

**Christian Preschool  
& Childcare Center  
Parent Handbook**

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*About Us*

## **Welcome Letter**

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the Ark of Learning! We are very pleased you have selected The Ark as the center to provide for the care, nurturing, and education of your child.

The Ark of Learning is licensed by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. The Ark of Learning is an outreach ministry of Mt. Moriah United Methodist Church. It was started by the congregation in 1964 as a needed service to the community.

Our mission is to be a quality learning center that makes a difference in the lives of young children and their families. We are not about making a profit, we are about making a loving difference in the lives of children and families.

Again, welcome to the Ark of Learning. As we begin this partnership, keep in mind that we will do our best to provide you and your child with the highest quality in childcare services. Please let us know how we may be of help regarding any concerns or questions you may have.

Blessings,  
Lauren Spaid  
Program Director

## **Introduction to Parent Handbook**

This handbook will provide you with the information needed to understand the Ark of Learning's operating policies and procedures, daily activities, and state standards that govern child care in Ohio.

We hope you will work with us and understand that although the policy information may appear somewhat restrictive, the overall outcome provides for the needs of all of our families, the Ark of Learning, and its employees. Please acknowledge these needs by reading this handbook in its entirety and abiding by the policies set forth. Your support will enable the Ark of Learning to maintain a safe learning environment and allow us to continue to provide high quality childcare services.

In addition to reading this Parent Handbook, we request that each family sign the Parent Handbook Agreement. The agreement verifies your understanding and acknowledgement of the Ark of Learning expectations.

Our goal is to foster a parent/center partnership. Please feel free to contact our Program Director should you have questions and/or concerns regarding the enclosed information.

## **Parent Handbook/Addendums/Memos**

In order to provide you with updated information and/or changes in policies, we will be providing handbook addendums and memos from time to time.

Please keep this Parent Handbook and refer to it when needed. Should you have questions or concerns, please feel free to stop by the office, telephone, or email us at your convenience.

It is the sole responsibility of each parent to be knowledgeable regarding the contents of the Parent Handbook, memos, and requirements of the center. It is also the parent's responsibility to request a meeting with the Program Director should there be any questions and/or concerns regarding standing policies.

Families are required to adhere to all policies and procedures. Failure to comply with these requirements may lead to termination of childcare services.

## **Philosophy**

The Ark of Learning was created to meet the needs of children in the community. We look forward to working with you to provide a safe and nurturing learning environment for your child/children to ensure successful growth and learning. The children are offered age-appropriate experiences to help them grow socially, physically, emotionally, intellectually, creatively, and in their understanding that each of them is a unique and special child of God.

## Demographic/License Information

The Ark of Learning is conveniently located at 681 Mt. Moriah Drive, Cincinnati, OH. Our school, located near the 275-Beechmont Avenue exchange, is very convenient for parents who work anywhere in the Greater Cincinnati area.

We provide childcare services for children ages 6 weeks -11 years old. The center is open from 6:30am-5:30pm Monday through Friday. We are closed on the weekends and for holidays. We rarely close in the winter, but occasionally very bad weather requires that we do so. Closing announcements will be made through email, Remind, Brightwheel, and our Ark of Learning Facebook page. If in doubt, please call the Ark at 513-752-1333 to see if an adult has arrived. A qualified administrator or assistant administrator remains on site during all hours of operation.

The center has an open door policy for all registered parents and families. All parent inquiry calls regarding a child's daily status are welcomed.

Our license is from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services and is posted in the Ark of Learning office and on the upstairs bulletin board. State rules governing childcare are located on the desk below the bulletin board at the Ark of Learning or [www.jfs.ohio.gov](http://www.jfs.ohio.gov).

The Ark of Learning is in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public. The purpose of the law is to make sure that people with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else. The ADA gives civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities similar to those provided to individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age, and religion.

## Licensing Capacity

Age of Child	Child to Teacher Ratio	Maximum Child to Teacher Ratio
6 weeks-2 years	5:1	12:2
2 ½-3 years old	8:1	16:2
3-4 years old	12:1	24:2
4-5 years old	14:1	28:2
6-11 years old	18:1	36:2

The center at minimum maintains these ratios and maximum group size is never more than double the group ratio. We maintain licensing standards and the center compliance record on premises should a parent have an inquiry regarding ratio maintenance.

Room observations and census checks are made randomly throughout the day by the office and administrative staff. Children will be supervised at all times.

### **Environment**

The Ark of Learning is located on 14 acres of beautiful wooded grounds and has three separate playgrounds for the different age groups. We have a bike area for preschool children and a paved area for basketball, jump rope, and hopscotch. We have a Big Muscle room, dining/ multipurpose room for lunch, special programs, and indoor active play.

Our classrooms are brightly decorated and contain age appropriate child-sized equipment and toys. Bathroom facilities are located outside the classrooms. All child equipment: toys, cots, cribs, chairs, tables, etc. are disinfected daily. Infant crib sheets are washed daily. Children's blankets/quilts (to be provided by parents) are to be taken home and laundered no less than once a week. Walkie Talkies are used to connect each classroom with the office in case of an emergency and/or needed communication. A fire alarm system is maintained throughout the entire building. In addition, fire exit doors and emergency exit signs are located in each classroom. Extinguishers are readily available in designated areas of the building.

