

PARENT HANDBOOK



St. Joseph's (Hill) Lutheran Church Day Care Center

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Boyertown PA 19512

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PARENT HANDBOOK FOR ST. JOSEPH'S HILL LUTHERAN CHURCH DAY CARE CENTER

Mission Statement

St. Joseph's childcare center is a non-profit, Christian centered program, stressing the development of the whole child. We believe parents and teachers are partners in the child's care and education. Within this partnership, the goals for social, emotional, spiritual, cognitive, and physical development are met through a wide variety of activities and community resources. Programs will be designed to meet the developmental level of each individual child.

Licensure

St. Joseph's (Hill) Lutheran Daycare Center is licensed by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services and participates in Pennsylvania Keystone Stars; a quality initiative for Early Childhood Education.

Enrollment

- Our enrollment at St. Joseph's Day Care is available to children from 6 weeks to age 12.
- Parents are required to pay an initial \$50 non-refundable registration fee. Annual re-registration of \$25 per child / or \$40 per family is collected each spring.
- Initial enrollment is contingent upon receipt of a completed Emergency Contact form, Financial Agreement, Child Health Assessment and registration fee. Parents are required to notify the day care center immediately, should any of the information collected at the time of enrollment or any time thereafter change.
- All custodial parents and/or legal guardians are required to sign a financial fee agreement prior to enrollment of their child in St. Joseph's (Hill) Lutheran Daycare Center.

Operating Hours

6:30 am – 6:00 pm Monday – Friday
Preschool Start Date: Sept. 6, 2023 to May 22, 2024 (9:00 am – 11:30 pm)

The Center will be closed on:

July 4, 2023 (Independence Day)
September 4, 2023 (Labor Day holiday)
November 23, 2023 (Thanksgiving Day)
November 24, 2023 (Thanksgiving Holiday)
December 25, 2023 (Christmas Holiday)
January 1, 2024 (New Year's Holiday)
March 29, 2024 (Good Friday)
May 27, 2024 (Memorial Day)

Preschool will not be held on the following days:

October 9, 2023 (Columbus Day)
November 27, 2023 (Monday after Thanksgiving)
December 25, 26, 27, 28 and 29, 2023 (Christmas break)
January 15, 2024 (Martin Luther King Day)
February 16 and 19, 2024 (President's Day)
March 25, 26, 27, 28 and 29, 2024 (Spring Break)
April 1, 2024 (Easter Monday)

St. Joseph's Hill Church Day Care Center is an Equal Opportunity Care Provider

Tuition

Payments:

- **Debit and Credit card payments** - must register at *myprocare.com*
 - **Cash**- receipt will be given upon request
 - **Check**-Your canceled check will serve as your receipt
There will be a \$36.00 fee charged from tuition checks returned by the bank
 - **Money Order**
1. A **\$50.00 registration** fee per child is required prior to enrollment.
Annually, a **\$25 re-registration fee** per child / or **\$40 for two or more children**.
 2. Payments are due on Monday for the current week, and/or bi-weekly and monthly in advance.
 3. Preschool rates are not available over the summer.
 4. Tuition does not include fees for field trips.
 5. School Year Transportation fee of **\$13.00 one way** and **\$18.00 two way trip** for Earl Elementary.
 6. Option for Virtual Learning fee is **\$10.00 per day** and **\$25.00 per week** in addition to tuition.
 7. Parents are responsible for paying the tuition rate for which your child(ren) is registered unless the hours increase into the next payment category. You will then be responsible for the higher rate. There is no discount for a decrease in hours unless it is a permanent change and a two-week notice is given.
 8. If payment is outstanding beyond two weeks, your child's continued care may be jeopardized until the balance has been paid and/or arrangements have been made with the office for a payment plan. Families may be asked to put their outstanding balance on a credit card. Without a parent explanation, a \$5 late fee will be charged each week payment is not received.
 9. The center offers a \$10.00 per week sibling discount for each additional child enrolled. The center offers a 10% discount to members of St. Joseph's (Hill) Lutheran Church.
Preschool families are not eligible for any discounts.
 10. To maintain proper staff to child ratios, children must be picked-up at their registered pick-up time. Pre-approval for early drop off or late pick-up is required.
 11. The center closes at 6:00 pm. A fee of \$10.00 will be charged for every ten minutes your child is picked up after 6:00 pm. These fees are to be paid at the time your child is picked up, or no later than the next week's tuition payment. Unpaid charges will be added to your weekly tuition.
 12. Unexplained absenteeism of more than two weeks may result in dismissal of your child. Re-registration will then be necessary for re-enrollment and subject to availability for care.
 13. No credit is given for illness, snow days, holidays or suspension; you are responsible for full payment for your registered hours, because your child has a "space" reserved in our program.
 14. In the event that your child needs to be absent for a period of time, please contact the office as there may be a "Hold Space Fee" charge.
 15. In the event that you are delinquent in your payments, legal action may be necessary. It is the family's financial responsibility for all fees incurred to St. Joseph's (Hill) Lutheran Church Day Care Center for legal fees, court fees and/or collection fees, etc.
 16. St. Joseph's (Hill) Lutheran Church Day Care Center accepts childcare subsidies. Please see Director, Robin Schmale, for more information or contact the Berks County Early Learning Resource Center at 1-833- 229-6927 or Montgomery County Early Learning Resource Center at 1-800-281-1116.

