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Child Enrichment Program

The Child Enrichment Program is a church sponsored, non-profit program that operates from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on Mondays and from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Tuesdays through Fridays for children 17 months to 59 months of age by September 30th of each school year.

All children regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, or gender, who wish to participate in our program, are warmly welcomed. CEP provides a safe, caring, healthy environment where children develop and play.

Classes Offered

Age as of September 30th

17 - 23 months	Monday
19 - 25 months	Tuesday/Thursday
24 - 35 months	Tuesday/Thursday
24 - 35 months	Wednesday/Friday
36 - 47 months	Tuesday/Thursday
36 - 47 months	Monday/Wednesday/Friday
48 - 60 months	Monday/Wednesday/Friday
48 - 60 months	Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday/Friday

PHILOSOPHY

As an expression of our concern for the healthy development of children and the needs of families, Messiah United Methodist Church developed the Child Enrichment Program. We believe that young children benefit from interactions with their peers, teachers, and adults through a developmentally appropriate program.

The Child Enrichment Program is based on the belief that children go through an orderly series of developmental stages as they grow and that each child is an individual who develops at his/her own rate. The guiding philosophy is that children learn best about themselves and their environment in an atmosphere where a variety of experiences exist and achievement pressures are minimized.

In keeping with this philosophy, the Child Enrichment Program provides an environment where children can:

- Develop a positive self-image. This enables children to participate easily and successfully in a learning environment and provides a framework for personal development that continues throughout life.
- Learn to handle their emotions in an appropriate way. Children need help in learning to understand, label, express, and manage their emotions in appropriate ways.

- Act on their environment. Children need to explore, question, practice, and pretend in order to discover the world around them. *Play is the work of childhood.* The learning process is life-long and best when children, within a safe environment, can choose a variety of activities that are challenging and interesting.
- Develop a sense of personal responsibility. Within a secure environment, children learn that their actions and behaviors have consequences for themselves and those around them.
- Learn to trust and care about those around them. Children need loving attention. They need to be with caring people who are consistent in their reaction to a child's behavior. Through these relationships, children develop the ability to give and receive affection and understanding, and learn to trust themselves and those around them.

GOALS

- To grow in independence. To help children make a successful transition from home to another caring environment. To help them learn to do things for themselves and to make decisions and choices.
- To learn to give, share and receive affection. This is called trust or bonding and calls for consistent and respectful caregivers.
- To learn to get along with others. To help children learn socialization skills by being with their peers and becoming familiar with a group setting.
- To develop self-control and self-discipline. Research shows a strong relationship between the experiences of making choices in the early childhood years and success as adolescents and adults.
- To learn non-stereotypical human roles. Avoiding stereotypes is an important aspect of self-concept and self-esteem. To learn these values means we help children to be competent in the home and community.
- To begin to understand their bodies. Good health practices, hygiene, and nutrition are a basic aspect of the preschool experience.
- To learn and practice large and small motor skills.
- To begin to understand and control the physical world. We want children to be responsive to the world around them, to have an understanding of cause and effect, to be able to reason, to be curious, and to find and use information.
- To foster the development of language, both listening and speaking. Children who have numerous perceptual and sensory experiences and good adult language models develop a richer vocabulary, more expressive language, and greater skill in communication.
- To support families of the program in effective parenting and provide educational opportunities when and where possible.
- To provide an environment where children can experience the love and teaching of God through the implementation of Christian principles expressed in the commitment, talents, examples and decisions of a dedicated staff.

OPERATIONS AND ADMINISTRATION

The Child Enrichment Program Committee is responsible for the policies and procedures of CEP. Members of the committee consist of CEP parents (both church and non-church members), the Messiah United Methodist Church Director of Discipling Ministries, the CEP Director, and members of Messiah United Methodist Church. The committee meets monthly.