### **Our Staff**

Our staff realizes the importance of their personal impact on the lives of the children and families who are enrolled here at the Ark of Learning. Two primary goals are to build a caring relationship with children and provide them with a happy, safe and nurturing environment that encourages the development of their self esteem and hands on active learning.

All of our staff attend early childhood training sessions that include classes on first-aid, child development, classroom management, communicable diseases, child abuse, CPR, and teaching methods. Each staff member is carefully screened through references and thorough criminal record checks. We are a member of 4C for Children, a regional non-profit organization that works for quality childcare, and we attend a yearly conference they provide to better educate ourselves on how best to care for the children entrusted to us.

### **Curriculum**

At the Ark of Learning, we use Creative Curriculum. This is a special curriculum that allows each of the teachers to meet each child where they are developmentally and to provide activities to help each child achieve developmental milestones.

Part of the Creative Curriculum is to make sure that each class has a schedule that they follow each day in their classrooms. The next page provides an example of a daily schedule and lesson plan.



## Sample Schedule

Arrival/Free Play 6:30-8:15 am

Wash Hands and Get Ready for Breakfast 8:15-8:30 am

Breakfast 8:30-9:00 am

Wash Hands and get ready for Circle Time 9:00-9:15 am

Circle Time 9:15-10:00 am

Centers/Arts and Crafts 10:00-11:00 am

Large Motor 11:00-11:45 am

Wash Hands and Get Ready for Lunch 11:45-12:00 pm

Lunch 12:00-12:45 am

Wash Hands and Get Ready for Nap 12:45-1:00 pm

Nap Time/Rest Time 1:00-3:00 pm

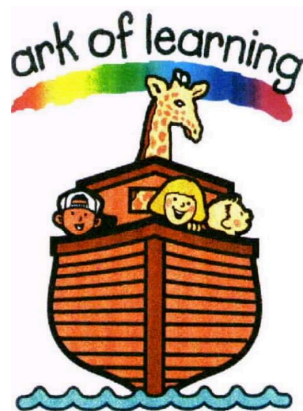
Wash Hands and Get Ready for Snack 3:00-3:15 pm

Snack 3:15-3:45 pm

Large Motor 3:45-4:30 pm

Wash Hands and Get Ready to Go Home 4:30-4:45 pm

Free Play 4:45-5:30 pm



### **Infant Care Policy**

Each of our infants are on their own “home” schedules until they are old enough to start the transition to the center meal and nap time schedules around 12 months of age. Each child has a primary caregiver who will work with him/her on a day-to-day basis. While we work with varying eating and sleeping times, we will also give one-on-one and small group attention by utilizing arts and crafts, reading books, going outside for walks, and so much more.

Diapers for infants and toddlers will be changed every two hours unless needed more frequently.

### **Transfer Policy**

Each room is designed to provide for academic and social needs according to a child’s growth and development. As the child demonstrates increased intellectual, emotional, social, and fine/gross motor development abilities, an assessment will be completed to determine if the child is eligible to transfer to the next level.

### **Transitioning Policy**

When a child’s growth and development needs warrant a transition to the next classroom, the parent will be required to sign a Transition Notice. The transition date/times will be included in this notice.

## ***Enrollment***

### **Tours**

Prospective parents, with their child/children are invited to visit the center, meet our staff, tour the facility and observe our program in process. Any prospective families can call or email to schedule a tour.

### **Registration**

To register your child, there is a \$50 non-refundable registration fee per family that secures a spot for your child. This fee is waived for Mt. Moriah United Methodist Church members.

Flexible schedules are available to families whose schedules change from week to week due to jobs or transportation needs.

To enroll your child, parents need:

1. To complete a registration form and pay the registration fee. This fee must be paid each time there is a withdrawal and a return to any of our year round sessions.
2. To complete a personal questionnaire regarding the child.
3. To complete the state child enrollment form.
4. To complete any medicine or medical plan forms if the child has allergies or other illnesses that require medicine or special treatment.
5. To complete an emergency transportation form showing current immunizations. A

medical form signed by a physician must be on file within 30 days after the child begins. The medical form must state the child is free from communicable disease and has had an examination within the last year. A current, updated medical form must be on file until the child has enrolled in school.)

6. To complete and sign a statement indicating that they have received and read the Parent Handbook.
7. To complete and sign the release permission form. Parents must indicate others who may pick up their child at the time of registration. We do require that you let us know if someone else on your pick-up list will be picking up your child. A written note from the parent or guardian as well as a picture ID is required for the person who is not listed on your pick-up list in order for them to pick up your child.

### **Notification of Change in Work, Phone or Address**

The center must always be updated with any changes made regarding emergency information, home/work addresses and telephone numbers. Should a change in your emergency notification information occur, please submit a new Emergency Contact Information Form in writing to the Program Director. These forms are available in the office. This information must remain current. Obviously, should the information we have on file be outdated due to the failure of the parent to comply with this request, we would be unable to reach the parent in an emergency.

## ***Tuition***

### **Tuition Fees**

You may enroll your child 5,4 or 3 days a week. Children in Pre-k only can be enrolled for half days 5, 4 or 3 days a week. Tuition information is available upon request. The Program Director will assist you in reviewing the tuition fees applicable to your requested childcare services.

