

2024

Parent Handbook



LITTLE HEARTS CHRISTIAN CHILD CARE CENTER

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Little Hearts Christian Child Care Center

PHILOSOPHY

Little Hearts Christian Child Care Center is based on the philosophy that each child is a unique individual who develops at his/her own rate. The program has been designed to enable each child to be involved in a creative learning experience in a Christian atmosphere of love and trust. It is a program designed to expand and develop the child's interests, teach basic cognitive and social skills, promote communication, and encourage a healthy sense of self-worth.

MISSION

Little Hearts Christian Child Care Center is committed to offering educational opportunities, which focus on the Christian values of open inquiry, firm but loving discipline, mutual respect, and response to the needs of others. These are primary among the values, which shall be nurtured in an atmosphere of joy and hope.

Introduction

Welcome to Little Hearts Christian Child Care Center. We consider it a privilege to have your child in our care and hope this experience is one of growth and many blessings for you and your family.

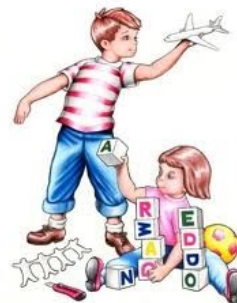
PRESCHOOL STAFF

Not only does Little Hearts Christian Child Care Center Staff meet all requirements as stated in the Code of Maryland Regulations, each staff member is credentialed by the State of Maryland as well. The Credentialing Program recognizes our staff for the work and education they receive that is above the basic qualifications of the State. Specific requirements for our Director, Senior Staff and Aides may be obtained by request. A staff member who holds a current certificate indicating successful completion of approved CPR and First Aid is available during the hours of operation. The Maryland State Office of Child Care provides an online pamphlet titled “A Parent’s Guide to Regulated Child Care”. This pamphlet provides information about child care that will help you make the right choice for your child. It explains what regulated child care is, why it is important to choose regulated care, and how to find the child care program that best suits your needs. The pamphlet also informs you about your rights and responsibilities as a child care consumer. The pamphlet can be accessed at the following web address:

http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/child_care/licensing_branch/parent_guide

OUR PROGRAM

Spiritual Development - It is the belief of our child care center that children before age six are deeply religious by nature. We recognize that young children have the greatest capacity to give and receive love. They ask of us the richest truths and the greatest mysteries of life. They are filled with wonder and are capable of tremendous joy. They also have a great capacity for prayer (that is listening and responding to God). The natural prayer of young children is praise and thanksgiving expressed through song, art, silence and other work. Presentations will include singing, praying, sharing Bible scripture, observance of religious holidays, and above all the opportunity to contemplate and enjoy God. Teachers will be sensitive towards the various faiths represented among the children.



Social Development - Through peer interaction in the various activities, the children learn to function as part of a group, to have respect for others, to take turns, to assume responsibility, and to follow directions.

Emotional Development - Each child is encouraged to develop his/her talents and abilities in an accepting environment where he/she can succeed and grow in self-confidence. Our goal is to provide opportunities for meaningful experiences that are based on the child’s individual needs and interests that will build a Christian foundation for daily life.

Physical Development - Our program provides appropriate play experiences that contribute to the developmental needs of each child. Participation in large motor activities is encouraged through playground time, classroom playtime, and various games. Fine motor activities are encouraged during learning center time and art activities.

Musical and Artistic Development - Music and art are used to encourage creativity in the children. A child's musical experience includes creating his/her own music through the use of rhythm instruments, as well as enjoyment of listening to music. Various art media are explored to help the children gain an appreciation of art as well as their own creation.

Cognitive Development - Our curriculum provides sufficient and appropriate intellectual nourishment for this very critical period of development in your child's life. Planned activity, along with informal play, is significant to intellectual growth. This program shares with parents the responsibility of promoting sound growth and learning during a time when growth is rapid and important.

FACILITIES

Little Hearts Christian Child Care Center is located in St. Mary's Episcopal Church Parish House. The classrooms are designed and furnished to accommodate young children and enhance their learning experience. The large, fenced-in playground has developmentally appropriate equipment to provide fun and creative physical activity. These facilities meet all Office of Child Care Regulations.

