

St. James Lutheran Church Early Learning Center Parent Handbook

Introduction

The St. James Child Care Center, 109 York Street, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania 17325, (717)-334-7171, (there in after referred to as the “Center”) is a Pennsylvania Department of Human Services licensed, non-profit, Christian child care facility. All center staff is required to comply with all regulations as mandated by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services.

Purpose

The purpose of the Center is to provide a caring, Christian environment for children of parents who are employed or enrolled in a full-time education program, and to serve the child care fellowship. Christian education will be an integral part of the daily program.

Mission

**The Purpose of the St. James Lutheran Church Early Learning Center:
The St. James Lutheran Church Early Learning Center is a ministry of outreach to the community and a mission of service and stewardship to the St. James Lutheran Church.**

Therefore:

- St. James Lutheran Church seeks at least a 40% enrollment of the child care center to be children who need financial aid to attend.
- St. James Lutheran Church is responsible for establishing a scholarship fund to supplement other income sources to make this goal viable. scholarship fund may be financed by various sources including fundraisers, endowments, grants, operating budgets, etc.
- St. James Lutheran Church gifts the child care center with use of the building in ministry outreach.
- St. James Lutheran Church seeks to provide quality child care in context of Christian values and education.
- St. James Lutheran Church considers the child care center as a witness to the faith in Jesus Christ. This witness has direct effect on employment practices, enrollment procedures, inclusive population, teachings and business practices. Expectations of good business practices further include fiscal accountability, optimum use of available space and resources and financial self-sufficiency.
- St. James Lutheran Church seeks to provide affordable child care to ALL.

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Admissions and Attendance:

St. James Lutheran Church Early Learning Center admits children from the ages of 6 weeks to twelve years of age without regard to race, culture, sex, religion, national origin, ancestry, or disability. St. James Lutheran Church Early Learning Center does not discriminate based on special needs and accepts all children if a safe and supportive environment can be provided for the child.

Arrival and Departure:

The center shall assume and retain responsibility for the child after the child has been signed in by a parent, guardian, or designated individual until the child is signed out by a parent, guardian, or designated individual who is at least 16 years of age or older; and designated on the Emergency Contact/Parental Consent Form. The parents or guardians shall notify the center in writing when someone other than those named on the Emergency Contact/Parental Consent Form will be coming for the child and/or telephone verification can be made. It is understood that a proper picture ID must be presented before a child will be released. In an emergency when none of the persons listed on the Emergency Contact/Parental Consent Form can come for the child, the center staff may accept telephone permission, if the staff person taking the call recognizes the voice making the telephone request as that of the voice of the parent or guardian.

Birthdays

Birthdays are special days for children. If you wish to celebrate your child's birthday at the Center, please make an early arrangement with your child's teacher. If you wish to send invitations to friends, you may place stamped envelopes with the names of the guest on the director's desk. She will be happy to address and mail the invitations for you. Please do not ask staff to provide you with address information or leave invitations in children's cubbies unless the entire class is being invited.

Closings and Cancellations

The Center director will determine when the Center will be closed or its opening delayed due to inclement weather or other emergency conditions. Closings and delays will be announced **by email** and on the website: www.stjamesgettysburg.com. Click on child care at the top of the menu. **Delayed openings will be posted no later than 9:00 p.m. and closings will be posted no later than 5:30 a.m.**

Clothing and Personal Belongings

The most appropriate clothes for the school day are easy fitting, easy dressing, and comfortable, washable, play clothes. Please provide long pants in cold weather and shoes that are appropriate for running and climbing. Please bring an extra set of clothes to keep on hand at the Center.

Please mark all clothing and personal belongs with indelible ink or name labels. We encourage children to take care of their clothing; however, the Center cannot be responsible for lost, stained or soiled clothing or personal belongings.

Communication

Open and frequent communication between parents and teachers will help your child have a positive learning experience. We hope that you will feel free to talk to the director or your child's teacher when you drop-off or pick-up your child. The center strives to maintain an atmosphere of mutual respect between the staff and parents. Should you have any questions or concerns about your child's care, please address those concerns in a professional and respectful manner to the appropriate staff member.

Additionally, classrooms have assigned emails so you can communicate to your children's teacher. Teachers check their emails generally in the morning and at nap time. The emails are:

Infants: infants@stjamesgettysburg.org

Toddlers: yt@stjamesgettysburg.org

Preschool: ps@stjamesgettysburg.org

PreKindergarten: pk@stjamesgettysburg.org

Kids Club: kc@stjamesgettysburg.org

Director: childcare@stjamesgettysburg.org

Assistant Director: kc@stjamesgettysburg.org

Office Manager (Child Care Tuition): Katy Clowney
kclowney@stjamesgettysburg.org

Child Care Governance Chair: can be contacted through the church office

Daily Schedule

Although your child's schedule varies somewhat each day, the general order of activities in a typical day is posted in each classroom.

Discipline & Guidance

Preventive discipline improves children's self - esteem and problem - solving skills and encourages pro social behavior. This helps the program maintain an atmosphere of warmth and understanding; and helps children to develop as individuals as well as part of a group.

Examples are:

- Providing interesting choices of activities.
- Redirecting children away from problems and into positive interactions.
- Providing consistent positive communication of positive behavior with minimal attention given to misbehavior.
- Simple rules that are consistent enforced and clearly communicated to the children.
- Allowing children to problem solve among themselves without teacher interference.
- Arranging the environment to promote positive behavior and self-control.

Providing children with the opportunity and motivation to make choices helps them to:

Function independently.

- Develop social skills through gentle, encouraged guidance.
- Respect the needs and rights of others.
- Adapt to routines and simple rules.
- Become a responsible group member.
- Build positive self-esteem.

In extreme situations, separation from the group may be required for the benefit of the child or remainder of the group. If separation is necessary:

- Remove the child from the group calmly, with as little disruption as possible.
- State the violated rule.
- Place the child where visual supervision by staff can be maintained always.
- Children shall not be placed or set in “corners” or “hallways” or other humiliating situations.

