

# Noah's Ark Child Center

## Parent Handbook



*Welcome Aboard!*

**Our Mission:** To provide quality childcare in a Christ-centered environment where the Bible and It's teachings are the basis of our core.

**Our Core Values:** To obey God and His commandments, to show respect, always to everyone, to convey a servant's heart and to have fun, while learning and exploring God's big amazing world.

**Our Philosophy:** To provide developmentally appropriate childcare to families in South Greensburg and the surrounding areas. We operate as a non-profit Christian organization devoted to the task of creating a Christ centered environment where children can grow, learn and socialize in an atmosphere of respect, kindness and love. It is a proven fact that children need stimulation for a healthy body and mind. At Noah's Ark Child Center, we strive to provide activities and stimulation that support development in all areas of learning.

**Age Groups:** Infants-ages 6 weeks to 12 months

Young Toddlers-ages 12 months to 24 months

Older Toddlers-ages 24 months to 36 months

Young Preschool-age 3 years

Older Preschool-age 4 years

K-Prep-ages 4 to 5 years

School-Age-ages 5 to 12 years

## **REGISTRATION**

Noah's Ark enrolls children ages 6 weeks to 12 years. There is a minimum enrollment of 2 full days of child care per week. During the enrollment process, our director and/or manager will review paperwork and speak with parents to ensure Noah's Ark is the right fit for your child.

The following paperwork must be completed for your child to attend: Contract Agreement, Emergency Contact Form, Health Assessment, Mandated Reporter Form and Acceptance/Agreement Forms. There is a one-time, non-refundable \$30.00 registration fee due at enrollment.

## **CHILD PICK-UP & DROP-OFF PROCEDURE**

All children MUST be signed in and out upon entering and leaving the building. Only a child's mother/father or legal guardian is to have access to the security code letting them into the building. Exceptions include special custody arrangements that must be reported to the office and/or documentation of special circumstances for the child's file. Anyone else picking up your child will be remotely let in along with the presentation of a photo ID. Written or verbal confirmation must be obtained by the office.

During drop-off and pick-up, DO NOT leave your car running and DO NOT leave any child unattended in the vehicle—that is a STATE LAW!

Any parent suspected of being intoxicated will be reported to the authorities.

## **TUITION and FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS**

Tuition is due the Friday before the week of service and may be paid using cash, check or credit/debit card. There is a \$25.00 bank fee for all returned checks. Annual increases may be implemented and are subject to change, but not without notice. Billing procedure policies including late payment, credits, withdrawal and registration fees will be given at time of enrollment.

No sick or vacation days will be given, you are under contract for the days you choose and are responsible to pay for those days. Noah's Ark will issue quarterly credits at the end of every third month, as long as your account is kept current, in accordance with the billing procedures given at enrollment.

Noah's Ark reserves the right to suspend enrollment if your account reaches a balance of \$300.00 or more.

Debit/credit card payments will include a percentage fee for usage charge. This fee is subject to change. Fees will be posted on the parent board in the front hallway and on the payment box on the sign-in podium.

Any family using the Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC) for financial aid will be charged the difference between Noah's Ark private pay rates and your weekly co-pay. Parents will be informed of the adjusted co-pay by way of their child's mailbox as we receive updated paperwork from ELRC. All co-pays are due by Friday of that week of service. If co-pays are not received in a timely manner, we are mandated to contact ELRC which could result in the loss of your funding.

## **CENTER DELAYS/CLOSINGS**

The center will be closed for Good Friday plus 1 additional day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day plus 2 additional days, Christmas Day plus 2 additional days, New Year's Eve & New Year's Day. Parents are responsible to pay for these days if it is a contracted day. The extra days will be posted in the front lobby and listed on your child's event calendar given at the beginning of every month.

The center may have to close or delay due to inclement weather or other reasons. In such a case, closing/delays will be listed on WPXI as 'Noah's Ark Child Center'.

If the center would close early for any reason, we will notify parents via telephone and inform you of the time we are closing so arrangements can be made to pick up your child.

## **CURRICULUM**

How do children learn best? Through play! At Noah's Ark your children will be provided an environment where learning is promoted through fun activities and experiences. Interest areas such as *Cars and Blocks*, *Kitchen*, *Dollhouse*, *Art and Library* will give children opportunities to learn through their own observations and experiences. Structure and routine are very important, with times designated each day for circle time, music, reading, arts and crafts, and physical activity (daily schedules are posted in each classroom). Teachers promote and guide learning as they recognize "teachable moments" throughout the day.

Starting at age three (depending on availability), children may participate in preschool. Young and Older Preschool meet on Tuesday and Thursday from 9-noon, and Kindergarten-Prep (those attending Kindergarten the following year) meet Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9-noon. For those attending daycare, there is no additional charge for preschool. Each week in preschool our teachers prepare theme-based learning centers and activities that will help your child develop social skills in addition to early literacy, language and math skills they will need for Kindergarten. Art, science, music and physical activity are also a very important part of our preschool program, with special days each month for "Library" and "Gym Class".