DAILY OBJECTIVES

Children will:

- Enjoy work and play with others.
- Respect the rights of others.
- Recognize teachers and other adults as friends.
- Be accepting and comfortable with other children.
- Accept personal responsibilities for group living.
- Feel their worth to themselves and those around them.
- Enjoy activities that develop large and small muscles.
- Develop habits of health, safety and nutrition.
- Manage feelings by expressing themselves in a clear, non-aggressive manner.
- Accept disappointments by substitution of other acceptable plans.
- Understand and sympathize with others.
- Grow in self-discipline and self-control.
- Appreciate the sensory experiences of the world.
- Accept and value the diversity of people, cultures and ideas.

PARENT INFORMATION

Different methods of communication are used to provide parents with up-to-date information about CEP.

- The ExCEPtional Times is a monthly newsletter providing announcements, classroom updates, activities, and other important information.
- Daily activity notes are posted outside each classroom at the end of the day.
- The CEP website - www.messiahcep.org - is updated regularly and is a good reference for upcoming events and general information about the preschool.
- E-mail to parents provides reminders and individual classroom updates from teachers and the administration.
- A Parent Resource Cart is located next to the CEP office. Materials may be borrowed; we operate on the honor system. Please return borrowed items in a timely manner. Donations are welcome and should be first given to the Director for cataloging purposes.

- Above the Parent Resource Cart are two bulletin boards. One is for general information and the other may be used for parent-to-parent communication and announcements.

POLICIES

1. Child Eligibility

Children are eligible for enrollment if they are between 17 and 59 months of age by September 30th of the year for which they are enrolling.

The Director, by permission of the Child Enrichment Program Committee, has the right to refuse entrance to any child, as well as request the withdrawal of any child, if evidence is shown that the child's participation in the program would cause physical or psychological harm to any child or adult in the program.

The same rights of withdrawal or refusal apply if the program does not meet the special or specific needs of a child. In certain circumstances, the preschool may determine that there is a need to assign additional staff to act as a resource for a specific student. Any additional cost related to this assignment will be the responsibility of the parent.

2. Registration

A non-refundable registration fee is required for each student registering. Students enrolling between September and January 31st are required to pay the full registration fee. Those students enrolling after January 31st are required to pay a registration fee equal to the regular fee reduced by \$15.00.

An application form must be completed at the time of registration and accompanied by the registration fee.

According to the CEP Committee, the director cannot accept sign-up sheets at the time of registration.

Enrollment in the Child Enrichment Program is open to all interested families with priority given in the following order:

1. Messiah church families currently enrolled in the program, current CEP Committee members, CEP staff, and Messiah UMC pastoral staff. To be considered a Messiah church family, you must have joined/attended Messiah United Methodist Church by October 31 of the current school year.
2. Currently enrolled CEP families with at least 3 years cumulative school attendance (each school year counts as one per family - regardless of the number of children enrolled).
3. Messiah church families and current CEP families with less than 3 years cumulative school attendance.
4. Alumni of CEP.

5. General public.

3. Tuition

Please make checks payable to CEP.

The first tuition payment is due the first Friday in May. If a child is registered after this date, the first tuition payment is due at the time of registration. **This first tuition fee is non-refundable.** Non-payment of this tuition fee by the first Friday in May will be considered an automatic withdrawal of the child from the program.

In September, the remaining yearly tuition may be paid in full or in 8 monthly tuition payments made from September to April. These payments are due the first class of each month beginning in September. A late fee of \$10.00 will be assessed for payments made after the 10th of the month. If tuition is still unpaid by the last day of the month, a satisfactory arrangement for payment must be made before the child may continue to participate in the school program.

Full tuition will continue to be charged if the school is closed temporarily due to unforeseen circumstances such as health precautions, weather conditions, energy shortages, or any reason beyond the control of the school.

Tuition adjustments will not be made for illness or vacation.

4. Returned Check Charges

A \$25.00 fee will be assessed for any returned check.