Chronic and Persistent Problems

Please remember that young children need the experience of interacting with other children on a consistent basis. Learning how to share and cooperate with others is an ongoing process for young children, and consequently, aggressive behavior will occur (i.e. - hitting, yelling, name calling, biting, pinching, kicking, etc.). Although we do not allow this behavior to persist, it does take time for a child to learn a more acceptable way of dealing with his/her anger and frustration (i.e. - using appropriate words to express feelings).

We will make every attempt to work with a child, however, if there are continual discipline problems that are violent or potentially harmful to other children and/or adults, the parent(s) will be called in for an immediate conference with the child's teacher and the center director so we can work together to help the child. The child will then be sent home from the center for the remainder of that day. Chronic, persistent behaviors that are unsafe, hurtful and violent simply will not be tolerated. The health, safety and welfare of all children and adults is important to the overall health and well – being of the child care program. Everyone has the right to feel safe, secure and loved.

Referral(s) to outside agency(ies) may be recommended at the initial conference and will be documented as the first – time offense. If a parent is not cooperative with our efforts to seek assistance for a child (i.e. - a child's disruptive or aggressive behavior) or the unsafe, hurtful or violent behavior persists for more than an eight – week period, we maintain the right to discontinue child care. Each situation will be evaluated on an individual basis and the final determination regarding a child's enrollment status will be made by the center director.

It is also our policy that we will handle **ALL** discipline situations which may arise with the children enrolled in our program, according to our stated philosophy. If a

parent has concerns regarding another child's behavior, we ask that you discuss your concern with the appropriate teacher. Under **NO** circumstances will parents be allowed to approach the child to deal with the situation yourself. We consider this method to be completely inappropriate and will not be tolerated.

Guidance Techniques

Guidance techniques are designed and carried out in such a way as to help the individual child develop self-control and to assume responsibility for his or her actions. The rules are simple and understandable and redirection, along with an explanation, is a common technique. Natural and logical consequences are used to help children learn to make good decisions. If a child is removed from the group or an activity to gain control, it will be for a short period of time. Generally, a child having difficulty in one area will be redirected to another area to play.

Please see the Director if you would like a copy of our more detailed guidance procedures which are used to train our staff.

Regulations Regarding Discipline

No child will be punished by corporal punishment or verbal abuse. Please keep in mind, this policy also applies to parents. Children may not be spanked or threatened to be spanked at the child care center.

The following behaviors are prohibited (by ALL persons) in all child care settings:

- Corporal punishment, including hitting, spanking, swatting, beating, shaking, pinching and other measures intended to induce physical pain or fear;
- Threatened or actual withdrawal of food, rest or use of the bathroom;
- Abusive or profane language;
- Any form of public or private humiliation, including threats of physical punishment; and
- Any form of emotional abuse, including shaming, rejecting, terrorizing or isolating a child.

Emergency Evacuation, Fire Drills and Plans

The St. James Lutheran Child Care Center conducts evacuation drills at least every 60 days as required by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services. Also in compliance with the department, the center maintains an emergency evacuation plan in place located in each classroom, on file with the Adams County's Emergency Planning Office and in the center's main office. Emergency plans include procedures for evacuations involving fire, natural disasters, technological disasters (power failure, hazmat spills) and security emergency plans.

We wish to keep you informed always in an emergency. However, most often, situations will only require in-place sheltering within our facility. If we must evacuate the premises, we will relocate to the Gettysburg Volunteer Fire Hall located at 35 North Stratton St.; Gettysburg, PA, 17325. After the full evacuation has taken

place, parents will be contacted and may be kept informed by checking our **website: www.stjamesgettysburg.com and click on child care at the top of the menu.** We urge you not to call during an emergency, as difficult as this may seem. This will help us to keep the main line open for emergencies and assist us in being able to relay information promptly and efficiently.

Enrollment

Prior to the child's first day of attendance, an enrollment visit or "Getting to Know You" visit will be scheduled for the parent or legal guardian and child by the center director and classroom teacher. At that, the child and family member will have the opportunity to meet the staff and spend time in the child's new environment and share information special to their child. After this time, the family member will then meet with the center director.

The parent or guardian will also be provided with a copy of the Child Enrollment Contract which summarizes important points from the Parent Handbook (posted on – line) and other admission forms as required by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services. These include: Child Health Assessment, Parental Consent/Emergency Contact Form, Special Care Form (if needed), Child Care and Adult Food Program Application and Financial Agreement form. Prior to the child's first day of care all admission forms must be returned to the Center accompanied by a non – refundable enrollment fee of \$25.00, and a deposit equal to one week's child care fee. The deposit will serve as payment for the last week of your child's tuition with two week's written notice of withdrawal. All enrollment intake forms must be returned to the Center thoroughly completed. The initial Health Assessment is due within 30 days of enrollment, and consecutive assessments are required at 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 15 and 18 months of age, then annually there after on the child's birthday. At six years of age, assessments are due every other year.

Family Programs

Parents will be encouraged to attend family programs as scheduled by the director. The programs will be held for the purpose of enhancing the parent-child relationships, improving the child care facility by helping and supporting parents in their parental roles, by educating parents in skill related to parenting and by providing opportunities to make friendships with other parents. The gatherings will be held approximately six times per year.

Field Trips and Transportation

Field trips are limited to the school age program for children who have completed kindergarten and older. Transportation will be provided by a local transportation company complying with all state and federal regulations regarding the safety and welfare of children. Requirements will include, but not be limited to: vehicle licensing, insurance, inspection, driver requirements and seat restraints.

Food and Nutrition

St. James Lutheran Church Early Learning Center provides all meals and snacks at the Center meet the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture Child Care Food Program (CCAFP) guidelines. Therefore, ALL children enrolled in program are eligible for the Child Care Food Program must have a completed enrollment form at the time of enrollment.

