

# Cathedral Early Childhood Center

Family Handbook  
(Updated JULY 2017)

State Licensed to provide care for children  
6 weeks to 13 years of age  
6:00am- 6:00pm  
Monday through Friday

519 North 10<sup>th</sup> Street  
St. Joseph, Mo 64501  
Telephone: 816-233-9794  
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## Table of Contents

- Mission Statement/ Philosophy
- Goals for children
  - Curriculum
  - Child Assessment
  - Parent Teacher Conferences
  - Discipline
- Hours of Operation
  - Center hours
  - Holidays
  - Severe Weather/Emergency Closings
  - Special Events
- Staff
  - Professional Development
  - Substitute Teachers
- Safety
  - Sign In/Out Policy
  - Security
  - Accidents or Emergencies
  - Fire & Prevention
  - Tornado/ Natural Disaster
  - Allergy Prevention

- Health
  - Child Illness Policy
  - Medication
  - Allergy Prevention
  - Biting
  - Safety Measures
  - General Policies
- Children's Records
- Clothing
- Visitation and Volunteering
- Enrollment Procedures
- Notice of Withdrawal from the Program
- Payments
- Late pickup and fee
- Registration Packet
- Signed Confirmation Form

## **CATHEDRAL EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER**

Cathedral Early Childhood Center is a State Licensed Center owned and operated by the Cathedral of St. Joseph and is incorporated under the auspices of the Catholic Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph. The Cathedral Early Childhood Center provides childcare for children six weeks to thirteen years of age. Our curriculum includes 3, 4 and 5 year old full-day preschool and before and after school care.

### **PHILOSOPHY**

The philosophy of Cathedral Early Childhood Center is based on creating a sound spiritual, psychological and social environment which will allow for the development of each child to his or her maximum potential. Cathedral Early Childhood Center will provide a learning experience which will create a foundation for a lifetime of education in a safe environment. We provide the opportunity for a child to explore and develop skills in communication, listening, observation and building relationships with others. Our curriculum strives to provide each child with a sense of self-motivation and self-reliance. Our Center's program is designed to develop solid values in each child and to teach each child that he or she possesses basic human dignity.

## GOALS FOR CHILDREN

The goals of Cathedral Early Childhood Center include the basic concepts that we will strive toward as we serve your child and family.

- To provide a Catholic “early childhood” environment where spiritual values are nurtured
- To provide a physical environment that is safe, clean, healthy, and child-oriented
- To encourage the unique qualities of each child and to be sensitive to his/her individual needs
- To cultivate in each child a healthy respect for self and others
- To maintain a positive classroom atmosphere that encourages successful experiences and a love of learning
- To assist the children in exploring the world around them as they broaden their sense of discovery and develop their scope of learning
- To create a caring and nurturing atmosphere that fosters creativity and a positive self-image
- To help develop understanding of receptive and expressive language
- To foster each child’s enjoyment of children’s literature and music

## CURRICULUM

Our age-grouped classes encourage children to be actively involved in the learning process as they experience a variety of appropriate developmental activities. The daily schedule is planned to balance indoor/outdoor, active/quiet, individual/small group/large group, large muscle/small muscle, child-initiated/ teacher-initiated activities within a child-oriented context. These activities are designed to foster self-concept, develop social skills, encourage children to think, reason, question, and experiment, encourage language development, develop physical skills and creative expression and to enhance sound health, safety, and nutritional practices.

Teachers working with the three-, four-, and five-year olds design lesson plans based on state and national standards to teach specific skills necessary for age-appropriate development. These activities are directly related to the assessment used for each specific age group and are designed to promote the development of the whole child and address the spiritual, social, emotional, physical, and cognitive skills necessary for lifelong learning. In addition, we are using the Sadlier Discovering God’s Child and Discovering God’s World in our 3’s and 4/5 Preschool classes. Joyful songs, poetry and hands-on activities introduce children to God’s gifts of self, creation, and love with family and the church community. This specially designed program addresses the social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development of children in an early education program.

The infants/toddlers and two-year old teachers complete their lesson plans following “High Scope” guidelines. This curriculum is specifically designed to assist teachers in meeting the needs of our youngest learners and reflect their unique developmental stages and learning styles.

## **CHILD ASSESSMENT**

Cathedral Early Childhood Center uses various assessments, based on the age of the child, including the Diocesan assessment for three- to five- year olds, and the developmental screening instrument, “Ages and Stages Questionnaire” for our infants, toddlers and two-year olds. After the assessment is completed, the results will be shared with you during a parent-teacher conference. In some cases, areas of possible delay may be discovered , which enable the parent to receive early intervention services for their child, if needed. Research shows strong evidence that the earlier a possible problem is identified, the more successful the child will be in subsequent educational years. The Diocesan assessment tool is based on Missouri state standards and NAEYC criteria. These tools will allow you to see exactly where your child is in his/her development and enable parents and teachers to set age level goals and to monitor achievement.

## **PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Communication between teacher and parent is essential to the success of our program. Teachers will be in contact with you throughout the year to keep you informed of your child’s progress in the classroom, via phone calls, notes home, and parent-teacher conferences. All children will be given a developmental screening within the first 3 months of the school year. Parents will be provided information, either verbally or in writing, about their child's development and learning. This will occur on a quarterly basis, with written reports at least 2 times a year. Our teachers work very diligently to use any assessment results to align their curriculum and teaching practices to the interests and needs of each particular child.