LIABILITY

Little Hearts Christian Child Care Center and the employees of Little Hearts Christian Child Care Center shall not be held responsible for any accident, except as covered by the liability insurance of Little Hearts Christian Child Care Center.

ENROLLMENT POLICY

Little Hearts Christian Child Care Center is licensed to provide care for children ages 2 to 10 years old. To be enrolled in our center, a child must be at least 2 years old. Grouping of the children will be based on the decision of the director, teacher, and parent.

Little Hearts is dedicated to the children of the entire community and admission to our child care center facility is open to any child that fits into the above ages. However, to ensure fairness and consistency when reviewing an application, the following policy will be applied: Preference will be given to 1) Children with siblings already enrolled at the center, 2) Full-time applicants 3) All remaining applicants eligible for enrollment.

A non-refundable registration fee of \$35 is required at the time of registration before any forms are given out.

CHILD CARE FORMS CHECK LIST

Upon applying for enrollment at Little Hearts Christian Child Care Center, parents will be given a packet of forms, which must be filled out and returned. These forms are required by our center and by the Office of Child Care. **These forms must be completed and in our possession prior to your child's first day of attendance.** The required forms include:

- Registration Form
- Health Inventory - This is in 2 parts with Part 1 to be completed and signed by parent and part 2 to be completed and signed by your child's health practitioner.
- Child Emergency Form
- Custody Agreements - If there are custody issues involved with a child, the Center will require parents to submit court papers indicating the custody situation. The Center may deny a parent access to their child without proper documentation.
- Permission to Photograph My Child
- Permission to Apply Sun Block
- Permission to Transport
- Request for Key Card
- Last page of Parent Handbook *(signed and returned)*

The Parent/Guardian is responsible for updating all contact information with the director or child's teacher.

In addition to these forms, the first week and last week of tuition is due the week before your child's first day at the Center. Please see below for Tuition Policy.

TUITION POLICY

This tuition policy will be strictly enforced to be fair to all families.

The first and last week of tuition is due in the week before your child's enrollment begins. The last week of tuition will be set in reserve and will be used as payment for your child's final week at our Center. Each week thereafter, tuition will be paid for the following week's care. Tuition is due by the first school day of each week. If tuition becomes 2-weeks late and no arrangements have been made, the child will not be permitted to attend child care. An agreement can be filled out making arrangements to catch up on late tuition with the current week's tuition amount being paid on time. *See the Director to make these arrangements.*

A second option to pay monthly, with payment due on the first school day of each month, is available. The same late policy applies.

Full tuition payments are necessary to secure you child's place in the program regardless of attendance. (e.g., vacation, illness, etc.) Tuition rates are subject to change at the beginning of each school year.

The tuition rates will be discounted in the following instance: The highest rate of tuition for a child will apply first. A 10% discount for tuition will be applied for enrollment of another child from the same family in the Center. This discount will continue to apply so long as both children remain enrolled in the Center.

Tuition Rates:

Full Time (5 Full Days) – \$180/week

Part Time (2 Full Days) – \$140/week

Part Time (3 Full Days) – \$150/week

Part Time (4 Full Days) – \$165/week

Before & After School: \$110/week

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

If it becomes necessary to withdraw your child from the child care center, two weeks notice must be given. The final week's tuition will be used from the reserve amount paid at the beginning of the enrollment.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Little Hearts Christian Child Care Center is open from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday.

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

Little Hearts Christian Child Care Center will open at 7:00 a.m. The building is secured with a key card security system. Parents can request a key card from the Director. Without a key card you must buzz the door to be let in. There will be congestion in the parking area. In order to provide the safest situation for your child, an adult must accompany the child into the building and into the classroom.

All children are to enter and exit through the child care main entrance. All children must be signed in when dropped off and signed out when picked up. An adult must also accompany a child into the classroom. Do not leave your child in the hall.

In order to provide a maximum amount of security for your child, the following policies must be enforced. There are no exceptions to these policies.

Parents are required to sign a Parental Attendance/Release Form for each child enrolling in the Little Hearts Christian Child Care Center. This form indicates who may be generally expected to bring the child to the Center. More importantly, this form indicates only those persons permitted to remove the child from the Center. In instances when another person is asked by the parent to pick up the child from the Center, the parent must speak to the Director directly prior to the pick up. In addition, the person substituting for approved persons on the Child Emergency Form or the Parental Attendance/Release Form will only be permitted to remove the child from the Center upon a showing of their picture identification.