Enrollment forms and income eligibility applications are valid for one year and therefore will be updated annually in **April** of each year in compliance with federal regulations. Forms will be reviewed by the **director/assistant director** for enrollment/eligibility of the CCAFP determination to reduce oversight. Forms will remain on file in the child care office for a minimum of three years for government reviews. For any children who do not have a current, complete, and correctly approved Income Eligibility Applications on file, meals will be claimed in the Paid category.

For children birth to 12 months of age, parents shall provide all formula, the exception of "Parent's Choice with Iron". If parents choose to use the center provided formula, then bottles with sterile water must be provided. The center will provide all foods following the meal patterns of the CCAFP program unless parents make the choice to provide their own foods for their infants.

Children 12 months and over: Breakfast is served between the hour of 7:00 a.m. until 8:00 a.m. When arriving with a child that is 12 months or older after 8:00 a.m., please see that she or he has already had breakfast.

Fundraising

Throughout the year the center will occasionally sponsor fundraising events. Parent participation is appreciated. The proceeds will be used to directly benefit the center. In the past we have held an annual bake sale to support our summer school age program and gift card fundraiser to support our scholarship program.

Health and Human Services

Children enrolled in the program are requested to have health assessment and Immunizations as required according by the schedule and recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Immunizations will be required according to the current schedule recommended by the U.S. Public Health Service and the American Academy of Pediatrics (see <http://www.aap.org> and www.paap.org)

Every January the Center Director will check with the public health department or the American Academy of Pediatrics for updates of the recommended immunization schedule. The state health department regulations regarding attendance of children who are not immunized due to religious or medical reasons will be followed.

Unimmunized children will be excluded during outbreaks of vaccine preventable illness as directed by the state health department. Routine preventive health services will be required according to the current recommendations of the

American Academy of Pediatrics.

Documentation of an age-appropriate health assessment should be obtained before, but is required no later than, 6 weeks after the child starts receiving care. Parents or legal guardians are responsible for assuring that their children are kept up-to-date and that a copy of the results of the child's health assessment is given to the program.

A visit to the doctor for a special health assessment or new documentation is not required for admission if documentation of an age appropriate health assessment is provided. Questions raised about the child's health will be directed to the family or (with permission of s parent or legal guardian) to the child's health care provider for explanation and implications for child care.

The Center Director will check annually with the public health department or the American Academy of Pediatrics for updates of health services.

Children will not be excluded for failure to be immunized if they have an appointment for immunizations initiated within one month. A child whose immunizations are not kept up-to-date will be dismissed after three written reminders to the parent or legal guardian over a 3-month period. The Center Director will check the facility's records to be sure each child's immunizations and other routine preventive health is current at least yearly, more often for younger children. The Center Director will remind parents and legal guardians to provide documentation of health assessments. These requirements and other recommendations can also be found on the: www.paaap.org.

The staff of the St. James Lutheran Child Care Center seek the expert advice of many community services and organizations to better understand the needs of all children in care. When the parent or legal guardian of a child identifies that a child has special needs, the center director and the parent or legal guardian will meet to review the child's care requirements. All parents at any time are encouraged to talk with the child's teacher and/or the center director when seeking advice concerning the care and development of their child. Many concerns can be put at ease through staff/parent conferences. However, agencies such as your child's local health care provider or pediatrician, Lincoln Intermediate Services, United Cerebral Palsy, PEACE, and numerous others are also available to provide services to families in need. Please see the center director whenever you feel that help may be needed.

Holidays/Vacations

The Center will be closed the following holidays: New Year's Day, President's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and the day after, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Two floating holidays will be scheduled each calendar year. The holidays will be announced each year the first week of each calendar year. Full tuition is due for all holidays.

IFSP/IEP:

When applicable, as required by the Keystone Star initiative, a copy of a child's IEP or IFSP, written plans, and/or special needs assessments are required that have been completed by professionals to inform classroom practice. We work together in conjunction with parents and various other service providers who may make recommendations for appropriate activities to implement IEP or IFSP goals and/or special needs plans and objectives. *Parent sign-off sheet requesting the IEP/IFSP must be requested.*

A plan is written and implemented describing procedures to refer parents to appropriate social, mental health, educational, wellness, and medical services are provided in additional document entitled, "Referral Process Steps". Please see staff for attachment.

Illness

The decision to exclude a child from care will be based on whether there are adequate facilities and staff available to meet the needs of both the ill child and other children in the group. Conditions and/or symptoms that would require the parents or guardians to keep a child out of the center or would require the Center to have a child picked up are:

- 1. Fever over 101 degrees,**
- 2. Repeated Vomiting,**
- 3. Repeated Diarrhea,**
- 4. Suspicious Rash,**
- 5. General appearance and or behavior of being ill,**
- 6. Or other symptoms of contagious illness,**
- 7. The child's illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities that the facility routinely offers,**
- 8. The illness requires more than one staff person to provide care without compromising the care of other children in the group.**

An ill child shall be given appropriate care, away from the general play area until the parent, guardian, or designated individual arrives. The Center will notify the parent/guardian of any suspected exposure to a communicable disease by posting a sign that gives the parent the date and communicable disease that the child may have been exposed to on the daily sign – in/ sign – out sheet. **A child may return 24 hours after the symptoms are gone, or with a written release from a licensed physician.**

Injury

First – Aid kits are in each classroom and kept inaccessible to children. The first – aid kits will contain soap, an assortment of adhesive bandages, sterile gauze pads, tweezers, tape and scissors as per the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services

regulations. First – aid kits will accompany the children whenever they are away from the center.

In the event of an accident, the Center staff shall give appropriate first aid to an injured child. A parent or guardian will be contacted if immediate medical attention is necessary. If an injury or illness requires emergency care, 911 will be called and a parent or guardian will be contacted immediately. The staff will document all incidents by completing a short “Ouch” report to communicate the incident/accident to the parents. Emergency procedures, evacuation procedures and emergency telephone numbers are posted in all classrooms, next to the telephones in the main office and the dining room.

