



## Mother's Day Out Program Cedar Park First United Methodist Church



### Parent Handbook 2015-2016

#### **Vision and Mission**

Our vision of A Child's Haven is a Christian environment where the uniqueness of all children is celebrated and all individuals are encouraged to explore, to learn, and to grow to his/her potential.

The mission of A Child's Haven is to provide an educational environment in which the Christian faith will be reflected. We will provide learning opportunities for children, which are developmentally appropriate, intellectually stimulating, and spiritually nurturing in a safe, loving environment.

#### **The Importance of Play**

Our program philosophy is based on the premise that children learn about the world around them through play (active involvement with other children, adults, and materials). Learning takes place as young children touch, manipulate, and experiment with things and interact with people. The emphasis is on the experiences of the children rather than the results of those experiences. For examples, painting is more important than what has been painted; building with blocks is more important than what is built. Days are filled with planned and spontaneous moments of learning. There's time for active outdoor play, imaginative games, independent discovery and group time experiences.

#### **Days and Hours of Operation**

A Child's Haven is in operation August to July, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, 9:00 – 1:00. We operate on the Leander ISD school calendar.

#### **Christian Education**

A Child's Haven provides a Christian environment where God's love is celebrated. Each week the teachers present a Bible story and/or a Bible verse to the children in a developmentally appropriate way. Prayer is used appropriately throughout the day. Songs with a Christian message are used in the classroom on a regular basis. The ministers of the church make visits to the classrooms, getting to know the children and telling stories.

## Program Objectives

- Assist children in learning to live comfortably in a social environment in addition to the family.
- Develop toleration and respect for individual and cultural differences through discussion, literature, and role modeling.
- Provide opportunities for the children to interact, guided by models of socially acceptable behavior.
- Enhance the child’s self-esteem, self-awareness, and self-confidence by offering many opportunities for a child to succeed, express ideas, and understand his/her emotions and to attain skills to control them (using peaceful conflict resolution).
- Provide opportunities for math, science, reading, memory skills, language development, and social science.
- Increase attention span and follow simple directions.
- Foster creativity and self-expression through art, music, and dramatic play.
- Develop small muscles by using scissors, paste, clay, blocks, puzzles, beads, pegs, etc.
- Develop large muscles through outdoor activities such as climbing, riding a tricycle, running, etc.
- Stimulate and encourage curiosity and provide opportunities for problem solving.
- Encourage children to take care of their own needs with support from the adults in their environment.
- Foster a belief in God and to know that God loves them and cares for them.

## Admission Procedures

Registration for the following year is held in March. Church members and currently enrolled children have first priority. A waiting list is maintained according to date the form was received.

## Withdrawal Procedures

A Child’s Haven requires 30 days written notice before withdrawing your child from our program. If a 30 day notice is not given you will be responsible for payment for that month’s tuition. (For example: If you withdraw from our program on January 18<sup>th</sup>, you are responsible for February’s tuition.)

**Registration Fee:** 100.00 per year per child. This fee covers your snacks and supplies for the year.

## Tuition per month:

One's Class		Two's Class		Three's and Four's	
Wednesday	\$100.00	Wednesday	\$87.00	Wednesday	\$85.00
T/TH	\$203.00	T/Th	\$177.00	T/Th	\$173.00
T/TH/W	\$289.00	T/Th/W	\$251.00	T/W/Th	\$245.00

Sibling discount: Full tuition for the first child (high tuition amount) and 10% reduction in tuition for each additional child.

*\*Tuition rates are calculated hourly and averaged across 9 months. Rates may be adjusted every other year. (September 2015)*

## **Late Fees**

Tuition is due on the first of each month and is considered late past the 10<sup>th</sup>. A late charge of \$15.00 will be charged after the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month. If your payment is 30 days late an additional \$15.00 fee will be applied. If your payment is more than 45 days late your child cannot attend class until you are paid in full. If you are not paid in full within 60 days from the payment due date your child's spot will be forfeited.

Tuition is based on a nine-month program and holidays and absences will cause no exception in amount due. Days cannot be made up.

## **Late Departure**

Children who are picked up after 1:10 p.m. will be escorted to the office. After 1:10 there is a late charge of \$1.00 per minute.

## **Enrollment**

Children are placed in a class based on their age as of September 1 of that school year. All children must be enrolled before attending the center. The following must be completed and submitted to the center:

- Enrollment Form
- Emergency Medical Form
- Health Requirements Form
  - Immunization record (up to date and current, including child's name, birth date, number of doses and type of vaccine, and date the child received each immunization, stamp, or signature from physician or health department).
  - Written document indicating the child is able to take part in the program from licensed health personnel.
  - *Hearing and Vision screening will be required for 4 year olds.*
- Release Form

## **Notification of Absence**

Please call the school if your child is going to be absent. A school staff member will contact you if your child is absent 3 days. If your child is sick, please keep the school informed so we can alert other parents to possible communicable diseases. Our expenses do not vary if a child does not attend for a period of time. It is our policy that in order to hold a class position, tuition must be paid. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis.