The center is closed in recognition of the following holidays. If the Ark of Learning is closed, we DO NOT charge tuition for that day. The Ark of Learning is closed on the following holidays:

New Years Eve  
New Years Day  
Martin Luther King Day  
Good Friday  
Memorial Day  
Independence Day  
Labor Day  
Thanksgiving Day  
Day after Thanksgiving  
Christmas Day  
Day after Christmas Day  
1 day for teacher in-service training

We rarely close in the winter, but occasionally very bad weather requires that we do so. We will only close if there is a Level 2 snow emergency in Clermont County and delayed starts will only

occur in emergency cases. You will be notified of closings or delays through Brightwheel, Remind, email, and Facebook.

### **Discounts**

Families with two or more children receive a 10% discount on the lowest tuition out of the children enrolled 3 or more full days per week (no discount for half day sessions).

The registration fee will be waived for families who are members of Mt. Moriah United Methodist Church. A 20% discount on weekly tuition for church members will be given for children enrolled 3 or more full days per week (no discount for half day sessions).

### **Stretch and Grow Fee**

Year-round, there is an additional \$3 fee to be added to the tuition total for toddlers through pre-kindergarten who attend Wednesdays and participate in the activity of Stretch and Grow.

### **Tuition Payments**

Tuition is due and payable the first day your child attends each week. Each family is required to either put a credit card on file, pay by check or cash. If you wish to pay with a credit card, a 2.1% service charge fee will be added to your account. If your credit card is declined twice you will be asked to pay by cash or check. If you wish to pay by cash or check, please put it in the tuition box near the door leading into the classrooms. Cash should be put in an envelope with your child's name, the date you paid, and the amount you put in it before you put it in the tuition box.

Checks should be made to Mt. Moriah Ark of Learning. There is a \$20 fee for returned checks. If two checks are returned within a twelve month period, you will be asked to pay the tuition in cash or by credit card.

You must pay for each day your child is registered whether your child attends or not. You may pay weekly, biweekly, or monthly, but we do not give refunds.

If you are two weeks or more behind on tuition payment, we reserve the right to disenroll your child from our program until the balance is paid in full.

We are approved to receive child care vouchers from the Clermont County Department of Human Services.

### **Vacation Days**

Each year, a family may take one week of vacation when the child may be absent without being charged. This vacation week equals the number of days per week your child is registered. Each year begins and ends on the child's starting date. A written request form located by the parent folders upstairs and downstairs must be received by the Program Director and account manager at least one week in advance.

## ***Attendance/Arrival & Departure***

### **Attendance Policy**

Flexible schedules are available to families whose schedules change from week to week due to jobs or transportation needs.

Missed scheduled days may not be made up by coming on another day. If you wish to send your child an additional day(s) occasionally, please call first to make sure space is available. We will gladly add the extra day(s) if we can.

Your child is invited to come on special party days or for special speakers at no extra tuition charge **IF an adult comes and stays with the child during this time.** The adult will be responsible for the child's care.

When a child must be absent, we ask parents to call to notify us. If the absence is due to illness, parents are asked to tell us if other children may have been exposed to a communicable disease.

After three weeks absence without notification, your child's name will be withdrawn and the registration fee must be paid again to re-enroll your child.

### **Arrival and Departure Policies**

The parent or guardian must walk into the building with the child each day, stay with the child as he/she places his/her belongings in the classroom and then be sure the teacher knows the child has entered the classroom.

When taking your child from the Ark of Learning, please stay with your child while he/she gathers their personal belongings. Please do not leave a child unattended in the building at any time.

The Ark of Learning closes at 5:30pm. Parents arriving after closing time to pick up their child will be charged a late fee of \$1.00 per minute per child after 5:35pm. (Late fees must be paid immediately or the following day to avoid interruption of service.) After three late pick-ups, a child's services may be subject to cancellation.

### **Persons Designated to Pick Up Child**

At the time of registration, parents will be requested to fill out a release form naming alternate people to whom their child may be released. Persons designated to pick up a child should be prepared to present proper identification. They are required to stop by the Director's office and show their driver's license, and also show their driver's license to the child's teacher. A childcare staff member may ask for the family password if this person is not one who usually picks up the child.

If a request for an alternate pick up person is made it must be in writing to the Director, sent via email to the Director or requested by a phone call to the Director. This pick-up must be approved by the Director before the alternate pick-up occurs.

In the case of divorced parents, the registering parent must indicate on the enrollment application who has legal custody and designate who may pick up the child. The center must have documentation from the court regarding the custody status of each parent. If we do not have copies of the custody papers on file, the child may be released to either parent.

### **Failure to Return from Activity**

If your child does not arrive from another program or activity, you as the parent will be notified immediately. We will also call the location where the program or activity is being held. If your child is still at the program or activity, we will make the proper arrangements to transport them. We will also keep you informed as to what is occurring.

### **Field Trips**

Field trips provide an opportunity for the children to explore new places and have new experiences. Age-appropriate outings are planned for pre-kindergarten and school age children during the year. Children under 4 years old will not be permitted to attend field trips.