****Additional Health Specific Policies at the end of this handbook.***

Keeping the Center Informed

Upon registration and twice annually, you will be responsible for completing and updating the Parental Consent/Emergency Contact form and Financial Agreement as required by the Department of Health and Human Services. We rely on this information to reach you in the event of an emergency and for our staff to meet specific needs of your child and family. It is inevitable that this information will change from time to time. It is therefore up to you to keep our files up to date. Please take the time to write us a note with any new information as the occasion arises. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Late Pick – up Policy and Fees

The Center closes at 5:30 p.m. each day. **There will be a late fee of \$5.00 charged for the first five minutes per child, or part of,** that a parent or guardian or other designated individual arrives after closing time and **\$2.00 per minute per child for each minute after the first five minutes.** This fee is payable to the Center staff on duty when the child is picked up. Every effort shall be made by the parent or guardian to contact the Center by phone when they are unable to pick up their child before 5:30 p.m. If children are not picked up within an hour of closing, Children and Youth Services will be contacted.

Lesson Plans

Lesson plans, which include field trips, special events and other activities that would be of interest to the families, are posted in advance in the classroom. Weekly lesson plans are prepared by the lead teacher of each classroom in consultation with classroom assistants. Lesson plans are based on child observations. The goals, objectives, materials and experiences contained in the lesson plans are connected directly to the Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards. Lesson plans are posted weekly on Friday for the coming week. Changes in planning will occur, however changes, deletions and additions will be noted on the lesson plans.

Lost or Missing Children

To prevent lost or missing children, the staff will frequently and at scheduled intervals throughout the day, especially during transitional times, on field trips and when away from the building count children. If it is determined that a child is missing, the center director will be contacted immediately and a search of the entire area will be conducted. If the child cannot be found the local police will be notified, the parents or legal guardian and other recommended local authorities. To prevent this from occurring:

- 1) All staff, regardless of position, are aware of adult/child ratios;
- 2) All staff are aware of which children are assigned to their group;
- 3) Staff count children during transitions.

Mandated Reporting

The state mandates that all child care providers and lay persons report suspected child abuse and/or neglect to the proper authorities. St. James requires that all staff report each situation to the Center director.

Medication

Pennsylvania regulations dictate that child care staff is not required to administer children's medication. Therefore, administration of medication is the responsibility of the parent or guardian and whenever possible.

However, we know that this is not always possible, and will administer medication twice daily, either before or after nap time which would be around noon or 4:00 p.m. Medications will be stored at room temperature and locked in a locked box in the closet or refrigerator out of reach of children in the toddler classroom room 102B.

All medications must be signed in on an individual medication log. Medication logs are available on the bulletin board outside of the child care office as well as on – line. Orders to distribute medication will not be taken by telephone and/or expired medication will not be given. Medication may not be stored in **cubbies, diaper bags, backpacks, or other carry-alls. Medicine must be kept in the original container and taken daily to specified place in the facility.** If they are found in any other location outside of the locked box in the facility will be discarded immediately.

All over the counter medication must be accompanied with a written physician's order or recommended dosages printed on the container by the manufacturers appropriate for your child's weight and age.

A physician may state that a certain medication may be given for a recurring problem, emergency or chronic condition. The instructions should include the child's name, name of the medication, the dose of the medication may be given; the conditions of the use and any precautions to be followed. These medications may be given to and locked in the locked medication box in the individual child's classroom.

Examples of conditions that fall within this range are: asthma, ADHD, seizures and allergies that require Epipen.

Parking Policy

When dropping off or picking up your child at the center, you may use the front (York St.) entrance or the east side entrance. Parking is available along Stratton and York Streets or you may use the parking lot at the back of the church. Please remember to observe the **“Handicap Only” and parking signs. No parking is permitted next to the church or behind the play yard from the alley.**

Parent Involvement

Parent participation is a very important part of our program. Your involvement is a valuable part of the teamwork in providing the best education possible for your child. If you have a special talent or interest you can share with the staff or children, please let us know. When field trips are scheduled, let us know if you can come along. Feel free to come in and observe your child at any time. Your ideas, concerns and comments are always welcome. We maintain an open – door policy always. For those parents who are interested in becoming a volunteer, please see the director for more details.

Payment/Tuition Policy

Payments are due weekly on the first day of care. Payment by check, electronic fund transfer or money order is encouraged. Cash payments may be made in the church office between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. A receipt will be provided at that time. All other payments requiring a receipt will be done so at the individual’s request.

A \$5.00 fee is added to the weekly tuition if it is unpaid for two consecutive weeks without making budgeting arrangements with the director or office manager. If no budgeting arrangements are made with the director or tuition is unpaid, **child care service will not be provided the third week and thereafter until full payment is made.** If the \$5.00 fee is added to tuition a second time in a calendar year, it will become a permanent addition. Once a budget is agreed upon, payments must be kept current as overseen by the director or child care services will be terminated. If termination of services is necessary, all legal and collection fees incurred are the responsibility of the parent.

A fee of \$25.00 will be charged for each check returned for non-sufficient funds. If two checks for non-sufficient funds are returned in a calendar year, you will be required to make cash payments to the director or use a money order.

Program Evaluation

The program goes through an evaluation process annually with staff, families and school age children. Evaluations are attached typically to the December newsletter. Parents, staff and school – age children are asked to complete evaluation forms and return them to the center in a sealed envelope within 7 days of receipt. These

evaluation forms are very important to our program. We use the information provided by you to make program improvement plans and set goals for the future. Please take this information seriously and help us to provide a high – quality program by offering advice, comments and complaints in a confidential manner.

Rest Time

Adequate rest and/or quiet time are a very important part of a young, growing child's day. The children rest in the afternoon for two hours or longer depending on the individual child without exception. Cots and/or cribs are provided by the Center. Classroom staff will check to ensure that each crib or mat is labeled and only one child uses it. Before sleep equipment can be used for a different child, all surfaces of the equipment will be cleaned and disinfected.

