

Noah's Ark Christian Child Care Center Parent Handbook

Mission Statement

We at Christ United Methodist Church believe that each child is a child of God and should be provided every opportunity to develop physically, intellectually, emotionally, socially and spiritually to his fullest potential. To that end we have established Noah's Ark Christian Child Care Center, a ministry of caring for children in a setting that is an extension of the Church.

Noah's Ark will provide a program to live out the message of God's love as expressed through Jesus Christ. Christian values such as love of God and respect for others will be an integral part of the curriculum. A high quality program will support the holistic development of the child while strengthening the family and society as a whole.

Licensing

Noah's Ark, a Christian Child Care Center and Kindergarten, is a not for profit operation. We serve the community as an outreach ministry of Christ United Methodist Church. We are licensed by the Department of Public Welfare and participate in the Keystone Stars Program.

Governance of Noah's Ark is the responsibility of Christ United Methodist Church and several committees within the church.

Non-discrimination Policy

Noah's Ark complies with the provisions of the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 and all requirements imposed by it. No person shall be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or otherwise be subject to discrimination in the provision of care on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, disability or religious creed. This policy applies to children and employees.

Location

Noah's Ark is located in the Educational Building of Christ United Methodist Church at 100 S. Church St., Waynesboro, PA 17268. The telephone number is 717-765-8146. In the event of an emergency evacuation, we will move to the church. If this is not a safe place, we will move across the street to the Waynesboro Church of the Brethren.

Parking

Access to the parking lot can be found off of West Second Street, between Philadelphia Ave. and Church St., as well as off of Church Street between Second St. and Third St.

When you are dropping off and picking up your children, please **DO NOT** leave your car running. Not only does this pose a serious safety hazard to our children, but it is a borough ordinance and you could be fined for doing so. When exiting your vehicle, please turn off the engine and remove your keys from the ignition.

Programs

Programs are available for Young Infants (ages 6 weeks to 1 year); Older Infants (ages 1 year to 16 months); Young Toddlers (ages 16 months to 2 years); Older Toddlers (ages 2 to 3 years) and Preschoolers (ages 3 to 5 years).

We operate our own Kindergarten program in addition to providing care before and after public school Kindergarten. We also provide care as well as transportation before and after school for children attending St. Andrew's School, Summitview Elementary and Fairview Elementary. A summer program is provided for children of elementary school age.

Upon written request, we will be happy to transfer your child's records to the appropriate school.

Hours of Operation

The center is open from 6:30 am until 5:30 pm Monday through Friday.

We are closed for the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day

Security System

Noah's Ark has a security system that limits entrance to the Church St. door only. For a \$10 deposit, a family is issued a key fob that will unlock the door. If the key fob is returned upon a families withdrawal, the \$10 deposit will be refunded. The key fob is

programmed to grant admittance only during our hours of operation. It will not let you in before 6:30 am or after 5:30 pm.

Enrollment

Enrollment may be on a full year basis of 50 weeks or on a school year basis of 42 weeks. In the case of the latter, parents will make two weekly fall tuition payments by May 31 to ensure a place for their child in the fall classes.

Parents must complete an enrollment packet which includes a Parent Consent/Emergency Contact Form, a Financial Agreement, and a Child Health Assessment. No child will be enrolled until all paperwork is on file, the registration fee is paid, and the child, his/her parent(s) and the Director have met. All records, health, academic and financial will be kept confidential.

Upon withdrawal from Noah's Ark, we will be happy to transfer any necessary records to another facility at the written request of the child's parent. We will do our best to make the transition from our center to another as stress free for the child as possible.

Arrival Procedures

Noah's Ark opens at 6:30 am. Your child should arrive no earlier than 15 minutes prior to their contracted time of arrival without notifying the office in advance. Parents must accompany their children into the building and sign the daily attendance log.