5. Hours and Terms of Operation

Messiah's Child Enrichment Program will have classes on Mondays from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. (17-23 month class), and from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. for all other classes. Classes that meet on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays meet from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

The school will open the Monday after Labor Day and close the last Friday before Memorial Day.

Reduced hours of operation are in effect the first four to five weeks of school. This special schedule provides an easier transition to school for your child. Children who demonstrate difficulty with scheduling or separation may be placed on a period of extended reduced hours. Adjustment difficulties will be discussed with parents so that they can be handled on an individual basis according to the needs of the child. All possible methods of assistance will be given to facilitate this process.

A schedule of the reduced hours will be available and distributed before the beginning of the school year.

The school will open one hour late (11:00 a.m.) for staff meetings and training one day during the months of October, November, January, February, March, and April.

6. Delayed Openings and Early Closings

CEP uses the Fairfax County Public School schedule as a guideline for its openings and closings. Specifically, the policy is as follows:

<u>Fairfax County Schools</u>	<u>Child Enrichment Program</u>	
Fairfax County Schools Closed	CEP Closed	
Two Hour Delay	Monday	Open at 10:30 a.m.
Two Hour Delay	T/W/TH/F	Open at 11:00 a.m.
Two Hour Early Dismissal	All Days	Close 2 Hours Early

The CEP Director may close the school for conditions determined to be unsafe. Make-up days will be determined at the discretion of the CEP Committee. It is CEP policy not to extend the school year past the first week of June.

7. Arrival Time

Teachers are busy preparing the classrooms before school opens. Please wait in the entrance hallway until CEP staff opens the doors. Doors will be opened five minutes before the beginning of the school day. If you arrive after the beginning of the school day, please find the Director and she will take your child to the classroom.

8. Departure Time

School ends at 12:30 p.m. (17-23 month class) and 1:30 p.m. on Monday, and 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday through Friday. Dismissal will begin five minutes before the end of the school day. Your child should to be picked up promptly at dismissal time. The staff has spent all of their time, love, and energies on your child during the program hours. After the close of school, they have other responsibilities. Your promptness is expected and appreciated.

There will be a \$10.00 charge for children picked up 15 minutes after dismissal time. After that time, a \$10.00 fee will be assessed for each 5 minute increment past closing time.

If a parent is unavoidably delayed, notification must be given by phone to the program office at 703.569.3033.

If you need to pick up your child early, please find the Director. She will go to the classroom to get your child. This process is less upsetting for the other children.

The staff will only send your child home with persons authorized to take your child unless you give them written or verbal permission for someone else to pick up your child. If the teachers and/or director are unfamiliar with the person(s) picking up your child, they may ask for photo identification (driver's license).

9. Parking Lot Safety

For the safety of all adults and children, we ask that you drive slowly and with great caution in the parking lot. No parking is permitted in the circle or next to any fire hydrants. Handicapped parking spaces may only be used by those cars with permits. If you require special assistance with transporting children, please call the CEP office. NEVER leave children unattended in cars.

When arriving at school, please use the Rolling Road entrance. Use the back exit onto Roxbury Avenue to leave the parking lot and please refrain from using your cell phone.

10. Absences

If your child will not be attending school, it is the parent's responsibility to notify CEP. If an absence is anticipated, please notify your child's teacher.

Tuition charges will continue if a child is kept home temporarily because of illness, family vacations, or other reasons.

11. Withdrawals

A 30-day written notice of withdrawal is required for a tuition reimbursement. As stated in the Registration Policies, this tuition reimbursement does not apply to the first tuition payment. If 30 days written notice is not given, a fee equivalent to one monthly tuition payment will be assessed.

12. Health

Virginia State Law requires all necessary health forms to be on file the first day that a child attends the program. A child can be refused admittance if completed health forms, signed by a qualified physician, have not been given to the Director.

Research shows that the biggest deterrent in fighting the transmission of germs is hand washing. Therefore, this self-help skill is taught continually in the classroom. Please help us by reinforcing hand washing before meals and after using the bathroom.