ABSENCES

In the event that your child will be absent, we ask that you notify your child's teacher. Tuition will not be adjusted due to absences. If your child has an appointment during the normal day, we ask that you notify your child's teacher of such. This will allow the teacher to have the child ready and/or adjust their schedule accordingly.

LATE PICK-UPS

Little Hearts Christian Child Care Center closes at 6:00 p.m. All pick-ups of children after the closing time of 6:00 p.m. are recorded on the Late Pick-Up Form. Parents will be charged \$25.00 as a late fee for pick-ups taking place after 6:00 p.m. Within a month, if three late pick-ups after 6:00 p.m. occur, the late fee will increase to \$45.00. Late fees collected will be used to compensate the teacher having to stay after closing time due to the late pick-ups.

INCLEMENT WEATHER/SCHOOL CLOSINGS



Snow/Ice

The Center will notify parents/guardians of inclement weather closings and delays through public television channels (WBOC 16 and WDMT 47) as well as an announcement on our social media sites, and a text message sent to the parents cell phone. Unless the Governor declares a state of emergency, the Center will be open.

Storm Warning Procedures

A staff member who has had Emergency Preparedness training is present in the Center during all operating hours. In the event of a threatening storm, hurricane, or tornado, local television and radio stations will give warnings. “Storm Watch” means conditions are favorable for the occurrence of a storm. “Storm Warning” means the storm is imminent and immediate safety measures should be taken. When advance notice of a severe storm, hurricane, or tornado is announced on the television or radio, we ask that you immediately pick up your child. Do not wait until school closings have been announced. Should sudden severe weather occur, staff will move the children to a secure interior rooms in the Child Care Center until an all-clear is transmitted by radio or internet. In the event the children need to be moved out of the Center to a nearby emergency preparedness site, two sites have been designated for this purpose – St. Mary the Virgin Episcopal Church across the street from the Center and the rector’s home immediately adjacent to the Center.

No refunds or make-up days are given for time missed due to inclement weather.

HOLIDAYS

Each year the Director will prepare a calendar of holidays and days the Center will be closed. This calendar will be distributed to staff and parents. The Child Care Center recognizes the following holidays: New Year’s Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve/Christmas Day.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Please mark all belongings with your child’s name!

At Little Hearts Christian Child Care Center we pride ourselves on providing both quality and a quantity of age appropriate toys and activities. We are aware that your child may have particular toys that he/she would like to play with, however we do ask that these toys not be brought to the Center. For many children sharing is difficult enough when it is a group toy. Leaving personal items at home will cut down on the conflict between the children and will keep your child’s toy from getting lost or broken. If your child has a special toy/stuffed animal, etc. that he/she uses for naptime, this may be brought in but will be kept in your child’s cubby except during naptime. Any toys/stuffed animals brought in for naptime must be clearly marked with your child’s name.

LUNCH AND SNACKS

Schedule of Meals:

8:45 a.m. Breakfast
10:45 a.m. Morning Snack
12:00 a.m. Lunch
3:00 p.m. Afternoon Snack



All children must use lunch boxes or containers clearly labeled with their name. To enable our staff to focus on assisting all children with getting their lunch, we ask you to limit lunches that must be heated. If you wish your child to have a hot dish for lunch, please heat the food at home and place the hot food in a thermal container. Milk will be provided at breakfast and lunch. The morning and afternoon snack will be accompanied by juice or water. **Please provide a written note from the child's physician pertaining to any food restrictions.**

CLOTHING AND BEDDING

Change of Clothing - Each child must have a complete change of clothes, season appropriate, at school. This will eliminate the need to contact you for emergency clothes. Please print your child's name on a zip lock bag to hold the clothing. Remember to send a fresh set if this clothing is used. Be sure this and all clothing that may be removed during the school day (particularly jackets, sweaters, hats, and mittens) are labeled, as young children often do not recognize their own clothing. Children should have a backpack clearly labeled with their name. Staff will place items to go home with the child in the child's file folder.

