

ST. JAMES LUTHERAN CHURCH  
GETTYSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

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Committee Child Care

# St. James Child Care 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 Public Welfare licensed, non-profit, Christian child care facility. All center staff is required to comply with all regulations as mandated by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare.

## 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.

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## **Mission:**

### **The Purpose of the St. James Lutheran Church Child Care Center:**

**The St. James Lutheran Church Child Care 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 to have at least a 40% enrollment of the child care center to be children who need financial aid in order to attend.
- St. James Lutheran Church is responsible for establishing a scholarship fund to supplement other income sources in order to make this goal viable. This 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.

## Table of Contents

Admissions and Attendance	5
Arrival and Departure	5
Birthdays	5
Closings and Cancellations	5
Clothing and Personal Belongings	5
Communication	6
Confidentiality	7
Daily Schedule	7
Discipline	7
Emergency Evacuation, Fire Drills and Plans	8
Enrollment	8
Family Programs	8
Field Trips and Transportation	9
Food and Nutrition	9

Fundraising.....	9
Health and Human Services.....	9
Holidays/Vacations.....	10
Illness.....	10
Injury.....	11
Keeping the Center Informed.....	11
Late Fees.....	11
Lost or Missing Children.....	11
Mandated Reporting.....	12
Medication .....	12
Parking.....	13
Parent Involvement.....	13
Payment Policy.....	13
Program Evaluation.....	13

Rest	
Time.....	
.13	
Scholarships and	
Subsidy.....	14
Security.....	
.....	14
Sibling	
Discount.....	14
Staff	
Qualifications.....	
14	
Toilet	
Training.....	1
5	
Transition	
Plan.....	15
Tuition	
Policy.....	15
Walks.....	
.....	15
Withdrawal	
.....	16

**Admissions and Attendance:**

St. James Lutheran Church Child Care 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 Child Care Center does not discriminate on the basis of special needs and accepts all children as long as 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 situation 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, as long as 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 on **WGTY-FM108, WGET-AM1320 OR WYCR-FM98.5 local radio stations and also WGAL channel 8 televisions no later than 6:00 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.

In addition, we have many other ways to keep you informed about what is happening with your child:

- 1) Once a child enters the toddler room, they receive a communication journal. This journal is used for multiple purposes as a way to communicate regularly with parents in an individual and confidential manner as well as a method for tracking developmental milestones. One of your child's classroom teachers will write information in the journal at least on a weekly basis. Parents are invited and encouraged to write back to the teachers. We understand that it is sometimes difficult to talk directly about delicate matters in the classroom with other people around. We

- hope that by providing this tool, both staff and parents will find it to be effective in communicating necessary information.
- 2) Developmental profiles are also kept on all children within the first 45 days when they enter the program. The developmental profiles that we use are the Early Learning Accomplishment Profile (birth to 36 months) and the Learning Accomplishment Profile (36 months to 72 months). This developmental checklist is a simple tool that we use to guide our plans and program development. They are researched based and enables us to plan a developmentally appropriate program for children as well as measure a child's individual progress. These profiles are updated at least bi-monthly and are available for your review at any time. For information on record transfer policy, see "Confidentiality".
  - 3) Lesson plans that describe the planned activities for the week are posted in the classroom on the Parent Information Board.
  - 4) "What Your Child Did Today," is posted in each classroom for parent's to read at the end of each day.
  - 5) Parent newsletters and menus describing the center activities and upcoming events are distributed monthly.
  - 6) Individual conferences are scheduled twice annually at the request of the parents, teachers or the director. Parents will be given individual written notices twice annually as well as an announcement being placed in the school newsletter in December and May of each year. All individual notes to parents, must be returned directly to the classroom teacher where they will be put in the child's file and become a permanent part of their school record.
  - 7) Back to School Night.

### **Confidentiality**

A child's records are open only to the director, caregivers working directly with your child, State inspectors, authorized employees and the child's custodial or legal guardian. Parents must sign a written "Authorization to Release Records" to allow access by anyone other than the above.

### **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**

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 also 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 at all times.
- Children shall not be placed or set in “corners” or “hallways” or other humiliating situations.

### **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 Public Welfare. 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 at all times in an emergency situation. 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 listening to local radio stations, *WGET, WYCR or by watching television station WGAL channel 8.*

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 will be scheduled for the parent or legal guardian and child. At that, the child and family member will have the opportunity to meet the staff and spend time in the child's new environment. The family member will then meet with the center director. During that time, a \$25.00 enrollment fee per child is required. The parent or guardian will also be provided with a copy of the Parent Handbook, Enrollment Contract and other admission forms as required by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, which include: Child Health Assessment, Parental Consent/Emergency Contact Form, Special Care Form (if needed), Child Care and Adult Food Program Application, Financial Agreement and Enrollment Contract. 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, and a deposit equal to one week's child care fee; which 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**

All meals and snacks at the Center meet the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture Child Care Food Program (CCFP) guidelines.