We use commercial bus and van services with professional drivers for our trips. Costs for these trips are kept as minimal as possible, but are over and above the regular tuition fees. A signed and dated permission form is required from a parent for each trip.

A first-aid kit is always taken along and at least one staff member trained in first aid will be present.

Parents are asked to pack lunch for their child for some of our outings. Following the Department of Job and Family Services rules, these lunches also must meet  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the child's daily nutritional requirements.

Field trips are part of our planned curriculum and program activities whether they occur during the summer or during the school year. If, for whatever reason, your child will not be going on a field trip with his/her class, we ask you to find another place for them to spend their day. We do not have the staff to provide an option for the child to remain at the Ark of Learning when their class is on a field trip.

Parents, grandparents, or other special adults are invited to join us! Limited bus space may require adults to provide their own transportation.

To ensure the safety of the children, the Ark staff members are aware that alert supervision of the children on field trips is required. Our supervision plan includes:

1. Children wear identification containing Ark of Learning's name, address and phone number.

2. Each teacher possesses a list of each child who is on the trip and a copy is left with the person in charge at the center.
3. The children are counted when they board the bus and when they get off the bus as they depart from the center as well as when they return to the center.
4. Children are assigned to a specific teacher. The teachers are to be constantly aware of the number and the location of the children in their care.

In the summer months, we do provide a “water day” for each age group. Our “water day” activities do not include swimming, but do include being outside with different water toys.

## ***Clothing/Personal Belongings***

### **Clothing & Personal Belongings**

Parents are requested to dress their child in appropriate clothing to meet the weather conditions and the day’s activities. Shoes should be appropriate for outdoor play. Each child should have at least two complete changes of labeled clothing which are to be kept at school. Soiled clothing will be sent home to be replaced with a fresh set.

Children may not bring money, valuables, food items, or toys (except for share day) to the center. If a special occasion arises, such as a birthday or Show and Tell, the classroom teacher should be made aware of it for prior approval. If your child has a transitional (security) object that he/she is strongly attached to, please let the teacher know before bringing the item to the center.

Parents are to make sure that all items that a child brings to school are labeled with their first and last name.

The center will not assume responsibility for lost articles. Check with the office for lost articles. Parents should be very careful when removing items from the center. Make sure all items removed belong to your child.

Blankets, pillows, stuffed toys, etc. must be taken home to be washed at least once weekly and more frequently during cold and flu season.

### **Diaper/Potty Training**

Parents are expected to supply the necessary diapers and wipes for their child. The teacher will notify parents if or when the child is getting low on diapers and wipes.

We change diapers every two hours with changing in between when needed.

Parents will be asked how they are handling potty training at home and we will work with that schedule while here at the Ark of Learning. Each parent is expected to bring multiple changes of clothes, wipes, and pull ups when a child is potty training.

## ***Food***

### **Meals and Snacks**

All children present receive breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack. Breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snacks are prepared in our kitchen. Following the guidelines of the Department of Human Services the lunch must meet  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the children daily nutritional requirements. (Lunch is provided during the school year, and parents must pack during the summer program.)

All children are expected to eat our prepared lunches unless a food allergy or medical condition requires a modified diet. A physician's signature on a specific state form is required for the modified diet to be brought from home. Following Department of Job and Family Services rules, these lunches also must meet nutritional requirements.

Our food service license is posted in the kitchen. If parents decide to pack their child's lunch, our center will supplement food if the parent does not include all five food groups in the packed lunch. Any type of food supplement will have a \$.50 charge to the parents' account.

The state's nutritional requirements are located in the back of the parent handbook.

### **Infant Meals**

All children who are enrolled in our infant room will need labels on their bottles, sippy cups, and food containers from home. Teachers will rinse each bottle and sippy cup after each use. Teachers will use a label on bottles and sippy cups with the child's name, date, what is in the bottle or cup and the time the child starts eating.

A child has 30 minutes to finish the bottle from when feeding starts. If not finished, the teacher will dump out the leftover breastmilk or formula. Parents are expected to supply all breastmilk, formula, and baby food when needed. When a child is starting on solid food, parents can request that their child use our food made in the kitchen. We will cut up food to the appropriate size and will offer Vitamin D milk. If a parent wishes to use a different type of milk, a form will need to be filled out by a doctor.

### **Birthday/Holiday/Special Event Policy**

The state requires that all ingredients be listed and provided for any food items brought into the center. Store-bought items with an ingredients label are preferred over anything homemade. We are a nut free center. When bringing in food items, please make sure to bring enough to share with all the children in your child's class.



## *Discipline*

### **Discipline Policy**

Our discipline philosophy at the Ark of Learning is to emphasize the positive instead of the negative. Developmentally appropriate child guidance and management techniques are used. These techniques include praise for appropriate behavior, redirection, and separation from the problem situation.

If there continues to be a problem, the child is removed from the group by the teacher and talked with on a one-on-one basis. If the child continues the inappropriate behavior, he/she will be removed from the classroom and have time in another room or in the office, always under adult supervision. The child will be permitted to return to the classroom when he/she indicates a willingness to do so appropriately.

If inappropriate behavior continues, parents will be notified and a conference will be held to determine an alternate plan for future occurrences. The Program Director reserves the right to dismiss a child from the program if inappropriate behavior cannot be resolved within a reasonable amount of time.