Please bring a blanket for your child. Be sure to put your child's name on the blanket with a permanent marker, and please take it home weekly for washing. Bedding materials will be stored in such a way so that there is no contact between the sleeping surfaces of one child with the sleeping surfaces of another child or surfaces that were in contact with the floor.

Infant's sleep according to their needs and the individual plan prepared by the parents for the staff and in compliance with the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Infants will be put on their backs without loose bedding or soft objects. Children who can turn themselves over will be allowed to assume a sleeping position that is comfortable for them. Staff will check that cribs and mats are placed at least three feet away from any other child who is asleep.

Scholarships and Subsidy Programs

If a government or community agency pays your child care, please be advised that late fees for children at the Center after closing, registration fee and other special costs are not covered with the regular tuition.

St. James also offers scholarships to families that are not eligible for subsidies but may meet our income requirements. Please see the center director for information. All families receiving a center subsidized scholarship are required to complete the application for Child Care Information Services. If they are rejected or waitlisted, then a scholarship may apply. Parents receiving center scholarships are asked to volunteer five hours annually assisting directly in fundraising activities that support the scholarship program.

Any change in household income relevant to tuition must be reported to the director. If the change of income is due to job loss, to meet the admission requirements, the unemployed parent or guardian must be actively seeking employment. Employment must be procured within 30 days. If admission requirements are not met, child care services will be terminated.

School-to-School Kindergarten Transition:

St. James Lutheran Church Early Learning Center shares a written plan for child transition with parents and community/school stakeholders. We offer parents both an individual and group meeting to share specific information regarding the child's transition to another educational setting, to give parents written information about the child's developmental progress and answer any questions they may have.

Security

St. James strives to maintain a safe environment for your child and is prepared to handle emergency situations. An emergency plan is posted in each classroom with emergency numbers and procedures. The primary mechanism for ensuring the security of the center is strict adherence to established procedures for your child's arrival and departure. Please be sure that all persons whom we may release your child to have proper identification. Children will not be released to anyone except those listed on the emergency information/parental consent form completed at enrollment.

Sibling Discount

St. James Child Care Center offers a sibling discount. For each child enrolled full time, a 10% family discount will be applied each week to the total tuition.

Staff Qualifications

The quality of the staff is an important determinant in the quality of the program. St. James strives to maintain a high-quality staff by providing a variety of training in child development, curriculum, fire safety and first aid as well as participation in Teach. At a minimum, state qualifications are met, but most often exceeded. All staff members working with children are required to submit FBI fingerprint clearance, a state police check, national child abuse clearance as well as a physician's completed health assessment.

Toilet Training

A team approach is used in toilet training children. Toilet training usually begins around two ½ years of age. However, each child's development will begin and progress at a different rate. Parents, staff and children work together to promote the child's independence for toileting. Although a staff member is always available to assist the child when needed, dressing the children in appropriate clothing that is easy to get on and off helps to encourage your child's success in this important step in your child's development. The staff at St. James would rather not use pull-ups or any product like pull-ups. The staff will keep you informed daily of your child's progress and are available as a resource to answer any questions about your child's toilet training process.

Transition Plan

When children transition from one class to the next, the center has a transition plan that helps children become familiar not only with the new program but the new teachers and children as well. The transition plan allows flexibility in order for us to

best meet the developmental needs of each child. Your child's teacher or Center director will provide more details about transitioning when your child is ready to move and space becomes available for the next program.

Children in our program are considered for transition according to their developmental abilities, chronological age and space availability in the next classroom. Our procedures help to provide a consistent environment for the children, allowing the teachers to effectively plan age-appropriate learning experiences and encouraging children to establish long-term social relationships, and help the Center regulate the flow of children through the class.

Walks/Walking Trips

Children will often go on walking trips weather permitted. Staff will take all children with permission on walks through town and to local parks and playgrounds. Children will be counted before they leave the building, every 15 minutes while on the walk and upon arrival at the destination. First aid kits and emergency contact information will accompany all children when away from the building.

Young children will ride in a baby buggy equipped with proper restraints, and older children will walk while holding onto a linked rope (a knotted rope which is stretched between two caregivers and which the children hold onto while they walk) or by having and an adult hold each child's hand, or by another means that keeps the child physically connected to an adult always. A designated adult will supervise the children at the front and another adult in the back of each group.

Children will learn pedestrian safety by caregiver role- modeling and verbal reinforcement. Caregivers will teach children to cross only at the corner, when traffic signals indicate it is safe to cross, and only after looking left, and right and left again.

Withdrawal

TWO WEEKS WRITTEN NOTICE IS REQUIRED PRIOR TO WITHDRAWAL FOR ENROLLMENT DEPOSIT TO BE APPLIED TO YOUR CHILD CARE ACCOUNT. The services may be modified whenever any of the circumstances covered by this handbook change. Such modifications may only be made in writing and must be signed and dated by the parties involved for it to be binding and effective. Oral modifications are not binding under this agreement and shall not be enforceable under this agreement and shall not be enforceable under any condition. This provides that: the parties to this agreement are aware of the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services's right to interview the child and the Center staff and to inspect and audit all records maintained by the Center without securing the prior consent of anyone. Both parties reserve the right to terminate services with two weeks written notice.

Additional Health and Safety Specific Policies and Procedures:

Daily Record Keeping/ Daily Health Checks: the following information will be documented daily on each child upon arrival or soon afterwards. The staff will complete the Enrollment /Attendance/ and Symptom Record to log attendance and any illnesses that the child is known to have. This can help classroom staff, as well as the center Director to identify patterns of illness when reviewing these records.

~~Children's records are open only to director, staff with the child, state inspector, parents and/or legal guardians. Parents wishing to transfer records must sign a written request of authorization to release records to the center director.~~

Health Plan: Health Consultation: The Center Director and staff may consult the American Association of Pediatrics (www.aap.org www.paaap.org) and the Pennsylvania Department of Health (<http://www.health.state.pa.us> www.health.state.pa.us) to assist in systems for injury, illness, and family education.