CEP has a policy that all children will wash their hands when entering the classroom at the beginning of each day (before participating in any activity). Parent assistance is needed for the youngest classes.

To help establish a healthy atmosphere for our preschool, we can only accept well children. We are depending on you to help us maintain our health policy. Your child must be kept home if:

- Child has a fever - oral 100 degrees or higher. Your child must be fever free without fever reducing medication for 24 hours before attending school.
- Child has diarrhea or vomiting within 24 hours of attending school.
- Child has a productive cough (croupy, whooping) or a thick nasal discharge.
- Child has a labored, rapid breathing (wheezing).
- Child has an earache, headache, red eyes or eyelids, chills, flushed skin, skin eruptions, severe itching, or skin rash.
- Child has a sore throat with fever.
- It has been less than 24 hours since receiving antibiotics.
- Child is too ill to play outside.
- Child has contracted a communicable disease and incubation exists or has any condition that may be contagious to others.
- Your child has head lice. To return to school, children must be treated for the lice and have a signed verification from a physician or the Health Department that they are free of lice and nits.
- Your child is behaving in a symptomatic way such as lethargy, irritability, etc.

The Director will be the final authority in judging the health and fitness of a child.

Should your child show these symptoms or become ill during class, we will call either parent or other emergency numbers and keep your child isolated and comfortable until he/she can be picked up from school.

The state of Virginia asks that parents inform all centers, within 24 hours or the next business day, after the child or any member of the immediate household has developed any reportable communicable disease. CEP will notify you if your child has been exposed to a communicable disease. Children with communicable diseases must be kept home.

13. Medication

The state of Virginia requires that schools and child care centers that administer medications have staff members who have successfully completed the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) approved Medication Administration Training (MAT) course. CEP has several MAT trained members on staff.

CEP will administer medications for emergencies and non-emergencies. Prescription medications must have forms completed by the parent and physician on file in the CEP office. Non-prescription medications have forms that must be completed by a parent. All forms are available in the school office.

14. Child Abuse Mandate

As of January 1, 2007, Section 63.2-1509 of the Virginia Code requires that should any person in their professional or official capacity have reason to suspect that a child is an

abused or neglected child shall report the matter immediately to the local Department of Social Services.

15. Accidents

Precautions for safety are taken, but should an accident occur, a parent will be notified immediately. Therefore, please see that all contact phone numbers listed on your emergency forms are kept current.

16. Discipline

In the belief that there is no real learning without discipline, the school maintains and insists upon definite rules of good behavior. These rules are all based on the premise of *respect for others*. A gentle approach is utilized that first identifies the action that was unacceptable. If a child has hurt (emotionally or physically) another child, he/she helps the teacher in aiding and comforting the injured child. The teachers will explain and encourage rules of good behavior. Parents will be notified of behavior issues that are unresolved and/or ongoing.

17. Food Allergies and Restrictions

The Child Enrichment Program strives to maintain a healthy and safe environment. Food allergies and the potential hazards and threats for young children of food inhalation are of primary concern. We trust that as caring and conscientious adults you will support our efforts to insure the safest possible environment for all the children who attend CEP by helping us maintain our food policies.

To prevent choking and accidents at school, teachers are not permitted to knowingly allow children to eat nuts, popcorn, whole grapes, or uncut hotdogs.

We are a peanut/nut free school. The following foods are excluded from CEP:

1. Any foods or candies containing peanuts or nuts. This also includes any foods containing "trace amounts".
2. Foods from manufacturers or bakeries that state on their labels that the product was made on equipment that also is used for products that contain nuts/peanuts.
3. Soy "peanut butter" and other foods of similar appearance are also not permitted.

There is no cure for a food allergy and strict elimination of the food in question is the only way to avoid an allergic reaction. The increase and severity of certain allergic reactions has resulted in our food policy.