Physical or verbal abuse to either an adult employee or other children will not be tolerated. Behavior that creates an unsafe situation for the individual child or others such as biting, spitting, kicking, running away from adults, or refusal to follow directions will result in a request that the parents come and remove the child from the center for a period determined by the program director. A parent conference will be required before the child will be permitted to return. Suggestions for professional intervention may be made and a list of resources for help will be made available. Continued behavior problems of this nature will result in permanent removal from our program.

The following methods of discipline are strictly forbidden within the center:

1. No cruel, harsh or unusual punishment such as, but not limited to, punching, pinching, shaking, biting, spanking, or angry loud voices.
2. No child shall be humiliated or subjected to profane language, threats, derogatory remarks about themselves or their family or other verbal abuse.
3. Discipline shall not be imposed on a child for failure to eat, failure to sleep or toileting accidents.
4. Techniques of discipline shall not humiliate, shame or frighten a child.
5. Discipline shall not include withholding food, rest or toilet use.
6. Separation when used as discipline shall be brief.

## **Biting**

One of the most difficult and unwanted behaviors a child may demonstrate is biting. The center utilizes a variety of techniques (non-physical) to deter a child from unwanted behaviors; however, we cannot resolve this problem alone. Parent participation and cooperation is a necessity.

Protocol for Biting is as follows:

1. Parents of the biter and the child that was bitten will be made aware of the situation.
2. If a child bites and breaks the skin of another child or bites more than two times a day, we may require the child to be removed from the center for a designated period. This will allow parents to work with their child until the behavior has ceased.
3. In the classrooms, teachers will closely monitor and keep an eye on the child who has bitten.
4. Together, parents and the teacher are to work to help eradicate the behavior.

## **Termination Policy**

If you need to withdraw your child from our program before the end of a session, we ask for at least a week's notice so goodbyes may be expressed to your child by staff and children in the classroom. There is no financial requirement except that any outstanding tuition be paid for the time your child has been in attendance.

As a privately owned center, we reserve the right to terminate enrollment for the following reasons:

1. Failure to pay tuition on a weekly basis (more than two weeks behind and you will be disenrolled).
2. Absence of child for three consecutive weeks without contact.
3. Aggressive behavior of a child continuing after a conference with parents and intervention techniques have been tried.
4. Failure of parents to complete and keep current health and enrollment forms required by our licensing agency.
5. Any reason that child's enrollment or parent would endanger the safety or health of the other children or staff.

## **Grievance Policy**

We work closely with our parents and hope our relationship will be pleasant and supportive. If parents have a concern regarding their child or our program, the Program Director is available to talk with parents regarding the matter. If needed, a conference will be arranged with the teachers(s) involved, the parents, and the Program Director. If parents feel their concern was not dealt with in a proper manner, they have the opportunity to contact the chairperson of the Ark Board in writing. The chairperson will then contact the parent(s) to discuss the complaint. A conference will be held then with the chairperson, Program Director, parent(s), teacher(s), and if appropriate, the church Pastor. The last step in the grievance process would be to ask for a hearing before the Ark of Learning Board.

## *Safety*

### **Supervision of Children**

All children will be supervised at all times. The policies governing arrival and departure of children assure that a childcare staff member is aware of each child's presence when in our care. Note that school- age children may be within earshot to use the restroom or run errands.

### **Child Protection Policy**

A childcare staff employee is a "mandated reporter" by the State of Ohio. **We are required by law** to notify Children Services when there is any indication that a child has been abused or neglected.

### **Parent Communication**

At the Ark of Learning, we utilize several ways of communicating with parents. First, our Brightwheel app is updated daily with everything a child has done for that day. This is a great way to keep parents connected to the classroom and to the child's teacher. Second, we have the Remind app. This is a texting app that our Program Director uses to communicate with parents about upcoming events. We also utilize email and our Facebook page. The office is always open if parents need to talk to the Program Director. The teachers are always open to talking also.

### **Outdoor Play**

The children will play outdoors daily, weather permitting. We will be going outside on days when the temperature is above 25 degrees and does not exceed 90 degrees unless considerations for wind chill, mud, smog alerts, pollen count, lightning, humidity, rain, snow, or ice prevent us from doing so. The center will closely follow weather forecasts and heed warnings.

Every child who is well enough to attend our center must be well enough to engage in all activities, including outdoor play. Please dress your child appropriately for the weather. This includes being prepared for a change in temperature during the day with a coat or sweater if cooler temperatures should arrive. For the safety of your child, we strongly recommend that sandals not be worn here.

The children will enjoy time in our indoor Big Muscle Room on days when the weather prevents them from playing outside.

### **Safety Policy and Emergency Procedures**

Fire Drills and Severe Weather Drills are practiced monthly. Evacuation plans are posted in all areas of the building for fire and weather emergencies. Phone numbers of the life squad and the poison control center are posted next to the phones in the hallways of the center. In most emergencies, each class should remain in their room until they receive specific instructions from the person in charge. Special emergency kits are available in each room if needed.

A “shelter in place” instruction will require children and teachers to gather in the interior hallways bringing their emergency kits with them. Outside doors will be locked until the Program Director or designated staff member receives word the emergency has ended. A message will be recorded on the phone to inform parents or guardians of the emergency. If the building needs to be evacuated, the children will be taken to the Mt. Moriah Sanctuary.