Design and Maintenance of the Physical Plant and Its Contents:

The childcare facility will meet or exceed federal, state, and local guidelines for physical plant contents and maintenance. All potentially toxic materials such as pesticides, toxic cleaning materials, aerosol cans, and poisons will be used according to manufacturer's instructions. All materials that instructions indicate to keep out of the reach of children will be stored in locked cabinets or closets and will be inaccessible to the children. In no instance will these types of materials be used so those children are exposed to any hazard.

Escape Hazards:

The Center Director will review with the staff annually a list of potential high-risk locations/situations where a child might escape unnoticed from the group. Staff will use this list to plan for increased supervision in these high-risk locations and situations. If such a high-risk escape hazard is identified between annual reviews, staff will act immediately.

Exposure to Blood and Other Potentially Infectious Materials:

The Blood-borne Pathogens Exposure Plan to ensure that all staff members are trained in ways to protect themselves is as follows:

- Staff will follow the standard precautions for childcare recommended by the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention in handling any fluid that might contain blood or other body fluids. Standard Precautions require treating all

blood, fluids that may contain blood or blood products, and other bodily fluids as potentially infectious.

- The instructions for implementing standard precautions are: spills of body fluids, feces, nasal and eye discharges, saliva, urine, and vomit should be cleaned up immediately.
- Use a barrier such as nonporous gloves or sufficient quantity of paper or cloth to clean it up without hand contact with spilled material.
- Be careful not to get any of the fluid you are handling in your eyes, nose, mouth or any open sores you may have.
- Clean and disinfect any surfaces, such as countertops and floors, on to which body fluids have been spilled.
- Discard fluid contaminated material in a plastic bag that has been securely sealed.
- Mops used to clean up body fluids should be cleaned, rinsed with a disinfecting solution, wrung as dry as possible, and hung to dry completely.
- Be sure to wash your hands after cleaning any spill.

Facility Cleaning Routines

Bathrooms will be kept visibly clean, are cleaned two times daily and sanitized after each use. Toilets and sinks will be sanitized after each use. Toilets will be kept separate from the children's activity area. The church sexton will assure that toilet paper and holders, paper towels, soap dispensers are available in the bathroom.

The Infant and Toddler Rooms are cleaned daily and all other rooms of the child care center are cleaned twice weekly.

Food Handling and Feeding Policies

Drinking Water

The local health department will approve the drinking water. Staff will contact the local health department to be sure their source of water is free of lead, parasites, bacteria and other contaminants. Safe drinking water will be accessible to children who can serve themselves and offered between meals to all children, while indoors and outdoors.

Drinking water will be offered to children who are over 1 year of age with snacks or meals. Younger children will be offered water by caregivers during the day, such as between feedings. Caregiver will offer water to children more frequently when the temperature is above 80 degrees F.

Food prepared at the Facility:

St. James Child Care Center does prepare fully cooked meals at the facility. ~~All meat prepared at the facility will be purchased fully cooked prior to use in meals.~~

Food Safety:

Dishes, Utensils and Surfaces:

- No one with signs of illness or who is known to be infected with bacteria or viruses that could be carried in food will be responsible for food handling.
- Those who prepare food will not change diapers and vice-versa.
- Hand washing sink(s) will be separate from food-preparation sink(s).
- Refrigerators will be maintained at a temperature below 40 degrees F. and freezers will be maintained below 0 degrees F.
- Hot foods will be kept at or above 140 degrees F after they are fully cooked and cold foods will be kept at or below 40 degrees F. these temperatures will be maintained until food is served.
- All food stored in the refrigerator except fresh, whole fruits and vegetables will be covered, wrapped, or protected from contamination.
- Food preparation, storage and service areas and equipment will be kept clean, and sanitary.
- Medications requiring refrigeration will be stored in a locked box in the Toddler Room.
- A dishwasher will be used to wash dishes and food service utensils whenever possible. The dishes and utensils will be air-dried.
- Bottles, bottle caps, and nipples will not be reused without first being cleaned and disinfected.
- Washable napkins and bibs will be laundered after each use.
- Food that has been served and not eaten on individual plates, containers and family-style serving bowls will be discarded.
- Trash or waste containers, which hold organic materials such as food, soiled tissues, or other bodily fluids, shall be covered with a tight-fitting lid. These containers will be closed after each use except when children are participating in clean up. Garbage/ trash will be double bagged and removed from the facility daily.

Food Brought from Home

The center director will inform parents or legal guardians of the food service plan of the facility. Food brought from home will only be allowed if a child has an allergy to the facility menu. A special care plan must be provided by the child's physician. All meals provided by families must comply with the meal pattern requirements of the CCAFP.

Infant/ Toddler Feeding

The Lead Teachers will obtain and review a written description of each child's feeding history before the child enters the program. The following criteria will also be followed:

- a caregiver trained in first-aid for choking will be present whenever infants and toddlers are being fed.
- Food will be cut into $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ inch pieces for finger feeding by children

who are six months of age or older. Utensils will be available to children who can use them.

- When high chairs are used, caregivers will strap the child in securely and not rely upon the tray for restraint.
- Trays, arms and seats of high chairs will be cleaned and disinfected before and after each use. They will be stored out of the path of doors or walkways.
- For bottle feedings, infants will either be held or fed sitting up. Bottle propping, feeding in cribs, beds or while using other sleep equipment, and carrying of bottles by young children will not be permitted.
- Infant meals and snacks provided by the facility will contain at a minimum the food components specified in national guidelines. Food will be appropriate for the child's nutritional requirements and developmental stage.
- The introduction of solid foods will be accomplished routinely between 4 and 6 months of age, as indicated by the individual child's nutritional and developmental needs.
- After six months of age, children will be encouraged to self-feed to the extent that they have the necessary skills. They will be offered a choice of foods from a limited number of appropriate choices. Children will be encouraged, but not forced to eat a variety of foods.
- Breastfeeding will be encouraged by providing a place for nursing mothers to feed their babies and by coordinating feeding routines in child care with the mother's schedule will support breastfeeding.
- Precautions appropriate to the handling of a body fluid will be followed when handling breast milk. Although gloves are not required when feeding breast milk, but otherwise be treated as a bodily fluid. This includes using good hand washing practices.
- Formula will be brought to the facility in a factory-sealed container. The formula will be in a ready to feed or prepared on the child care site. Formula will be diluted according to the instructions provided by the manufacturer or from the child's health provider. Formula brought from home will be labeled with the child's name.
- All bottles will be refrigerated until immediately prior to feeding and will not be prepared and stored more than 24 hours before feeding occurs.
- Bottles will be warmed in a pan of warm water at a temperature not to exceed 120 degrees F., gently mixed and temperature- tested before feeding.
- Only whole, pasteurized milk will be served to children who are not on formula or breast milk.
- Commercially packaged baby food will be served from a bowl or cup and not directly from the commercial container unless the entire container will be used for one feeding. Solids will be fed by spoon only, not by bottle. Uneaten food in dishes will be discarded.