18. Snack

The program will provide a morning snack. This is usually crackers or pretzels and water.

19. Lunches

Lunches are eaten at school in all classes except the Monday 17-23 month class. Parents are responsible for sending a lunch and drink from home in a lunch box. Small amounts of a variety of foods are best to send in your child's lunch.

Children under that age of 5 are prone to choking. Grapes must be cut in half lengthwise. Hotdogs must be cut into thin strips. If your child is in a 2 year-old class or younger, cheese and other foods must be cut into small bite-size pieces.

Do not send sweets. Please save these treats (candy, pudding, cookies, etc . . .) for home.

20. Birthday and Holiday Treats

Special treats for birthdays and holidays should be cleared with your child's teacher to insure compliance with our food policy. All foods prepared from home or purchased must meet our food allergy guidelines (no nuts or peanut butter).

21. Clothes

We strongly recommend washable play clothes. Art, cooking, and playground activities can be goopy, messy and dirty! Some washable paint colors do not wash out well and may leave permanent stains on clothing and shoes.

Please bring a sturdy bag (CEP tote) with a complete change of clothes (including socks and underwear), disposable diapers (4) and wipes for those not toilet trained, and a plastic bag for wet or soiled clothes. This tote goes home each day with your child. Extra clothes and a plastic bag are required for all classes.

Rubber-soled shoes or sneakers are strongly recommended. They better accommodate developing motor skills, rhythmic activities, navigating stairs, running, and outside play. Please do not send your child to school in boots, sandals or Crocs.

All removable articles of clothing should be labeled - coats, sweaters, hats, gloves, boots, etc.

Children's clothing with drawstrings will not be permitted. Parents are asked to remove or cut drawstrings and ties from hoods, waists, and bottoms of their child's clothing. These drawstrings are considered a health risk to your child in our environment. The strings can become snagged and create a choking hazard. CEP staff reserves the right

to remove from the clothing any drawstrings that pose a potential danger to a child or not allow the child to wear the clothing.

22. Toilet Training

Please speak with the teachers when your child reaches this developmental stage. They are prepared to assist children with toilet training and keep the process as consistent as possible. However, if your child is having daily accidents at school, diapers or pull-ups must be worn. If your child is in pull-ups and has an accident, diapers or Velcro pull-ups must be available in the tote bag to more easily change your child. Daily accidents in the classroom are a health issue.

If you are toilet training your child, be sure to send extra clothes, socks and shoes.

CEP requires that children in the 4 year-old class be toilet trained.

23. Field Trips

Advance notice will be given for all field trips. Parents may be asked to assist by driving or supervising their child's class on these trips. All drivers must provide proof of insurance in accordance with state regulations. A form will be provided for this purpose. Children are required to be in an approved safety car seat or restraint.

Parents will be asked to provide the car seat/restraint and will be responsible for installing it in the appropriate car on the day of the trip. A permission slip must be signed for each child at the time of his registration; this slip relieves the church and the preschool of any liability.

24. Outside Play

The children may go outside every day. Please dress your child appropriately.

If your child is not well enough to play outside, he/she should be kept at home.

25. Show and Tell

The purpose of Show and Tell is to foster the development of language, to promote self-esteem, and to develop self-confidence. This is an opportunity for the children to learn good listening and speaking skills. The "presenter" practices using expressive language to further develop communication skills and the "listeners" practice self-discipline and self-control as they learn to focus, ask questions or make comments.

Items shared during this time should be important, familiar, and of specific interest to the child so that information can be easily discussed.

Unacceptable items include toy weapons or any items that encourage or promote violence. Arrangements should be made in advance for bringing in pets.

Please assist your child with item selection for Show and Tell.

26. Toys

Unless requested by your child's teacher, please do not let your child bring toys, games, etc. to school. Books, music, nature objects, and pets (with permission) are wonderful to share at school. We will do our best to protect these items, but cannot be responsible for their safe return. All items should be labeled with your child's name.