Most mornings the toddlers and preschoolers meet together for a large group music time, during which we sing, dance, learn about God, and pray together. This really builds a sense of community and "family". In addition, there are also field trips, and special center-wide activities to look forward to. Our curriculum is aligned with Pennsylvania's Learning Standards for Early Childhood.

### *Assessment*

*Your child's teacher will also complete a "Summary Report" several times per year to help you track your child's development, which you will need to sign. Parent-Teacher Conferences are held at least once per year to review your child's progress. Parents are encouraged, but not required to attend. We will let you know if we are concerned about any aspect of your child's development, and will refer you to the proper resources, if necessary.*

**Our goal is for your child to grow in faith, love, confidence and independence!**

## **REST TIME**

With the exception of our infant room, children have nap time from 1pm to 3pm and sleep in pack'n'plays or on cots. Blankets and sleeping gear will be provided by parents and must be labeled with your child's name on it. They are to be taken home every week for cleaning and returned the following contracted day. We understand that preschool age children may start to outgrow naps, but feel a "rest time" is still very important for development. We encourage all children to lie quietly until the other children are asleep at which time they can be given a book or quiet activity.

Linens will be provided for infant and young toddler rooms only.

## **DISCIPLINE**

Our morals and values are based and modeled from the Bible. The children are expected to follow the classroom rules as age-appropriate. Through redirection and positive reinforcement, most misbehavior can be prevented or ends relatively quickly. If misbehavior continues, this may lead to a child losing playtime or loss of a special activity. If unruly behavior escalates beyond a teacher's control, a child will be removed from the classroom and sent to the office where, under our discretion, a parent may be contacted to pick up their child. In extreme cases, Noah's Ark reserves the right to suspend or expel a child for behavior that we feel is putting themselves or others in harm's way. These may include, but are not limited to, throwing heavy or dangerous objects, punching, hitting, kicking, biting, inappropriate language or bullying of another child or teacher.

The preschool classrooms each use their own variation of the green-yellow-red light system.

Expectations and consequences are clearly explained and all discipline is handled fairly and with compassion.

## **ENROLLMENT INFORMATION**

Noah's Ark Child Center does not discriminate based on race, color, age, sex, religion, handicap or national origin. All required forms must be turned in upon enrollment and updated every six months. A list of community resources will be given upon enrollment and is available on the front table in the main entrance for information concerning family and financial planning, etc. Noah's Ark is also required to keep a copy of all IEP or IFSP reports or any other special needs assessments. All forms will be kept confidential and are available to parents upon request.

We are required by DPW to update your child's file every 6 months. During our file updates you will be asked to review all information in the file and update anything that has changed. Any changes in between are required to be brought to our attention immediately so that we can get a hold of you as quickly as possible should an emergency arise.

## **OUTDOOR PLAY**

Weather permitting, we take the children outside. When the weather is not so good we are fortunate to have a gym where the children can go for large muscle play. Please dress your children accordingly as we may go outdoors.

Our playground is a public non-fenced area at the end of a street in a residential neighborhood. It is a wonderful place for the children to play, but we have many rules that the children are expected to follow. If a child is having a hard time following the rules and the teachers feel it is a safety concern, they will be removed from the playground for an age-appropriate amount of time.

During the months of June through August we have water play day outside. You will receive a calendar as to when your child's water day is each week. Please make sure to provide a swimsuit, towel and water shoes in a non-plastic bag labeled with your child's name on it.

\*\*Remember sunscreen and face stick lotion may not be left in the child's swim bag. Please make sure those items are given to your child's teacher so they can be placed out of reach of the children.

## **HEALTH and SAFETY POLICIES**

Daily cleaning and hand washing procedures will be posted at each sink. We use a company called Allegheny Supply for our disinfecting and sanitizing solutions. Clorox Hydrogen Peroxide is used on all diaper changing tables and restroom areas. Sani-bet is used on toys and table surfaces and Quat-Stat SC is used for floor cleaning. All solutions and their specs can be found on the Allegheny Supply website or in the office. Injury and prevention will be logged and tracked in each room and monthly staff meetings will be held addressing any issue. A parent recall book will be available on the front desk in the lobby for reference and will be updated periodically. Health records and immunizations MUST be updated yearly or according to DPW regulations.

It is your responsibility to provide us with your child's well visit form. Forms must be signed/dated by the doctor and include their license number. Forms can be obtained in the office or on the Noah's Ark website, [www.noahsarkchildcenter.com](http://www.noahsarkchildcenter.com). If health assessments are not received in a timely manner or any other DPW required forms for that matter, Noah's Ark reserves the right to suspend/dismiss a child.