In case of fire or tornado, a special alarm will sound and the teachers and children will immediately enact the drill that they practice each month. In case of fire, the children exit the building following instructions shown on maps posted in each room. In case of a tornado or severe weather, the children gather in the safe area also shown on the evacuation maps posted in each room.

For loss of power, heat, or water for an extended amount of time, the children will be moved to the Mt. Moriah Sanctuary and parents and guardians will be called. In case of snow, ice or other emergencies that would require the center to close, we will use a Level 2 snow emergency. Announcements will be made through email, Brightwheel, Remind, and Facebook. Phone calls will be made if necessary.

Staff are trained in first-aid and common childhood illnesses and have received a written policy on safety. Allergies of children are posted. No child is ever left alone or unsupervised.

### **Weapons Policy**

**WEAPONS ARE NOT ALLOWED IN OR AROUND THE BUILDING**

## ***Health***

### **Medical Emergency (life-threatening)**

Upon enrollment, the parent must complete all medical forms, including an Emergency Transportation Form and Release for Medical Treatment Form for use when the parent cannot be reached. The center will make all efforts to reach the family before the child is transported. If the family cannot be reached at this time, the Program Director or designee will accompany the child to the designated area for treatment. The center will continue trying to reach the parent or person listed to be called in an emergency. In the event of a life-threatening medical situation, the childcare provider will initiate the center’s emergency code system by telephone/intercom or through another employee. Upon initiation of the code, all designated trained staff will proceed to the location and begin medical interventions until the emergency squad arrives. When the code is signaled, the emergency number will be called for medical help. Police and fire emergency numbers are posted by all telephone areas.

All childcare providers are trained in the Heimlich maneuver, first aid, and CPR. First aid will be continued until the emergency squad arrives. The child will then be transported to the closest hospital for medical treatment.

All medical forms will be sent with the child to the hospital.

*Note: If a parent refuses to sign the Emergency Transportation Form, the center will not enroll the child, as this can create a safety issue for the child and other children at the center.*

### **Accident/Injury/Illness (non-life-threatening)**

If a non-life-threatening situation occurs, the Program Director will be called to assess the injury/illness. First aid will be utilized as needed. The Director will make the parent aware of the child's physical and emotional status; at this time, the parent should make the decision as to whether or not he/she chooses to have the child seen by the family's physician. Under no circumstances will the Program Director perform any medical intervention within the physician's realm of practice and/or outside his/her standard of practice.

The staff will notify the appropriate emergency personnel for transportation when a medical emergency occurs. It is the responsibility of the parent to provide for all other forms of transportation.

First aid kits are located upstairs and downstairs and in all classrooms. The Program Director or designee will administer first aid as needed. An Incident/Injury Report will be completed for all accidents and injuries. A copy of the report, reviewed and signed by the parent, will be given to the parent and the original will be placed in the center's files.

### **Dental Emergency**

Should a child require emergency dental care, the parent will be notified immediately. We will assist the parent in contacting his/her preferred dentist if requested to do so.

In the event that the parent cannot be reached, the alternate-care provider will be contacted. All first aid measures will be taken until the parent arrives. If the situation in any way becomes life-threatening, emergency procedures will be taken.

### **Communicable Disease Policy**

Each provider is trained in the recognition and prevention of communicable disease. The Ark of Learning provides continuing education in trends and methods to reduce the spread of communicable illnesses. Proper hand washing and disinfecting techniques are utilized by all childcare providers. This procedure is utilized and required of all persons coming into contact with the children. Our goal is to decrease the chance of spreading illnesses and promote a healthy environment.

**A child should not be brought to the center if he/she is demonstrating any of the following symptoms (or has done so within the preceding 24 hours):**

- Temperature of at least 100 degrees F when in combination with any other sign or symptom of illness
- Untreated infected skin patches, unusual spots, or rashes typical of a communicable

illness

- Diarrhea (three or more abnormally loose stools within a 24-hour period)
- Vomiting more than one time or when accompanied by any other sign or symptom of illness
- Evidence of lice, scabies, or other parasitic infestation
- Difficulty in breathing, shortness of breath, or wheezing
- Jaundice - appearing on skin or eyes
- Redness, burning, or itching of the eyes
- Conjunctivitis (any unusual drainage from the eye or matted eyelashes)
- Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stools
- Sore throat or difficulty swallowing
- Stiff neck with an elevated temperature
- Coughing which results in respiratory distress or is associated with a suspected inflammatory process

In the event that a child develops these symptoms while at the Ark of Learning, he/she will be isolated and observed by a staff member or Program Director until the parent or alternate-care provider comes to pick up the child. Parents are required to pick up their child within one hour once notification has taken place. Prior to re-admission, the child must be symptom free for at least 24 hours or the parent must present a physician's note indicating the child does not have a communicable disease and is safe to return to the center. Should the Program Director believe the child is too ill to participate in the daily activities and/or there are questionable health-risk factors, the child cannot remain in the Ark of Learning.