If there are tears, reassure your child, give a hug and a kiss and leave him/her with us. Tears usually cease within moments of your departure. Feel free to call and check on your child any time during the day. Your comfort is important to us as well. If your child will be absent on a particular day, please notify the center by phone as soon as possible.

Departure Procedures

Children may only be taken from the center by their parents or persons listed on their Emergency Contact Form. If someone other than those individuals listed will be picking up your child on a particular day, you must provide written notification that includes the name of the individual picking up the child. Staff will be seeking identity verification from the individual you have designated. Please inform this person to bring a photo id along with them when they report to pick up your child.

A child will be released to either parent unless a court order on file in the office states otherwise.

When leaving, the parent or authorized adult must sign the child out on the daily attendance log. Parents are asked to remove belongings from the child's cubby each day.

Financial Policies and Procedures

Registration

A non-refundable registration fee of \$25 for the first child and \$15 for each additional child from the same family is paid at the time of enrollment.

Tuition

Tuition is payable ***in advance of service*** on the first day of the week or month, depending on the financial agreement between each family and the center. An additional \$10 is charged if tuition is not paid when due.

Failure to pay tuition may result in the termination of a child's enrollment.

Parents are encouraged to participate in our automatic tuition withdrawal program. This can be established on a weekly or monthly basis as chosen by the participant. Weekly tuition is withdrawn on Monday of each week and monthly on the first of each month.

When more than one child from the same family is enrolled at the center, a 10 percent discount will be applied to the tuition of the oldest child enrolled.

Tuition assistance is available for persons eligible by total family income, family size, and major financial responsibilities. Assistance is dependent on the availability of funds. Requests should be made to the Director.

We participate with Child Care Information Services, an agency that subsidizes child care for families who meet their income guidelines. Information may be obtained from the Center Director.

Tuition is based on a nine hour day. A fee of \$1 per hour is added to the weekly tuition for longer days. Tuition is a yearly fee broken into weekly or monthly installments.

Holidays and occasional absences due to illness are calculated into the fee. After the first full week of absence due to illness, the parents are not responsible for further

tuition payments until the child is able to return to the center.

Vacations

Monthly tuition is calculated on a 50 week year so that tuition for two vacation weeks is automatically deducted. If payment is on a weekly basis, no payment is necessary during the two weeks of vacation.

Vacations must be Monday through Friday and the center must be notified, ***in writing***, at least two weeks in advance. We operate on a school calendar year and vacations are figured September to September.

Academic Year Enrollment

Contracts for parents of children who do not attend over the summer months are written for a minimum of 42 weeks of service. The academic year begins on the Monday of the first week Waynesboro Schools are in session in August/September and ends on the Friday of the last week of classes. No vacation weeks are considered for this enrollment.

Each Spring, prior to their withdrawal for the Summer, families reserve enrollment for the Fall by prepaying the first two weeks of Fall tuition.

Late Pick-up Fee

Noah's Ark closes at 5:30 pm. State law requires the presence of two people in the facility until the last child leaves the premises. Parents who do not pick their children up before 5:30 pm will be charged a late fee of \$10 per child for every 15 minutes they are detained.

Parent/Teacher Communication

Close and frequent communication between parents and staff is an invaluable contribution to a child's well being. Parents and teachers can often learn from and enjoy new wisdom based on the experiences of the other. Information will be exchanged daily in writing in the infant and toddler rooms.

We will complete an assessment of each child within 45 days of enrollment. When this assessment has been completed, we will meet with the parents to discuss the results and to receive input from the parents regarding the child's care. Assessment is an ongoing procedure with formal documentation occurring in October, January and April. Parents are encouraged to meet with their child's teacher to discuss the results

of these assessments at any time during the year.

If your child receives services and has an IEP or an IFSP, we ask that you provide a copy to Noah's Ark. This will enable us to provide the best learning environment possible for each child and to support both you and your child according to your needs.

A conference may be requested by parent or teacher at any time throughout the year.