Staff is required to ensure that children do not play on the playground wearing unsafe clothing or footwear. Because of safety concerns, children will not be allowed to play on the playground if they are wearing drawstring clothing around the neck. Sandals and flip-flops or clogs are not the safest playground footwear. To insure that safe footwear is used on the playground, parents are asked to leave an old pair of sneakers at the Center to be used for outside play when needed.

Bedding - Each child will need two sheets (crib sheets will fit the cots) and one small blanket. Bedding should be taken home on Fridays. Parents/Guardians are responsible for clean linens.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Illness - In order to protect all the children, we have very strict rules concerning sick children. If your child becomes ill at our center, we will call you and ask that you pick your child up or make arrangements for your child to be picked up within 30 minutes. If your child goes home with a communicable illness, a doctor's note stating they may return will be required. For chicken pox, measles, or other childhood diseases, your child must be symptom free prior to returning. **For fever or diarrhea, a child may not return the following day.** A child must be fever-free for 24 hours before returning to the center. For diarrhea or vomiting, your child must have zero episodes for 24 hours prior to returning.

The following are symptoms of illness that will require your child to be picked up:

- Fever – having a minimum temperature of 100 degrees. Must have no fever for 24-hours before returning to care.
- Diarrhea - runny, watery, or bloody stools or 2 or more loose stools within a 4 hour period. Even if diarrhea is caused by antibiotic the child cannot stay in care and will be sent home. The child may return to care after there have been no episodes for 24 hours.
- Vomiting – cannot return to care until there have been no episodes for 24 hours.
- Breathing trouble, sore throat, swollen glands, loss of voice, hacking or continuous coughing.
- Runny nose other than clear, draining eyes or ears
- Frequent scratching of body or scalp, lice, rash or any other spots that resemble childhood diseases, including ringworm.

The Teacher/Center Director reserve the right to make the decision to send a child home based on the observation of a child and overall well-being of a child who doesn't feel well, regardless of the illness falling into one of the above categories.

Allergies - If your child has food allergies, please provide a doctor's note listing the allergies and signed by the doctor to the office. We will accommodate all food allergies. If your child is allergic to bee and/or wasp stings, please provide the office with any prescribed antidotes on the first day your child is in attendance.

Medications - Little Hearts Christian Child Care Center does not provide medications of any kind. If your child requires prescription or nonprescription medication, you must provide it. The MD State Office of Child Care has drafted the following rules for giving prescription and nonprescription medication to children in child care centers.

Staff may administer medication only if:

- Prescription medication is labeled by the pharmacy or physician with:
 - The child's name
 - An expiration date that indicates the medication is still usable
 - At least one dose of a prescription medicine has been given to the child at home
 - The amount, date, and time of administration and who administered the medication to the child in the center, is recorded in the child's personal file.
- The parent's authorization was signed before administering the medication
- The parent's authorization includes:
 - The child's name
 - Parent's signature and date signed
 - Identity of the medication and dosage for the child
 - Dates on which the medication is to be administered and
 - Time to administer the medication or the conditions for which the medication is to be administered;

Prescription medication may only be administered according to the instructions on the label of the medication.

Accidents - Parents are immediately called in the event of an accident or health concern. The person witnessing the accident fills out an accident report. The completed report is given to the parent to sign. For minor bumps that may occur during active play the staff will complete an incident report. Parents will be asked to read and sign this report also.

Fire /Disaster Safety - Our building is in compliance with the Fire Marshal's office. Exiting procedures are posted by all doorways and we conduct fire drills on a monthly basis. We review fire safety and drills every time there is a new student in our care. Our staff has participated in the State of Maryland required Emergency Preparedness and we hold Disaster drills twice a year

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

Our curriculum is designed to be stimulating and organized. Our child care center stresses building the child's self-esteem and developing respect for themselves and others. All behavior management actions are directed towards these goals. Corporal punishment, belittling and yelling will not be tolerated by any member of the child care center under any circumstance. Child care providers will use stories, role-playing, and puppets to help the child learn appropriate behaviors. The child will be given guidance to work out his or her problems. Acceptable behavior will be rewarded with positive verbal feedback that reinforces the child's feeling of self-worth.