Family Vacations

Vacations will be based on the contract year June 5, 2023 through June 7, 2024.

Families that are enrolled for 52 weeks per year are eligible for two weeks unpaid if your child is not in attendance at the center. Families that are enrolled "Only" for the school year, or "Only" for the Summer are eligible for one week that your child is not in attendance. A week is defined as your regular one week schedule.

- **Both Summer and School Year enrollment** - eligible for two weeks of vacation
- **Summer Only or School Year Only enrollment** –eligible for one week vacation

Meals & Snacks

If your child(ren) arrives prior to **8:00 a.m.**, you may provide breakfast for the child to eat at the center. The parents are responsible to provide a nutritious lunch daily. The center will warm lunch as needed. Refrigeration for lunch bags (marked with child's name) is available in the church pantry.

The center provides AM and PM snacks. A snack schedule is posted on the bulletin board. If your child has severe food allergies, the center may request that the parents provide snack. Donations and special treats are always appreciated. As a benefit to our parents, the Center provides milk and water to all children.

Arrival Procedures

Upon arrival at the Center, the parents or the adult dropping the child off ***must sign the child into care on the Procure computer system (or clipboard)*** located inside the day care entrances. Please have your child wash their hands before escorting your child to their designated classroom.

AT DROP OFF AND PICK UP, ALL VEHICLES MUST BE TURNED OFF FOR PARKING LOT SAFETY

Please Note: Arrival procedures may change under recommendations by the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the PA Health Department and/or the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL).

Pick-Up Procedures

Children are required to be picked-up at their scheduled pick-up time. Parents or other authorized adults are required to sign their child out of care on the Procure computer system (or clipboard) located inside the day care entrances. Parents may pick up their children from the playground in the evening, weather permitting. Once a parent signs their child out, the parent is then solely responsible for supervising their child while on agency premises. The parent should not allow a child to wander through the hallways, bathrooms, other classrooms, and/or playground. Parents are requested to handle all business issues prior to signing out their child.

Parents should take home all papers in the child's cubby, folder or school bag each day or as provided outdoors.

Please Note: Pick-up procedures may change under recommendations by the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the PA Health Department and/or the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL).

Parental Access to Children

The center has an "open door" policy and parents are welcomed, unannounced at any time to visit with their child. Parents must notify the staff of visitors or alternate pick up and drop off persons.

In cases where the child is the subject of a court order (e.g., custody order, restraining order, or protection from abuse order) the center must be provided with a copy of the most recent order. In the absence of a court order on file in the center, **both** parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law. The center will contact the local police should a threatening situation occur on site.

Transportation Policy for School Aged Children

Oley Valley School: Children will be picked up and dropped off by the district bus in the church parking lot and escorted to and from the building by staff.

Bovertown School District: The center will provide transportation to and from Earl Elementary School. A fee of \$13.00 per week per child will be charged to transport children one-way. A fee of \$18.00 per week per child will be charged to transport children two-ways. Transportation fees will be adjusted if additional costs are incurred. Parents will be contacted if the center is unable to provide transportation due to inclement weather.

Virtual Learning Policy: Under special circumstances St. Joseph's Day Care will provide space to facilitate virtual learning. Additional fees may apply. Teachers will be provided to assist Day Care students.

Notification of Absences

Important: Parents are requested to inform the Center if their child(ren) will not be at the center on a scheduled day.

Inclement Weather

In the event of an emergency closing and/or inclement weather, parents may call the Center's answering machine by 5:45 a.m. for information. Parents should sign up for text alerts at the wfmz.com/storm center. Be sure the Center has updated emails and cell phone numbers on file.