Children birth to 12 months of age: Parents shall provide all formula, the exception of "Parent's Choice with Iron", and juice in prepared bottles, all jarred baby food and cereals. If parents choose to use the center provided formula, then bottles with sterile water must be provided.

Children 12 months and over: Breakfast is served between the hour of 6:45 a.m. until 8:00 a.m. When arriving with a child 12 months or older after 8:00 a.m., please see that she or he has already had breakfast.

If a child is going to be absent, you must call or have the absence recorded in the daily lunch count log located in the Young Toddler Room. **Phone calls must be received before 8:00 a.m. on the day of absence. Cancellations after 8:00 a.m. or failure to call will result in a \$2.00 lunch charge billed to you monthly**

Since the Center participates in CCFP, reimbursement is based on the number of children eating, and not on the number of children enrolled.

### **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 helped to park cars for a soccer tournament, held a Mother's Day Flower Sale and sold Joe Corbi's pizza and cookie dough.

### **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 which are to be given at: 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 15 and 18 months, 2 years and annually thereafter until their sixth year birthday and bi-annually thereafter until time of dis enrollment. These requirements and other recommendations can also be found on the: [www.paaap.org](http://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**

#### **Holidays/Vacations**

The Center will be closed the following holidays: New Year's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day. If any of these holidays fall on a Saturday, then the center will be closed on the Friday prior to the holiday. If the holiday falls on a Sunday, the center will be closed on the Monday following the holiday. Full tuition is due for all holidays. All other scheduled closings will be announced no later than February 1 of the current calendar year.

Each child enrolled in care will have one full week's vacation that he/she may take as needed at no charge. The week may only be taken in a one-week interval of Monday through Friday when the child is not in attendance. Days may not be taken one at a time. Request for vacation credit must be put in writing two weeks prior to the week that vacation is taken and submitted to the child care office.

### **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 located 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 Public Welfare 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.

### **Keeping the Center Informed**

Upon registration and twice annually, you will be responsible for completing a series of forms. 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 Fees**

The Center closes at 5:30 p.m. each day. 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. At 5:30 p.m., all children must be picked up by their parent or legal guardian or other designated individual. If a family has more than one child, then ALL children must be picked up from each room by the closing time of 5:30 p.m.

**If a child is left in the care of the caregiver after 5:30 p.m., there will be a late fee of \$5.00 charged for first five minutes or any part of, per child, that a parent or guardian or other designated individual arrives after closing time to the child's or children's classroom. After the first five minutes, then the charge will be \$2.00 per minute per child.**

The clock on the telephone in the child care office will determine the correct time. This fee is will be billed to your account through the billing office and the staff will be paid accordingly.

### **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.

### **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, medication must be administered in the mornings and evenings by the parents or guardians.

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 out of reach of children in the toddler classroom. Refrigerated medication will be stored in the locked box in the refrigerator of toddler room, 102.

**All medications must be signed in on the medication log in toddler classroom daily.** 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 situation 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 back parking lot. 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 at all times. For those parents who are interested in becoming a volunteer, please see the director for more details.

### **Payment Policy**

Payments are due weekly on the first day of care for the current week of service. A **\$25.00** fee is added to the weekly tuition if it is unpaid without making budgeting arrangements with the director. 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.** Once a budget is agreed upon, payments must be kept current as overseen by the director or child care services will be terminated within one week, then services will be terminated until full payment is made. If termination of services is necessary, all legal and collection fees incurred are the responsibility of the parent.

### **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 one - two hours or longer depending on the individual child without exception. Mats are provided by the Center. 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.

Infant's sleep according to their needs and the individual plan prepared by the parents for the staff.

### **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 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, in order 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.

### **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. When two or more children from one family are enrolled in any program full time, a 10% discount will be applied each week for each full - time child.

### **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 Project Teach. At a minimum, state qualifications are met, but most often exceeded. All staff members working with children are required to submit 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 also help the Center regulate the flow of children through the class.

### **Tuition Policy**

A full week's tuition is due on Monday or the first day of care for the current week of service. Payment by check or money order is encouraged. Cash payments may be made in the church office between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 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 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

### **Walks**

Staff will take all children with permission on walks through town and to local parks and playgrounds. Young children will ride in a baby buggy equipped with proper restraints, and older children will walk while holding onto a linked rope. Children will be counted before they leave the building, every 15 minutes while on the walk and upon arrival at the final destination. First aid kits and emergency contact information will accompany all children when away from the building.

### **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 in order 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 Public Welfare'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.