If your child is sick (please refer to the Noah's Ark Health Policy Form) they will be brought to the office to be made more comfortable. A parent will be contacted to pick up their child within the hour. If a parent cannot be reached (depending on the severity of sickness) we will start calling people listed on your child's Emergency Contact Form. A request for a doctor's note for your child to return to daycare is at the Director's discretion. If your child is diagnosed with a contagious illness or may be a health risk to other children, please inform the center as we may need to take extra precautions when sanitizing rooms or post information for all families. Names will remain confidential.

Any child that experiences a fever over 101 degrees, more than two diarrhea bowel movements, vomiting or a contagious rash must be free of that illness for 24 hours either by use of antibiotics or until the sickness has run its course, but without the aid of Tylenol or a fever reducer, before they can return to daycare.

We try very hard to keep our center as germ free as possible!

### **MEDICATION and SPECIAL HEALTH CONDITIONS**

Noah's Ark must be informed of any special health conditions for your child such as asthma, seizures, etc so we are fully prepared in the event of an emergency. We would ask that parents leave an extra medical device (epi-pens, inhalers, etc) at Noah's Ark at all times.

Noah's Ark can administer medication to your child only if it is signed-in under the medication log located in your child's room and given to your child's teacher to be put up high in a lockbox.

All medication MUST be in its original box, labeled with your child's name on it and not outdated.

### **NUTRITION and MEALS**

Noah's Ark Child Center offers healthy meals to all enrolled children as part of our participation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) meal program. Menus and food components are posted and available on our "Parent Board" in the front lobby. Meal times are listed in each room on their "Daily Schedule" form.

Noah's Ark will provide:

Breakfast served 6:30-8:15

AM Snack served 10:00-10:15

Lunch served 12:00-12:30

PM Snack served 3:05-3:20

Unless there is a documented allergy or other medical issue, a child enrolled in our program will eat the meal components as specified by the USDA and prepared daily by the center's cook. As a Christ-centered environment we pray before every meal and snack-time.

### **PARENT COMMUNICATION and ENGAGEMENT**

Volunteer opportunities for parent involvement include help with Station Days, our Annual Thanksgiving Family Feast, our Christmas Shoppe, and other field trips. We value parent feedback and are available for discussion at any time. "Daily Reports" are sent home each day for infants and toddlers including diapering and feeding information.

Daily activities are posted on the dry erase boards outside of your child's classroom as well as individual classroom calendars. Monthly activities are listed on the center calendar which is posted on the front entryway door. Copies are available upon request. Other happenings are posted on our website, [www.noahsarkchildcenter.com](http://www.noahsarkchildcenter.com) and our facebook page.

-Parents can learn more about quality early education and how they can become a part of it by visiting Pennsylvania's Promise for Children campaign at [www.papromiseforchildren.com](http://www.papromiseforchildren.com).

Parents are welcome to speak to their child's teacher with any questions or concerns as well as the director or office personnel at any time. We have an "open-door" policy and value our parent/guardian relationships as much as the children's.

Please check your child's mailbox daily for parent information and activities/projects.

### **CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT**

Our facility is registered with the DPW and licensed by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Noah's Ark is also a member of the Pennsylvania Child Care Association (PACCA), a non-profit organization dedicated to early childhood care by supporting families and organizations in Pennsylvania.

### **STAFF REQUIREMENTS**

Upon hire, and every 5 years thereafter staff are required to obtain all PA clearances including State Police, Criminal History, Fingerprinting, Mandated Reporter and NSOR (National Sex Offender Registry). Staff health assessments must be updated every two years.

Our teachers also participate in continuous quality improvement and education by obtaining at least 6-12 credit hours per year or more in early childhood education according to the DPW and PA Keystone STARS career lattice. Teachers are encouraged to pursue degrees in Early Childhood Education as well as required to be certified in pediatric first aid training and mandated reporting.

### **BIRTHDAYS**

Upon approval of your child's teacher, birthday treats and invitations are allowed.

### **CLOTHING and MAILBOXES**

Please make sure your child has an extra pair of clothes at the center at all times either in a non-plastic bag or in their cubby labeled with their name. These should be changed with the seasons. Appropriate shoes are to be worn to daycare (sneakers, boots, sandals with sturdy straps) as the children are taken outside daily, weather permitting. A list of "Required Items For Daycare" will be given upon enrollment.

### **TRANSITIONING**

As children grow, so do their interests and abilities; that's why we want to keep your child engaged and exploring all aspects of learning. Each of our classrooms are set up with age appropriate learning centers that challenge their minds and encourage exploration. We transition children into the next learning level by age. You will be notified of the transition in writing which will include a letter from the new teachers introducing themselves, their room and their daily schedule. We encourage your interest and input each time your child is transitioned into a new room.

**Thank you for the opportunity to learn and grow with your child!**

*Proverbs 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.*



**USDA Nondiscrimination Statement**

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and US Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, religious creed, disability, age, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.