Each child will be screened upon arrival at the Ark of Learning. Should a child have any of the above symptoms, the parent will need to take the child home, and/or a referral for follow-up care may be suggested by the Program Director. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services Communicable Disease Chart is posted downstairs and in the Program Director's office.

In the event a child is believed to have been exposed to a communicable illness within the center, the parents may be notified by the Program Director and/or childcare provider with written information which includes the incubation period of the disease, signs/symptom, and common treatment methods.

A "mildly ill" child is defined as one who is experiencing minor cold symptoms or does not feel well enough to participate in class activities. If the child's status worsens and/or meets any of the stated signs/symptoms, or in the opinion of the Program Director the child may be developing early signs of an illness, the child may be placed in the office and monitored by the Program Director. Again, should the child develop signs of an illness which the Program Director believes to be communicable, the parent will be required to remove the child from the center.

Children are taught hygiene techniques, with reinforcement provided in handwashing, using tissues, and covering the mouth when coughing. These are just a few of the hygiene skills promoted at the center.

## **Medication Policy**

ALL medications (brought to the Ark of Learning) will be administered by the Program Director. We reserve the right to refuse administration of any medication we believe is contraindicated and could possibly be harmful to the child. No medications are to be taken into the classrooms. Medications must be given to the Program Director. Do not leave medications in your child's diaper bag. Do not mix or place medications in your infant's bottles. This is an unsafe practice as well as possibly leading to future distaste for the fluid you use to dilute the medication.

A Request for Administration of Medication Form developed by the Ohio Human Services Department must be completed by the parent before medication administration can take place. A medication form must be on file at the center.

- If the medication requires special physician's instructions, the middle part of this form must be completed.
- If the medication or vitamin is prescription from a pharmacy, the physician's instructions and signature will not be required. The part of the form that indicates the name of the child, name of the medication, Rx number, pharmacy, address, phone number, etc. must be completed along with the parent's signature.
- A copy of the Request for Administration of Medication Form is included in your admission packet.
- Topical creams/lotions may be applied by staff members trained to utilize the proper technique.
- Sunscreen must be applied by parents in the morning. The staff can apply sunscreen only in the afternoon per a Sunscreen Waiver signed by a parent.

Requirements for medication administration/fluoride supplements:

- Written instructions from a licensed physician or dentist have been filed at the center.
- The medication must be in the original container with the child's name clearly visible.
- The label must specify the amount of dosage and time medication is to be administered; dosage should be by age and/or weight.
- The expiration date should be on the container.
- The length of time medication is to be administered should be clear.
- The medication will be cross-checked with the child's allergy history.
- Over-the-counter medications for a child under the age of two must have a physician's order.
- Over-the-counter medications (if appropriate for children) may be given to a child two years of age or older for three days. After that time, an order from the physician must be obtained in order for the center to continue administration.
- Physician office sample medications must have a written physician's order stating the child's name, name of the medication, dosage, schedule and length of time to be administered. The medication container should also reflect the expiration date.

## **Medication Policy for School-Age Children**

The Ark of Learning stores all medication in the Program Director's office, including inhalers and epipens for the children who need these medications. Teachers will carry the inhalers and epipens with them on field trips.

### **Parent Responsibilities Regarding Medications and Other Health Needs**

The Program Director will administer medications, monitor temperatures and other health concerns as a courtesy to the family. The Program Director *does not* take responsibility for the administration of all daily medication needs. This means all early-morning medications should be administered by the parent before the child arrives at the center. The Program Director will then continue the medication administration during the hours the child is in the Ark of Learning. A health assessment will be performed should a child demonstrate any symptoms of illness while here at the center and the parent will be notified. The parent will then need to follow up with his/her preferred physician.

Our goal is to promote and assist in maintaining your child's health status. We reinforce the necessity for each parent to acknowledge the need for continued physician exams when there is a health concern and/or for well-child checkups.

We are always willing to discuss your child's progress and we will be happy to assist with health monitoring, as this is part of our service. We do not, however, take the role of the physician. We understand continued health exams can be costly, but definitely are worthwhile to assure your child's health status.

### **Immunizations**

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services requires that all children receiving care in a childcare setting must be current with needed immunizations.

Periodic reviews of each child's immunization status will be conducted by the Program Director.

Parents will be informed when written verification of required immunizations is needed. Parents should submit documentation indicating dates of all completed immunizations.

## ***Miscellaneous***

### **Nap/Resting**

We do provide time where children 2-5 years old must have a time to either nap or have rest time. Each age group will nap in their own room. Our nap/rest time is from 1-3pm each day.

For children younger than 18 months of age, teachers will try to follow the schedule of the parent. Please keep in mind sometimes we will need to be flexible when working with children. Parents will provide a crib sheet.



Once children are 18 months of age, the teachers will transition those children to a schedule of an afternoon nap starting at 1pm. Children who are 12 months or older can transition to a cot with written parental consent. Parents will provide a crib sheet, blanket and any other special item to sleep with. When a child turns 2 years old, we will transition a child from a crib to a cot during nap time.

### **Assistances**

The Ark can assist with finding valuable resources on:

- Bankruptcy
- Divorce
- Financial Assistance
- Wills
- Child Support
- Housing
- General Education Development Test (GED)
- Food Pantries
- Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)
- And More
- Prayer partners are also available upon request.