Parent – Teacher – Community Partnership

The day care staff utilizes various developmental tools in implementing a program for all children. These tools include but are not limited to; Creative Curriculum, Ages and Stages, the Pennsylvania Learning Standards, observations, assessments, and information provided by the child's family. Resources are available on topics of social & emotional, mental health, early childhood education, health & wellness, and medical services; to parents and staff. Early Intervention information is available to our families and we partnership with community services (SAM, IU, Creative Health, etc.) and welcome therapists and case workers to participate in our program.

IEP and ISFP - *Your child's growth and development are measured with developmental assessments. If your child currently has an Individual Education Plan or an Individual/Family Support Plan, please provide a copy of your child's plan to the center. St. Joseph's teachers are willing to participate in IEP and IFSP meetings. The day care facility is available as a location for services as well as a setting for scheduled IEP and IFSP meetings.*

Inclusion - The day care collaborates with local Early Intervention Programs to support the OCDEL Inclusion Announcement and reasonable accommodations will be made for the children.

Supporting Language Development - The Center supports language development and academic achievement of all children. Reasonable accommodations will be made for children whose first language is not English.

Curriculum Statement

It is our philosophy that children learn through play. Our classes provide a variety of planned hands-on activities which are developmentally appropriate. The center has adopted the researched based Creative Curriculum and utilizes the PA Learning Standards as a framework.

Goals for individual children will be determined through the use of daily observations, progress reports, the screening tool Ages & Stages, and conferences with parents. **Parent conferences are offered twice a year.** Through this parent and staff partnership, activities are presented to support the child both at home, and in the center, to achieve predetermined goals. Individual needs will be reflected in staff's weekly lesson plans. All key learning areas of development will be integrated throughout the day. A well planned environment including defined interest areas will aid in promoting learning. Infants and toddlers will receive daily information about their child and every classroom will communicate a weekly newsletter for our families.

Teachers will use play, hands on activities, a whole language approach, fine & gross motor activities, literacy, and language development to plan intentionally for each child. Children go outside daily when the forecast temperature/wind chill are above 25 degrees or the forecast temperature/heat index is less than 90 degrees.

Consideration of outdoor safety is also given for falling precipitation and air quality.

When planning for the environment and developing lesson plans, teachers will use Creative Curriculum, Teaching Strategies, observations, assessment, research and the Pa Learning Standards as resources. The Environmental Rating Scale (ERS) may also be used to enhance the interest areas in a child's classroom and encourage diversity.

Staff training is offered to compliment the professional development of the teachers.

Transitioning from developmental stages and classrooms: The general rule is that children are moved according to their Kindergarten classroom age. They would move with the same class according to their Kindergarten start date. The exception to that rule is the child who is developmentally able to participate in the next classroom or the child who has outgrown their current class developmentally and would benefit from a more challenging or structured curriculum. Activities are intentionally planned to assist the children in anticipating the move to the next developmental stage. Children typically move at the beginning of the school year. Information is available upon request for school age children moving to self-care.

An Open house is planned in September, each school year, to introduce the parents to the classroom instructors, the curriculum, the new environments, the teacher's expectations and the center's philosophy. It is at the open house that families are introduced to the STAR program. Information is shared during this orientation meeting to inform parents about the upcoming year and transitioning to a new classroom.

Field Trips

The center frequently supplements the programs with off premise field trips. Parents are required to give written permission for their child to attend all field trips. If parents wish to attend the trip with their child, they should discuss attending with the classroom teacher.

If your child is not scheduled to attend on the day of a field trip, your child will be permitted to attend if required ratios can be maintained and there is transportation available. Payment for the additional hours, as well as the cost of the trip and signed permission slip will be due prior to the trip. Families have the option of meeting the group at the trip location and supervising their child without additional cost.

School Aged Summer Field Trips:

Field trips will be scheduled primarily on a Tuesday (or Wednesday) for school-aged children. Additional admission fees (ticket cost) will be charged for individual trips.

Guidelines for Disciplining Children

The following discipline guidelines are implemented at the center:

Understanding child development for each age group and having an "overabundance of patience", and gentle reminders will teach the children through positive reinforcement and guided self-control. A developmentally appropriate environment will be achieved by explaining classroom rules to the children in a simple, loving manner. Cooperation and partnering with families for the goal of self-discipline is the ultimate desired outcome for each and every child.