27. Conferences

Optional conferences are available throughout the school year and are informal in format. Parents are encouraged to provide their child's teacher with developmental information and concerns at the beginning of the school year and at any time new information is available and/or concerns arise. Teachers will, in turn, notify parents of any specific developmental or behavioral concerns seen in the school environment.

Teachers may contact parents during the first few months of school for phone or in-school conferences.

In February and March, conferences are scheduled and limited to 15-20 minutes. The Director is available to attend conferences if requested.

The teachers of the 17 - 23 month class and the 19 - 25 month class do not hold formal conferences unless requested.

28. Classroom Visits and Observations

Parents are encouraged to visit or observe their child during the year. Observations may be done in the classroom or through the one-way windows on the classroom door. The playground is also available for observations from upstairs classroom windows.

29. Substitutes

CEP employs qualified individuals and parents as substitute assistant teachers. Substitutes will be required to submit the results of a TB test and a health examination. Additional forms and documents may be required. If you are interested in substituting for CEP, please see the Director. Substitutes are paid.

30. Complaints or Concerns

It is requested that any concerns you may have about your child or classroom be directed to the teacher. If not satisfactorily resolved, the complaint should be referred to the Director

Complaints that cannot be resolved by the Director should be made in writing to the CEP Committee. The Committee shall seek to handle the complaint in a way that is personally satisfying to everyone involved.

31. Scholarship Fund

A limited scholarship fund is available to aid families who require financial assistance and is overseen by the CEP Committee. See the Director for help in this matter

32. Gifts to the Child Enrichment Program

In the past, some parents and friends of CEP have expressed a desire to contribute to the growth and quality of our program through monetary gifts or equipment. The program does not solicit such gifts. If you wish to assist our program in any manner, please contact the Director. Any discussion or action will be held in confidence.

PUBLIC DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

The Code of Virginia, Section 63.1 - 196.3, allows child day centers operated by religious institutions the opportunity to file for an exemption from licensure by meeting documentation and other requirements specified within the exemption law. Annually, CEP files this documentation to operate as a religiously exempt child care center in Virginia.

The statements below have been prepared and distributed to meet requirements of the exemption law.

Exemption

In compliance with the Code of Virginia, this center is exempt from licensure and is classified as an "Exempt" child care center.

Qualifications of Personnel

The staff of CEP meets the Messiah Child Enrichment Program Church Committee's qualifications. These include academic training and/or experience working in developmental early childhood education, annual continuing educational requirements, successful work experience with young children, a positive attitude toward children, and a Christian commitment. All teachers and staff members are certified in CPR and First Aid. CEP meets the requirements for Medical Administration Training (MAT) as mandated by the Code of Virginia Drug Control Act.

Description of Facilities

The program uses the first floor of Messiah United Methodist Church's educational youth wing. Rooms 163, 165, 166, and 168 are used as classrooms. The Youth Center (basement level) is used for gross motor activities and is supplied with slides, riding toys, large building blocks, mats, balls, etc. Room 203 is used for music classes. Messiah has kitchen facilities that are available for use by the program. There is a fenced playground with equipment such as slides, climbing apparatus, and sandbox. The Child Enrichment Program has access to all other church facilities as needed.

Enrollment Capacity

Our Fairfax County Department of Health Services permit allows our program a maximum of 60 children per day. Presently, we have 31 to 56 children enrolled per day. Class sizes range from 7-15 children per classroom depending on the age of the children. CEP complies with staff-to-child ratios as required by state law.

Food Service

The program provides mid-morning snacks. Children bring their lunch from home.

Staff Health Requirements

Staff employed at CEP must be certified annually by a practicing physician to be free from any disability that would prevent them from caring for children. A negative TB test result is required every two years for each staff person. Documentation is on file in the program office.

Public Liability Insurance

The Child Enrichment Program is covered by public insurance and accident insurance.

Revised 8/29.17