Daily Schedule (adapted for various age groups)

- 6:30 Open- children's choice
- 9:00 Snack
- 9:30 Circle time- Bible Story, songs
- 10:00 Learning Centers
- 11:15 Active Outdoor Play
- 12:00 Lunch
- 12:45 Sharing time/Story time
- 1:00 Rest/Nap Time
- 3:00 Snack
- 3:30 Active Outdoor Play
- 4:30 Children's Choice
- 5:30 Close

Health

Children are God's gift to us, given for our care and love. Your child's health and enjoyment of the hours spent at Noah's Ark are the top priority for all of us who are involved with the program. It is our goal to see that each child has nutritious food, adequate rest, plenty of fresh air, opportunities for a balance of highly active play and more passive activities, good health habits and an environment which is clean and free of infection to the degree possible in a setting such as this.

The main protection for your child's health is for us to exclude ill children from participating in our program, thus preventing your child from contracting that illness. In like fashion, we must exclude your child to protect the other children should he/she be exhibiting any symptoms of illness. Childcare providers find that the child's health is often taken for granted, even though illness may be the greatest source of parental anxiety. Not only is a sick child very uncomfortable, but the parent faces the prospect of missing work and possibly jeopardizing career advancement opportunities.

Reliable health consultants insist that the easiest way to protect the spread of an

illness is to keep infected children and adults away from others.

We are realistic about the circumstances parents are dealing with, such as the need to be at work and the difficulty of finding alternate care. But there does not seem to be any short cut from sick to well which avoids a trip to the doctor or some time spent at home.

Please observe the following child care health policies:

1. Children will be excluded from Noah's Ark for any of the following conditions:

- a fever of 101 degrees or higher
- vomiting
- diarrhea- 2 loose bowel movements in 2 hours
- any unidentifiable rash
- the common childhood diseases: measles, rubella, roseola, chicken pox, mumps
- fifth disease
- head lice
- strep throat
- conjunctivitis (pink eye)

CHILDREN MUST BE FREE OF THE ABOVE NAMED CONDITIONS FOR 24 HOURS WITHOUT THE USE OF TYLENOL, MOTRIN, ETC. OR HAVE BEEN TREATED WITH THE APPROPRIATE MEDICATIONS FOR 24 HOURS BEFORE RETURNING TO NOAH'S ARK.

2. While ear infections themselves are not contagious, the upper respiratory infections that cause them are. In addition, at the early stages of an ear infection, a child is uncomfortable and not easily cared for in a group setting. Please keep him home until treatment relieves his misery.

3. Should there be a medical problem or emergency, the staff will call the person designated on the Emergency Contact Form. Parents will be asked to update this form when information changes or routinely every six months.

4. We prefer not to give over-the-counter medications to the children. If your child must have these medications, then we must have a written note from their doctor stating what the dosage is and how often it is to be given. Parents must also fill out and sign the medication log in the child's classroom.

In order to dispense prescription medications, the medicine must be in its original

container with the pharmacists' label stating the child's name, name of medication, amount and frequency of dosage and the doctor's name. Parents must also fill out and sign the medication log.

5. Prior to enrollment, a physician's report must be signed by the child's physician and submitted to the Director. Thereafter, according to state regulations and by the recommendation of the American Academy of Pediatrics, additional physician's reports must be submitted at the following ages: 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, 9 months, 12 months, 15 months, 18 months, 24 months and every year thereafter, on or near the child's birthday. Once children have entered the public schools, a physical assessment is due only in Kindergarten and Grade 6.

6. Outdoor play enhances the health of children. In winter, each child should bring snow pants, boots, a warm jacket, hat and mittens for outdoor play. If your child is not well enough to go outside, he is not well enough to participate in our program at Noah's Ark. Please keep him home until he is able to participate fully in our program.