## **Financial Assistance**

The school offers a need based scholarship. Parents needing financial assistance should talk to the director to obtain an application.

# Health and Safety

## Arrival and Departure

Children must be brought into his/her classroom and released to the assigned staff. Parents/guardians should sign their child in and out each day. Children will be released only to individuals other than their parents if the following procedures are followed.

- Persons listed on your child's release form may pick your child up with proper identification. Please notify the teacher/director in advance if you know of a change in arrangements.
- Any person picking up a child in an impaired condition will be encouraged to allow us to find alternative transportation.

## Illness

One of the most serious challenges facing group care situations for young children is preventing illness. The staff will strive to maintain the highest standards of cleanliness. Proper hand washing procedures will be followed and taught to the children. The toys, eating surfaces and toileting and diaper equipment will be sanitized between children's use. One of the best ways to prevent the spread of disease is to have strictly enforced standards regarding the exclusion of ill children. **We need your help for this. Please do not bring ill children to school, and if your child becomes ill at school, please pick the child up immediately.** According to the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services, children cannot attend school if one or more of the following conditions exist:

- The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in facility activities.
- The illness results in a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the health, safety, and supervision of the other children.
- The child has any one of the following:
  - Arm pit temperature of 99.4 degrees or greater, accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness.
  - Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness such as lethargy, uncontrolled breathing, uncontrolled diarrhea, vomiting illness (two or more episodes in 24 hours), rash with fever, mouth sores with drooling, wheezing, behavior change, or other unusual signs.
- The child has been diagnosed with a contagious disease, until medical evaluation determines that the child is no longer communicable and is able to participate in the facility's activities.

## Staff Immunization

We do not require our staff to show proof of immunizations.

## Medications

Under no circumstances will A Child's Haven staff administer medication to children. Do not send medication with your child, including in their lunch box or diaper bag. Parents are welcome to come during school hours to administer medication to their child.

## Inclement Weather

A Child's Haven will follow the same closure schedule that is advised for the Leander ISD. If school is cancelled for Leander ISD, the same applies to A Child's Haven. In the case of closure or delay, the director will send an e-

mail to families and post on the Facebook page. Due to our unvarying expenses, tuition will not be refunded for inclement weather days.

## **Accidental Injuries**

In the case of a serious accidental injury to your child, we will make an immediate attempt to contact a parent. If necessary, we will call 911 and an ambulance will take your child to Cedar Park Regional Medical Center or Dell Children's Hospital. Because of this, it is essential for parent(s) to let us know the following information:

- Where you can be reached while your child is in attendance at the center.
- Physician's name and phone number.
- Emergency contacts and phone numbers.

If injuries are not of a serious nature, we will apply first-aid and notify parents(s) at the end of the day in an accident report.

## **Emergency Procedures**

Fire drills will be practiced every month to acquaint your child with evacuation procedures. Tornado drills will be practiced every three months. Children and staff must exit the building within 3 minutes. An emergency evacuation diagram is posted in each classroom, which sets forth primary and secondary evacuation routes for staff and children in case of an emergency. All employees must have access to a first aid kit and each classroom must have a flashlight, sign-in board, emergency files. These should accompany the staff during all drills and emergencies. In case of a toxic fume release or if the building must be evacuated, the children will be taken to St. John the Forerunner Orthodox Church (800 W. Park Street, 512-258-1757).

## **Teacher Qualifications**

All teachers for this program have to be CPR trained and first-aid trained and must have a criminal background check before they are employed. All volunteers for the program must have a background check before they may work with the children.

## **Child Abuse and Neglect**

In an effort to protect the well-being and safety of children, the state of Texas requires anyone who suspects child abuse and neglect to report it to the proper authorities. The staff are required by law to attend one hour of training annually for child abuse and neglect. All suspect indicators will be documented and reported. The school is required by law to cooperate with any investigation of child abuse and neglect. Information on recognizing child abuse as well as resource links and phone numbers have been posted in our hallway.

## **Child Custody Issues**

It is the school's intent to meet the needs of children especially when the parents may be experiencing difficult situations such as divorce, separation, or remarriage. Sharing information about such situations may be helpful to school staff and will be held in the strictest confidentiality. The school cannot legally restrict the non-custodial parents from visiting the child, reviewing the child's records, or picking the child up unless the school has been furnished with legally filed, executed and current documents. Copies of all court documents must be submitted to the school. In case of conflicts, the proper authorities will be contacted.

# **General Policies and Procedures**

## **Separation and Transition**

Separation can be stressful for parents as well as children. We are here to help in this sometimes difficult, but very common, developmental process. Please inform your child's teacher of any changes in your routine, such as illnesses, death or separations that may affect them at school. When you leave your child, please don't "sneak out". Make your good-bye and hug something he/she can count on, even if it brings some tears at first. Sometimes children don't express anxiety until a few weeks later, when they feel comfortable enough here to do so. In either case, please be assured, we will comfort and reassure your child. We'll talk about his/her feelings. We encourage you to do the same. When it's time for you to leave the classroom, after you say your good-byes, make the departure definite. Lingering can make a child unsure of what is expected of him/her. Although parents are welcome to visit the center at any time, keep in mind that it may be difficult for a very young child to cope with separating from a parent for a second time during the day.