Preschool/ School Age Feeding

- When possible children will participate in family style service to allow them to learn how to serve themselves.
- Children will eat in a social group with a caregiver to guide and encourage, but not force appropriate conversation and eating behavior.
- Children will eat only when seated to decrease the possibility of choking.
- Food will not be offered as a reward or denied as a punishment.
- Feeding of Children with Nutritional Special Needs: Children with special needs related to their ability to eat or a nutritional need will have an individual management plan that includes a written description of each child's feeding history. The written description should include prohibited foods, and substitute foods where applicable as supplied by the parent, legal guardian, and the child's health care provider.

Hazard Identification and Correction

The Center Director will conduct an inspection of the facility for hazards twice annually. The building supervisor of the church will arrange for correction of hazardous conditions identified in the results of the site inspections. Written reports of the inspections and corrections will be kept in the program files.

Health Education

Health Education will be apart of the curriculum for staff and children. Topic areas for staff may include nutrition, stress management, child development, safety, first aid, control of infectious disease, and other topic areas based on community needs and interests. Speakers and materials may be obtained from community hospitals, children's hospitals, public health department, medical/oral health/nursing/ mental health providers/ health agencies, and local colleges and universities. All health education activities and materials for children will be developmentally appropriate. Health practices will be integrated into daily routines and focused on topic areas.

Programs will notify parents and legal guardians if sensitive topic areas are included in the health education plan. Parents or legal guardians must notify the staff of the facility if they do not want their children to be involved in activities related to a specific topic.

Media Inquiries

Please refer all media inquiries to the Center Director. The facility will not be accessible to the media during a crisis. Media access will be prearranged at times when staff and families have been informed and when such visits will cause the least amount of disruption to the program.

Ongoing Health Requirements

Daily, the administrator of the facility shall visually assess the staff for signs of ill health. Staff may have their work limited or modified and be required by the center director to have a health assessment if the health status of the staff member affects the ability of the person to continue to do the work required is uncertain. Staff will report to the center director and have a release from a health care provider to return to work for any of the following conditions: condition that may significantly affect the person's ability to do the job (e.g. pregnancy, specific injuries, infectious diseases), or if the condition is likely to pose a significant risk of harm to the health and safety of the person or others, a serious prolonged illness (e.g. back injury, heart attack, stress or mental illness).

All staff will supply and annually update or verify the following information in writing:

- Emergency contacts (next of kin).
- Name, address, birth date, training, experience, and education background.

Staff illness will be reported to the center director as soon as the condition is known during the day. Although disclosure cannot be required, staff who is infected with the human immunodeficiency virus or who are hepatitis B carriers may care for children. The conditions required that do not have open lesions or that the lesions can be adequately covered or that other conditions that will not allow contact with their blood and if they can competently perform their duties.

Pets

Lead Teachers will be responsible for checking that the appropriate care instructions for pets are followed.

- Pets will meet the following guidelines:
- Any pet or animal present at the facility, must be in good health, show no evidence of carrying any disease, and be a friendly companion for the children. All animals will be immunized for any disease which can be transmitted to humans and will be maintained on a flea, tick, and worm control program.
- Pets will be kept clean and housed in clean-living quarters. Animal tanks and cages will be secured in such a manner that prevents children from climbing on the structure and prevents the structure from tipping over.
- All pets will be enclosed in cages or separated by some other means from children except when children are handling them under adult supervision.
- Staff, volunteers, and children will wash their hands after handling pets. In the event of an animal bite or scratch, procedures for first aid and proper notification of parents or legal guardians as contained in these policies.

Plants

Lead Teachers will be responsible for checking that all plants receive the appropriate care instructions. Plants will meet the following guidelines:

- Plants of the poisonous type will not be permitted in the facility environment.
- Plants will be regularly dusted. Children will not be allowed to put plants in their mouths.
- Staff, volunteers, and children will wash their hands after handling plants.
- In the event of contact with a poisonous plant, the regional poison control center will be consulted for instructions. (1-800-222-1222). The emergency procedures will be followed and the child's parent or legal guardian will be notified as soon as possible.

Policy for Handling Persons Who May Pose a Safety Risk

(Includes abusive parents or legal guardian and any adults who cannot take the child safely from the facility.)

Children will not be released to anyone who cannot safely care for the child. The Center Director or Group Supervisor will contact an emergency contact person to arrange for safe transport of the child. The Center Director or Group Supervisor may notify the police by calling 911 to manage an adult or an individual who poses a violent safety risk. If an emergency contact person is not available to care for the child, the Center Director or Group Supervisor will contact child protective services for guidance.

Review and Revision of Policies, Plans, and Procedures

The center director will make policies, plans, and procedures available to families, caregivers, staff and consultants on an annual basis or/and whenever policies are changed. Copies of standing policies will always be available for family or staff to review during the hours that the facility is in operation. When new staff members are assigned to work in the facility, they will sign that they have read, have understood, and here agreed to abide by the content of the policies.