- Disciplinary methods will not humiliate, shame, or frighten the child.
- Redirection and substitution will be used, as well as the use of praise and positive reinforcement to help obtain a more positive behavior.
- Aggressive physical behavior directed at teachers or children is unacceptable. Teachers will intervene immediately when a child becomes physically aggressive.
- Severe discipline problems will be referred to the Director.
- Use of time-out will be used as a last resort and a quiet activity will be provided in order to help the child regain composure. The period of time spent in time-out should coincide with the child's age in minutes. A child younger than 18 months will not be put in time-out, but redirected to another activity. The staff member will discuss with the child the reason for discipline.

Expulsion and Suspension Policy: Parents may be required to meet with the teachers and or administration if approved behavior management strategies are not effective. Together, the parent and teacher/administration will devise a written plan of action including a time frame for improvement. Part of the written plan may include requiring the parents to seek support services to assist teachers in managing the child's behavior. The written plan

may be sent to the Day Care Administrative Board for review and/or recommendations. The center reserves the right to dismiss a child; if they pose a safety threat to themselves, classmates, or teachers.

Policy on Violence or threats of School Violence: The Center will adhere to similar protocols of the PA Act 26 recommendations for students in a Public School District. The policy warns parents against allowing their children from carrying to day care any weapon, instrument, or devise that can be construed as an “actual harmful” weapon. Threats of violence, even if not taken seriously, may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of care or suspension or expulsion from the child care center. The purpose of this policy is to provide a safe and non-threatening environment for all children, teachers, volunteers and families. Disciplinary action will be determined by the Director, with approval by the Pastor and the Day Care Board.

Public Media

Parents should refrain from posting pictures taken at the center **of other children** on public media.

COVID Information

The Center follows the recommendations of the child care licensing (OCDEL), Center for Disease Control (CDC), , the Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC), health care consultants and child care accreditation organizations.

Exclusion:

- Children should be kept home and tested if they have any symptoms of COVID-19: fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, shaking w/chills, loss of taste or smell, headache, sore throat, vomiting or diarrhea.
- Children should be kept home if they have tested positive for COVID-19 for 5 days and wear a mask on days 6 – 10. Children can return to daycare on day 6, symptom free.
- Children will be isolated in a “sick room” with a staff if they display symptoms of illness and parents will be contacted. Be sure to have updated emergency contact information on file with the center.
- Refer to the daycare Health Policy for any additional illnesses that warrant exclusion.

Health Policy

The Department of Human Services requires a current health form to be completed by a physician within 60 days of enrollment and kept on file at the center. Updated health forms (according to the schedule below) must be returned within 30 days. Pick up a form each time your child goes for a well check.

Form Schedule:

- Infants: 6, 9, 12 and 15 months of age
- Toddlers: 18 and 24 months of age
- Preschoolers: age 3 & 4
- School Age: Kindergarten health form or upon enrollment if first grade and older.

Conditions of Exclusions - When a child becomes ill at the center, but does not require immediate medical care, the child’s teacher and/or director will determine if the:

- ✓ Illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities.
- ✓ Illness results in a need for care that is greater than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children.
- ✓ Illness poses a risk of spread of disease to others.

A parent will be contacted to discuss the concern and arrangement made for exclusion from their classroom. .

In the event that your child is absent due to a contagious disease, a signed statement from the child’s physician stating the child is no longer contagious is required for your child to return to the Center.

Additional Conditions Requiring Temporary Exclusion -Temporary exclusion is recommended when the child has any of the following conditions, unless a health professional determines the child's condition does not require exclusion:

- Appears severely ill.
- Fever (temperature over 101° orally, 102° rectally or 100° axillary), unusual lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, difficult breathing or other signs or symptoms (e.g. Sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea). Fevers 101° or higher, readmission after 24 hours fever free.
- Diarrhea, if not contained in diaper or causes soiled clothing or 2 or more diarrhea stools.
- Blood in stools.
- Vomiting more than 2 times in the previous 24 hours, unless the vomiting is determined to be caused by a non-communicable condition and the child is not in danger of dehydration.
- Mouth sores with drooling.
- Unexplained rash with fever or behavioral changes.
- "Pink eye" or conjunctivitis with white or yellow discharge, (often with matted eyelids after sleep), the child must have at least 3 doses of medication to return to the center.
- Tuberculosis.
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment has been started.
- Streptococcal pharyngitis, until 24 hours after treatment has been started.
- Head lice until free of all nits.
- Scabies, until free of all mites.
- Additional communicable diseases, we abide by the recommendations of the Academy of Pediatrics.

