistance to teachers and the administrative office. During my tenure as a Lead Team Coordinator, my dedication and tenacity led to the promotion as the Associate Business Manager, giving me an opportunity to support the needs of families and enhance my ability in Human Resources to provide financial support to the families and staff at GCDC. Suffice it to say it has been an excellent experience!

I am a mother of 2 amazing children ages, 22 and 17. My children were extremely instrumental in motivating me to further educate myself in early childhood education. During my free time, I enjoy spending time with family and friends. My hobbies are shopping, reading, networking, and supporting a non-profit organization for mothers with young children with rare disabilities. I am looking forward to my upcoming 15th school year at GCDC serving children and families in the Goddard Community.

Credentials Include:

90-Hour Child Care Credential
 MSDE Child Care Credential Administrator level 1
 Child Development Associate (CDA)
 45-hour Director Credential GCDC Coach and Mentor
 MSCCA Board of Directors PG County
 Maryland Notary Public
 Birthday: January 6th
 GCDC Anniversary: September 7, 2008



My name is Ms. Leona Adams and I am the Program Director of NASA Goddard Child Development Center. I have been working in the field of early childhood education for over 25 years. I have always had a passion for children and their newly developed personalities. I believe that empowering our young is everyone's responsibility. I am a recognized International Early Childhood Leader and Expert which was published in July of 2020 in the National Early Childhood Exchange Magazine. Currently, I am also a certified CLASS observer in infants, toddlers, and preschool-school age-specific age groups. In addition to my role here at GCDC, I conduct CLASS observations for Fairfax County Government, Office of Children. I also work as a consultant with ECE programs throughout the DMV on quality improvement and accreditation. I have been a certified trainer in the state of Maryland (MSDE) since 2017. In this capacity, I provide approved state training to Teachers, Directors, and Principals in the state of Maryland. I enjoy my role as a mother of two sons (21 & 15) most of all. Family is an integral part of my life as I am the second oldest of 5 siblings so caring, advocating, and nurturing individuals has always been a large part of my upbringing.

I have an Associates of Applied Science (AAS) in Preschool Child Development from the University of the District of Columbia, a Bachelor of Science degree in Social Work from Virginia State University, and a year completed towards my Master's degree in Non-profit Management from Eastern University and a host of many other credentials specific to my field. Prior to my employment at GCDC, I managed multiple Head Start/Early Head Start, Nonprofit, and Private Sector Programs located throughout the Metropolitan area. I have had very diverse experiences with infants, toddlers, preschool, and school-age children. I have worked as a teacher and administrator in all age groups. I especially enjoy teaching adults. I have worked as a child development associate (CDA) instructor, CDA representative, and accreditation consultant for several early childhood programs.

I am a native New Yorker, from the Bronx. Currently, I reside in Upper Marlboro, MD. My hobbies include spending time with my family, volunteering with my community, advocating for early childhood professionals, cooking, and exercising. I am looking forward to another great year here at GCDC!

Credentials Include:

MSDE Child Care Credential: Administrative Level 2
Child Development Associate (CDA)
Bachelor of Science (BA)
MSDE Certified Coach and Mentor
Exchange International Early Childhood Expert
Certified CLASS Observer
Birthday: March 4th
Anniversary: June 8, 2008