Review of Injury Reports

Whenever an injury occurs, a copy of a completed Injury (we call an ouch report) Report will be filed in an Injury Log. The Center Director will review the Injury Log at least every four months to identify hazards for corrective action.

Sanitation and Hygiene

Hand washing: All staff, volunteers, and children will wash their hands at the following times:

- Upon arrival for the day.
- When moving from one childcare group to another.
- When coming in from outdoors.
- Before and after eating, handling food, or feeding a child.
- Before and after giving medication.
- Before and after playing in water that is used by more than one person.
- After diapering and toileting, handling body fluids and wiping noses, mouths, and sores.

- After cleaning or handling garbage.
- After handling pets or other animals
- After playing in sandboxes.
- Diapering: diapering will be done only in a designated diapering area.
- Food handling will not be permitted in diapering areas. Surfaces of diapering areas will be cleaned and sanitized after each use. The surfaces will be waterproof, free of cracks, tears and crevices.

Smoking, Prohibited Substances, and Guns

The indoor environment of the facility is designated as non-smoking areas. The use of tobacco in any form, alcohol, or illegal drugs is prohibited in the facility.

All childcare providers and staff will maintain sobriety while providing childcare. Caregivers, staff, or other adults who are inebriated, intoxicated, or otherwise under the influence of mind-altering or polluting substances will be required to leave the premises immediately. Guns and other lethal weapons are prohibited in the center.

Staff Policies

Required Paperwork

Pre-employment Requirements: all staff (volunteer and paid) who have any contact with or with anything with which the children come into contact with have an initial, job related health assessment performed within 30 days of the employment by a physician which will include a review of immunizations and communicable disease. A review of occupational health concerns, including risk during pregnancy, is appropriate. All staff must have a TB screening by the Mantoux method (intradermal, intermediate strength PPD injection with needle and syringe) to check for infection.

All staff will provide two written references from persons who are not family members who can vouch that the prospective staff member is reliable and able to work with children.

A check of public records for history of conviction of a crime against children (Child Abuse Registry) will be completed prior to any caregiver's contact with children. All potential employees and volunteers will be required to attest to any previous convictions whether they have ever been convicted of any crime against children or other violent crime. A volunteer or employee's failure to fully disclose previous convictions will be viewed as automatic grounds for dismissal.

All caregivers will sign an agreement to abide by the policies of the program.

Breaks

All staff will have the opportunity to take a scheduled break during the day when working more than a six-hour period. Breaks will be scheduled at a mutually agreeable time with immediate classroom supervisor. Breaks may be taken only if child: staff ratios for supervision of the children can be maintained during the break

period.

Staff Training

All new staff (paid, volunteer, including substitutes) will be oriented to the following: the goals, philosophy of the program, regulatory requirements and the written policies of the program with special emphasis on:

- The planned activities of the program.
- Routines and transitions.
- Acceptable methods of discipline.
- Parent relationships.
- Occupational health hazards such as back injuries and stress, infectious diseases, issues for pregnancy workers, and environment hazard.
- Hand washing, diapering or underclothing changing, and surface sanitation.
- Standard precautions for handling bodily fluids.
- Meal patterns, food preparation, and handling.
- Back-to-sleep positioning for infants.
- Teaching health promotion to children and families.
- Medication administration.
- Recognizing symptoms of illness and when to exclude ill children.
- Emergency procedures.
- Child abuses prevention, recognition, and reporting.
- Injury prevention and hazard recognition.
- The names and ages of children whose care will involve the staff person and the developmental and special need of these children.
- Within 90 days of employment and every **two** years thereafter each staff member will successfully complete training in a pediatric first aid course that includes the following items: ability to demonstrate rescue breathing and management of a blocked airway.
- Ongoing training will be required for all staff members.
- Annual Fire Safety Training.

Steps to Report Communicable Disease

Some communicable diseases must be reported to public health authorities so that control measures can be used. Center director will obtain an updated list of reportable diseases from the local or state health authorities annually. A copy of this list will be shared with each classroom annually and posted for the parent and/or legal guardian review.

In September, families and staff will be reminded to notify Center Director within 24 hours after the child or staff member has developed a known or suspected communicable disease and to inform the Center Director if any member of their immediate household has a reportable communicable disease.

While respecting the legal boundaries of confidentiality of medical information, the Center Director will notify the appropriate health department authority about any

suspected or confirmed reportable disease among the children, staff or family members of the children or staff. Families of children who may have been exposed to a child with a communicable disease or reportable condition will be informed about the exposure according to the recommendations of the local health department.

Toys

Classroom staff will be responsible for checking that all toys receive the appropriate care and meet the following guidelines. Objects will be prohibited that have removable parts, or a diameter of less than 1 ¼ inch and a length of less than 2 ¼ inches or are small enough to fit completely in a children's mouth. No latex balloons, plastic bags, and Styrofoam objects can be accessible to children under 4 years of age.

Children in diapers will have only washable toys. All toys that are mouthed during the day will be set aside in an inaccessible container before another child plays with the toy. Mouthed toys will be thoroughly washed and disinfected by hand or washed in a dishwasher. Cloth toys for children who are still mouthing toys will be limited to use by only one child and cleaned in a washing machine and dried in a clothes dryer every week or more often if heavily soiled. Toys used by children who do not put these objects in their mouths will be cleaned at least weekly and when obviously soiled.

Water tables where more than one child plays in the same water will not be used unless the container and toys are disinfected before each use of the table. The children all wash their hands before they use the table, and staff supervises the water play closely to be sure no child drinks the water or has any contact between body fluids and the water in the water table.

Toys that develop sharp edges are coated with lead paint, have breakable glass, and have screws that have unthreaded, or that present risks of injury from common use will be repaired or discarded.

Transportation

Daily Transportation: The facility does not provide transportation to and from the program. It is the responsibility of the parents or legal guardian to supply transportation to and from the program. Gettysburg School District provides transportation for school children in the GASD. Staff that oversees the school aged children will walk the children to the bus stop located behind the church on Middle St.