PARENT PICK UP: In the event of illness while at the center, the parent/guardian will be notified and the child must be picked up as soon as possible. If the parents/guardians cannot be reached, the emergency contact list will be called. The teacher will keep a record of your child's symptoms to share with the parent/guardian at pick-up time and this information can be shared with the family's health care provider.

Care Plans: Children that experience health problems or special needs that require treatment/services will have their health care professional complete a care plan to indicate special training, equipment or provisions.

MEDICATION POLICY

St. Joseph's staff will administer medication to children with written approval of the parent. When appropriate, a recommended order from a health provider for a specific child and a specific condition should be provided. Please follow the procedures below.

Non Prescription Medications

1. The first dose of medication for the day should be given at home.
2. The medication must be in the original container.
3. The container must be labeled with the child's first and last name.
4. Instructions including the dose, time to be given, method to be administered, and duration of administration will be provided in writing or dictated over the phone.
5. The parent completes a medication log.
6. Medication will not be used beyond the date of expiration on the container or beyond any expiration of the instructions provided by the physician.

Prescription Medications

1. The first dose of medication for the day should be given at home.
2. The medication must be in the original, child resistant container that is labeled by a pharmacist.
3. The parent completes a medication log.
4. Medication will not be used beyond the date of expiration on the container or beyond any expiration of the instructions provided by the physician.

Recurring Problems/Emergency Situations/Chronic Conditions

1. Follow the instructions for non-prescription or prescription medications.

2. Additional required information: how often the medication may be given; the conditions for use; and any precautions to follow.
3. The physician must renew instructions and permission annually.
4. The parent completes a medication log.
5. Medication will not be used beyond the date of expiration on the container or beyond any expiration of the instructions provided by the physician.

An authorized member of St. Joseph's staff will administer medication only if the parent or legal guardian has provided written consent.

Infant Sleep Position

The Department of Human Services requires that facilities comply with the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendation on infant sleep position relating to SIDS prevention. All infants must be placed on their backs to sleep unless there is a signed note from the child's pediatrician indicating otherwise.

Records Transfer

St. Joseph's Day Care Center will transfer your child's records to another educational setting upon the parent/guardian's completion of an Authorization for Release of Information Form. These forms are available upon request in the Day Care Office.

Emergency Policy

The following information is our emergency policy. Safety is a priority for the children attending St. Joseph's Day Care Center. Our Emergency Plan provides for response to all types of emergencies. Depending on the circumstance of the emergency, we will use one of the following protective actions:

- *On-site First Aid:* Children that experience minor injuries will be treated by staff that have been trained in Pediatric First Aid.
- *On-site Emergency Injuries:* The center will assess the child, dial 911 and contact parents.
- *Immediate evacuation:* Students are evacuated to a safe area on the grounds of the facility in the event of a fire, etc.
- *In-place sheltering:* Sudden occurrences, weather or hazardous materials related, may dictate that taking cover inside the building is the best immediate response.
- *Evacuation:* Total evacuation of the facility may become necessary if there is a danger in the area. In this case, children will be taken to a relocation facility.
- *Relocation Facilities:*
 - St. John's UCC Church located at the corner of 620 Hill Church Road and Franklin St., Boyertown (a safe, short distance walk through the Union Cemetery).
 - Earl Township Fire Company, 1340 Ironstone Drive, Boyertown is a secondary location if unable to relocate at St. John's UCC Church. Children will be transported with daycare vans, available staff vehicles and Emergency Management Services EMS resources.
- *Modified Operation:* May include cancellation/postponement or rescheduling of normal activities. These actions are normally taken in case of a winter storm or building problems (such as utility disruptions) that make it unsafe for children, but may be necessary in a variety of situations.
- *Communication to parents:* Parents will be notified of the emergency by telephone, email or text using the numbers provided on the Emergency Contact Form. If the child's parents cannot be reached, a designated person on the Emergency Contact Form will be notified.

Mandated Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse and/or Neglect

Under the Child Protective Services Act, the employees of St. Joseph's (Hill) Lutheran Church Day Care Center are considered mandated reporters. Mandated reporters are required to report any **suspicion** of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities.

*As mentioned in our "Mission Statement", we believe parents and teachers are partners in your child's care and education. For this reason the center welcomes your questions or concerns. Teachers should be contacted by phone or classroom email and the director and office is always available at (610) 367-1980 or **hillchurch.ptd.net**.*

Periodically, additional Information and addendums may be added to the parent Handbook.