Safety

The most hazardous places at Noah's Ark are those areas outside the building. It is vital that parents make certain that they always close the gates behind them. There is no way to predict when a child might break free from a parent. The gate may not stop a child but it will slow him/her down.

The grates that cover the downstairs windows are also a hazard where children have been injured. It is our rule that the children may not walk on those grates. It is important for parents to enforce that rule as well and we appreciate your support in that respect.

Food

Noah's Ark will provide nutritional snacks for morning and afternoon. Parents will either provide lunch for their child each day or purchase a lunch through the school lunch program. For those children bringing a lunch from home, each item in the child's lunchbox should be labeled with the child's name. If the child's lunchbox does not have an ice pack, any items requiring refrigeration must be removed from the lunchbox and placed in the refrigerator used by the child's classroom. If the child wishes to purchase a school lunch, parents may buy a sheet of 10 lunch tickets for \$22 .

Microwaves are available in each classroom. We request that you **DO NOT** send

items that require more than 2 minutes to heat. We do not prepare food and/or open cans. Meals should be in a sealed container from which the child can eat.

Personal Belongings and Clothing

Each child is required to keep a complete set of extra clothing at Noah's Ark in a shoebox labeled with the child's name. These extra clothes are used for emergency changes. Parents are responsible for taking home the soiled clothing and replacing them with clean extras. It is also helpful for each child to keep an old sweater or sweatshirt at the Center for the occasional change in weather.

Please dress your child for PLAY and COMFORT. We prefer that the children have no bare midriffs or tops. It may be hot outside but our building is air-conditioned. T-shirts and shorts or slacks make the transition nicely in hot weather.

Sneakers and socks are the footwear of choice. Open toed shoes of any kind are not allowed. We do a lot of walking and running and sandals and jellies can cause blisters and/or accidents.

Children are **NOT** to bring toys from home to Noah's Ark. It is very easy for them to be lost or broken in group play. It may also be difficult for the child to share his/her own toys, as well as confusing to the other children who expect the center's rules on sharing to hold in all situations. The only exception to this is when teachers ask children to bring a specific item from home for an activity. In **NO CASE** should toy guns, war toys or toys of violence be brought to Noah's Ark.

Any clothing, bedding, lunchboxes, and lunch containers or any other belongings brought from home must be clearly labeled with the child's name. It is impossible to guard against loss of items if they are not labeled.

Any child bringing in treats to share must bring enough for the entire class and the child's teacher must be informed in advance that this will be happening. Chewing gum is **NEVER** allowed.

Bottles are only given in the infant room. No other children may have bottles at any time. Diaper bags may not be left in the classroom.

Naps

We believe it is important for each child to have a quiet time to rest or sleep during the day. All children will participate in this quiet time. Older children who need less

sleep will be given the opportunity for a quiet rest. During naptime, the children will hear a quiet story followed by soothing music as they fall asleep. Children may only leave their cots to use the bathroom until the teacher signals the end of quiet time. Parents should bring a blanket and pillow for the child to use during this time. This blanket and pillow will be sent home each Friday to be washed.

Child Protection

If it is suspected that any child enrolled at Noah's Ark is being abused or neglected, the center is required to contact ChildLine as mandated by the Child Protective Services Law.

Each staff person has received a clearance from the State Police regarding his/her criminal history and from the Department of Welfare regarding any history as a child abuser prior to his/her employment. Any staff member suspected of abuse will be suspended pending an investigation. Staff persons found guilty of abuse will be dismissed.

Fundraisers

We hold two fundraisers annually, both of which have proven to be very successful. In the Spring we sell Wolfgang Candy and in the Fall we sell Joe Corbi Pizzas. These fundraisers are vital for purchasing and replacing toys and equipment.

Campbell's Labels for Education

We collect labels from Campbell's Soup products to earn various items for the center. Your labels can be placed in the large cardboard Campbell's Soup can inside the side entrance to the Center. Your donations as well as your assistance in counting and bagging them is greatly appreciated.