We will inform parents if their child has been involved in an incident involving biting, hitting, pushing, pinching, or use of inappropriate language. The parents and child care provider can work together to help resolve the situation.

Should a child consistently exhibit behavior that poses a threat to the safety of themselves or other children, is not age appropriate, and/or is disruptive, the following course of action will be followed:

- Teacher will speak to parent or send note home, Director and teacher's aid will work to help child in the classroom.
- If there is no change, a conference with the director, teacher and parents will be scheduled. At this time, a course of action will be decided on.
- The Director will continue to observe the child to help the staff employ methods to address the behavior.
- An outside resource will be called in, such as the Early Intervention Program sponsored by the Lower Shore Child Care Resource Center
- If the parent does not give permission for the outside resources to be used, and the child's behavior continues, the child's enrollment will be terminated.
- If, after all the steps have been taken and the behavior still does not change, the child's enrollment will be terminated.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parent Newsletters - To enhance communication between home and school, parent newsletters are sent home monthly. The newsletters include information about the month's curriculum, special activities, and general information. Please check your child's cubby and file folder each day. Additional information may be posted on the door of your child's classroom or on the parent bulletin board.

Conferences - Parents may request a conference at any time by contacting the Teacher or Director. Teacher or Director may request a conference by contacting the parent and being available at parent's convenience. Conferences are more productive without the child present.

Birthdays - We welcome birthday parties, as this is a special day for your child. We recommend the following:

- Make arrangements with the teacher prior to the birthday.
- Keep it simple; crackers and cheese or fruit is a treat.
- Parents are welcomed, as always, to take part in the celebration.



VOLUNTEERS

We always welcome anyone who wishes to help in the Center. Contact the Director if you wish to volunteer.

Our child care center wishes to maintain the confidentiality of verbal information that may be shared with any volunteer or teacher. Younger children have not yet developed a sense of judgment about the difference between information that can be shared and information that stays within the family. They often share private information about their families; teachers and volunteers are often the recipients of these confidences. It is critical that children's confidences are not repeated to other teachers, parents or friends.

It is also important that volunteers refrain from commenting to other parents or friends on the behavior of the children in their child's room. A casual comment can cause misunderstanding and hurt feelings for a child or parent/guardian. Comments and or suggestions should be made to the Center Director.

CHILD ABUSE AND/OR NEGLECT

Child abuse and neglect is a serious problem, which can have a devastating effect on the abused or neglected child, the child's parent/guardian and other loved ones. Staff members are required to routinely and discreetly observe each child in their care for signs of abuse and neglect including, but not limited to:

- Bruises
- "Stocking" or "glove" burns which result from feet or hands held in hot water
- Cigarette burns
- Fractures
- Handprint marks on skin
- Long, thin welts from straps, extension cords, etc.
- Extreme passivity or an excessive desire to please a parent/guardian
- Inappropriate food, drinks, or drugs given to a child
- Inflammation or other abnormal appearance of genitals
- Unexplained weight loss or failure to gain weight
- Clothing which is inappropriate for the season of the year, insufficient or dirty
- Insufficient medical or dental care
- Constant hunger, thirst or drowsiness

Any staff member, who has reason to believe that a child has been abused and/or neglected, shall report such belief directly to Child Protective Services as required under Maryland law.

Any person making a report of child abuse or neglect is immune from any civil or criminal liability in connection therewith, unless it is proven that such person acted with malicious intent.

I have received a copy of Little Hearts Christian Child Care Center Parent Handbook 2016.
I have read and understand the requirements of the Center noting in particular the Tuition Fees set forth on page 7 and the Health and Safety Requirements set forth on pages 10-11 of this Handbook.
I agree to the requirements of this Handbook and believe them to be beneficial for my child (children) enrolled at Little Hearts Christian Child Care Center. I am also aware of the online link noted on page 4 of this Handbook to the Maryland State Office of Child Care pamphlet entitled, "A Parent's Guide to Regulated Child Care."

Child's Name(s): _____

Parent's Name (print): _____

Parent's Signature: _____ Date: _____

***Changes may be made to the Parent Handbook at any time. Parents will be notified of any changes made to the Parent Handbook and given a printed copy of the changes.



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