## **Guidance Techniques**

We believe that discipline and guidance should be consistent and based on an understanding of individual needs and development. Please remember that young children need the experience of interacting with other children on a consistent basis. Learning how to take turns 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). The staff will not use abusive, neglectful, corporal, humiliating, or frightening punishment under any circumstances. No child will be physically restrained unless it is necessary to protect the safety and health of the child or others. Changes at home do affect a child's behavior at school. The staff is willing to work with you regarding behavior challenges at school or home.

## **Parent Information and Communication**

A newsletter will be sent home once a month to keep your family informed of events. There are also notices of activities and events on our information board, as well as the school's website and Facebook page. Occasional emails are also sent to families to inform of school events and activities.

## **Visitors**

Parents and visitors are welcome at A Child's Haven but must enter and exit through the main doors of the Multi-Ministry Building. Other doors to the school are locked from the outside. Visitors must sign in and sign out at the school office and wear a visitor tag while on campus. A member of the school staff will accompany visitors while on campus. Parents are welcome at any time but asked to observe from outside the classroom door so as not to disturb the classes. All parents who volunteer with the children or interact with them in any manner are required to have a background check first.

A Child's Haven will to the best of their ability provide a comfortable place with a seat to enable our mothers to breastfeed. All parents have the right to breastfeed or provide breast milk for your child while in our care.

## **Meals and Snacks**

All children need to bring a nutritious, well-balanced lunch from home each day. Please pack lunches with items that do not require refrigeration and/or which can be kept cool with an ice pack brought from home.

Refrigeration for drinks will be provided in the one-year room. Use containers in your child's lunchbox that can be easily opened by your child. Please label bottles, lunchboxes, and cups with your child's name. Please limit the use of sweets to assist us in teaching good nutrition. A midmorning snack of crackers, fruit, and a drink are provided on a rotating basis and are listed on each month's calendar. *A Child's Haven is not responsible for meeting the daily food needs of your child due to the number of hours in attendance each day and that the center only provides a snack.*

## **Clothing**

Clothing that children wear to school should be comfortable and easy to put on and remove. We offer art activities, water, outdoor play, and sensory play (finger paints, etc.) so children need to wear clothing that allows them to move about freely and get dirty. The children will go outside every day (weather permitting) so dress them accordingly. Each child also needs two complete changes of clothing, labeled with the child's name. Please also have your child wear tennis shoes.

## **Items Brought From Home**

Our center maintains a generous supply of materials, toys, and equipment for the children to use. Therefore, children are asked to keep personal toys at home. Occasionally teachers will have show and tell. On these occasions, the teacher will send a note home asking for these particular items.

## **Field Trips**

Some of our classes may take field trips throughout the year with parent volunteers or staff members providing the transportation. Permission slips for field trips will be sent home before each trip. Children without parents attending will travel with staff members. All staff members transporting children have received additional safety training.

## **Holidays**

Our school chooses to celebrate the various holidays throughout the year in a low-key manner. It is our feeling is that we should maintain the consistency that the children come to expect at school. We will discuss holidays, read stories about them based on children's interests, but we will limit parties. Because we are a Christian school the children will learn about the meaning of Christmas and Easter from the Methodist perspective. Our curriculum demonstrates respect for all customs and celebrates the diversity of all families. Therefore we feel it is up to each individual family to celebrate special days in their own way.

## **Birthdays**

Although we are happy to share in the excitement of your child's birthday, this is not an appropriate setting for a party. We will sing Happy Birthday to your child and say a special prayer. Please do not bring cupcakes, goody bags, etc. If invitations are sent to school for a party please include one for each child in the classroom.

## **Parental Grievance Policy**

If a parent/guardian has a particular issue or grievance concerning our program, please feel free to contact the director at any time (512-335-9540 or [director@childshaven.net](mailto:director@childshaven.net)) and this issue will be put into writing and resolved at once. If the issue is not resolved to your liking the matter may be brought in writing to the Board of this program, which will resolve the issue fairly for all parties involved.

## **Policies and Procedures**

A Child's Haven policies are developed from guidelines set by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. The State Agency may be contacted at 512-388-6215. The Child Abuse hotline is posted in our main hallway and may be reached at 1-800-252-5400. The website for the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services is [www.tdprs.state.tx.us](http://www.tdprs.state.tx.us). A current copy of the minimum standards can be viewed in our office by appointment along with our most recent Licensing inspection report. The minimum standards can also be viewed at the website for the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1000 feet of a child-care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalty.

Parents will be notified in writing of any changes in school policies and will be asked to sign a statement that they have received the changes.

Questions or concerns of the policies and procedures of A Child's Haven should be addressed by calling the office at 335-9540 or by meeting with the director.