### **Nursing Mothers**

If you wish to breastfeed your child during our hours or pump onsite, we do have a parlor, fellowship hall, or Director's office open for nursing mothers. Check in with the Director or the office for availability

### **Important Information Summary**

- Please dress your child appropriately in washable clothes so that he/she can participate in all activities including painting and active play on our playgrounds. Athletic shoes are requested.
- We ask that personal toys are not brought from home except on special days such as Show and Tell or special theme days.
- Preschool children will have the opportunity to ride tricycles, bikes, and scooters on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays. If you wish your child to wear a helmet when they ride, please send one labeled with his/her name.
- Children are asked to bring a small pillow, blanket, stuffed animal or special toy that will help them feel safe and secure during naptime. These items are to be in an enclosed bag and are to be taken home the last day of the week to be washed.
- The classrooms are used each Sunday by other children and adults. Sweaters, coats, helmets and nap items are not to be left in the rooms.
- For the safety of the children, please do not leave your car running in our parking lot when you come in the building (NEVER LEAVE OTHER CHILDREN UNATTENDED IN YOUR VEHICLE WHILE INSIDE THE CENTER.).
- We ask that children have two changes of clothes here at all times.
- At least one conference is scheduled with parents in the fall and the spring each

- year. Please contact the teacher or administrator any time you have a concern.
- Please put your child's name on all sweaters, jackets, coats, and mittens or gloves. We cannot be responsible for the replacement of lost items.
  - **Please do not leave a child unattended in the building at any time.**
  - Neither Mt. Moriah United Methodist Church or the Ark of Learning can be held responsible for any arrangements between staff and outside groups or persons regarding childcare services or other employment during a staff member's personal time.
  - Please contact the administrator or a teacher if you have any concern regarding the safety of your child or any child here.



For more information about worship services and other activities offered by our church community, visit [www.mtmoriahumc.org](http://www.mtmoriahumc.org)

Additional parent information from our licensing agency, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services is included in this booklet.

*See next two pages.*

## ***Congratulations!!!***

Your child is enrolled, or you may be considering enrolling your child, in a learning and development program whose level of quality exceeds Ohio's child care licensing standards.

High quality learning and development program settings are important because early experience lasts a lifetime. Your child has 1,892 days from the day they are born until they enter kindergarten. What happens on this journey lays the foundation for success in school and life.

A Step Up To Quality One-Star rated program means that your child is in a program where:

- **The administrator, lead teachers and assistant teachers complete 20 hours of specialized training every two years.**

The administrator and teaching staff are committed to expanding their knowledge and skills to better support your child's development and learning.

- **Teachers are familiar with Ohio's Early Learning and Development Standards.**

Your child's program is aware that there are standards that explain child development and this information assists teachers in supporting your child's growth and learning.

- **The program focuses on building relationships with families.**

The program builds relationships with families and makes information available about community services and resources that support all family structures.

- **The program is committed to continuous improvement.**

Your child's program focuses on the continuous improvement process, and looks for ways to make good even better. By conducting self-assessments, the program is working to identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement.

**For more information on your program or other star-rated programs visit [www.odjfs.state.oh.us/cdc/quert.asp](http://www.odjfs.state.oh.us/cdc/quert.asp)**

To stay current with information regarding learning and development programs in your area and state, visit [www.earlychildhoodohio.org](http://www.earlychildhoodohio.org)



**CENTER PARENT INFORMATION**

**REQUIRED BY OHIO ADMINISTRATIVE CODE**

The facility is licensed to operate legally by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. This license is posted in a conspicuous place for review. A toll-free telephone number is listed on the facility's license and may be used to report a suspected violation of the licensing law or administrative rules. The licensing law and rules governing child care are available for review at the facility upon request.

The administrator and each employee of the facility is required, under Section 151.421 of the Ohio Revised code, to report their suspicions of child abuse or child neglect to the local public children's services agency.

Any parent, custodian, or guardian of a child enrolled in the facility shall be permitted unlimited access to the facility during all hours of operation for the purpose of contacting their children, evaluating the care provided by the facility or evaluating the premises. Upon entering the premises, the parent, or guardian shall notify the administrator of his/her presence.

Contact information for parents/guardians of the children attending the facility is available upon request. This information will not include the name, telephone number or email of any parent/guardian who requests that his/her name, telephone number or email not be included.

Recent licensing inspection reports and any substantiated complaint investigation reports for the past two years are posted in a conspicuous place in the facility of review.

The licensing record, including licensing inspection reports, complaint investigation reports, and evaluation forms from the building and fire departments, is available for review upon written request from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. The Center's licensing inspection reports for the past two years are also available for review on the child Care in Ohio Website. The website is: <http://www.jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/childcare.stm>.

It is unlawful for the facility to discriminate in the enrollment of children on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin or disability in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 104, Stat. 32 U.S.C. 1201 Et seq.

Revision Dates  
2016  
March 2023

## Parent Handbook Agreement

We hope that this handbook has answered all of your questions about our program. If not, please feel free to contact the office with any questions you may have.

I \_\_\_\_\_ acknowledge what is written in this Parent Handbook and will follow the rules that are set forth regarding the policies and procedures at Mt. Moriah Ark of Learning.

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Director Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_