Individual conferences will be held in the fall and spring during our designated conference days. Each child will have a portfolio demonstrating their development in the early education program. This portfolio is an authentic collection of your child's work, showing their progress throughout the year. These portfolios will be shared with the parents during conferences. The portfolios will remain in the center and move to new classrooms with your child. At the end of your child's preschool experience the portfolio will be given to you. Parents are encouraged to discuss any concerns with the teachers or the administrators at any time. We welcome your comments and suggestions.

## DISCIPLINE

Cathedral Early Childhood Center strives to discourage all forms of unacceptable behavior by maintaining an appropriate classroom environment. Cathedral Early Childhood Center embraces a philosophy of positive reinforcement, redirection to appropriate behavior, addressing actions rather than children, and giving children a clear understanding of the consequences of unacceptable behavior. The teacher will handle discipline by various methods of communication and, if necessary, removal from the activity. The Conscious Discipline model is implemented in the center. Staff members are trained in utilizing the safe place technique for children who may need time away from the group. Conscious Discipline includes "I Love You" rituals designed to make human connections, which create neural connections in the brain. Our brains are shaped by our loving relationships, and the health of a child's relationships with others is the vital link to academic success.

The teacher and the administration will contact the parent for a conference concerning any negative behavior that does not respond to this technique. Under no circumstance will a child be subjected to discipline that is severe, humiliating, frightening, or associated with food, rest or toileting. Parents are encouraged to discuss the needs of their child with the teacher so that we may best serve the needs of each child in our center.

If a situation arises where a child experiences difficulty complying with redirection, time away in the safe place, or displaying a behavior or language that is violent toward a staff member or another child, the parents will be notified. In some situations it may be necessary to restrict the child's daily attendance or require time away from the center. In cases such as this, we emphasize communication between the parents, Early Education Center staff, administration, and child. In all situations, our focus will be to keep as a priority, the healthy development and safety of the children, the staff, and the center as a whole. No form of corporal punishment is allowed by anyone (including families) while on center property. **Staff members are mandatory reporters of child abuse.**

## STATE LICENSING

Cathedral Early Childhood Center is fully licensed by the State of Missouri. The regulations of the license are available in the office of the Director.

## HOURS OF OPERATION

Cathedral Early Childhood Center is open Monday through Friday from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. For 3, 4 and 5 year old preschoolers, our day begins at 8:00 a.m. Please have your child here at the Center no later than 7:50 a.m.

## HOLIDAYS & SNOW DAYS

Cathedral Early Childhood Center observes nine major holidays each year (New Year's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and the day after, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day) and two Professional Development Days, usually scheduled in October and February. (These dates will be communicated as part of the annual contract.). There are no refunds for these holidays.

Snow days: when the public and parochial schools are closed due to bad weather, we will generally be in operation at the Center. Dependent on the severity of the weather and allowing for staff to deal with the road conditions on some snow days there may be some delay as to the exact time the Center can open. When schools are closed due to bad weather please call prior to leaving your home. This will ensure that we have adequate staff available.

You will be reminded at least two weeks prior to a holiday of our planned closing. Annually, a calendar will be distributed to all families enrolled in the center.

## EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

In the event that a major problem develops (extreme weather, lack of utilities, or maintenance difficulties) parents will be notified as soon as possible. If such a closing occurs before the Center is opened in the morning we will try to phone you at home. The closing will be posted on television channel 10 and channel 3.

## SPECIAL CATHEDRAL ECC EVENTS

There will be special events scheduled throughout the year, both seasonal events and classroom/teacher events. Examples of these programs/events are Ice Cream Social night and Parent/Teacher conferences. You will receive notice of these 2-4 weeks in advance. All children and parents are invited. The events will be announced in the monthly calendar as well.

## STAFF

Staff ratios are one caregiver for every four infants/one year olds, one caregiver for eight two-year-olds, one caregiver for ten three-year-olds, etc. We have a caring staff who, on a regular basis, continue their education in early childhood care and development.

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Professional Development Days are an opportunity for our staff members to continue developing their skills and providing the best possible learning environment, activities, and experiences for the children. These training opportunities require that we close the center in order for all staff members to participate in planned activities.

## **SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS**

On the days when staff ratio is low or a staff member is ill or absent the director will call for a teacher substitute, assistant, or aide to assist in the daily activities.

## **HEALTH & SAFETY**

Cathedral Early Childhood Center maintains stringent health and safety practices. Staff members undergo screenings during the hiring process, including background reference checks. Staff members certified in CPR, First Aid, and Bloodborne Pathogens (infectious control) are present in the center at all times. All staff members are trained with regard to proper hygiene practices, which include hand-washing procedures, general infection control, diapering, and toileting procedures. We will ensure that certain equipment items and surfaces are sanitized using soap and water followed by a bleach solution on a regular schedule. The center management conducts routine fire and emergency drills on a regular basis.

To ensure that families and children feel comfortable at all times, families of enrolled children are welcome to visit at any time under an open-door policy. We provide our own security keypad system/secured access, ensuring that access is available only to parents/guardians and authorized personnel. Families who enter the building on a regular basis for our full-time program will be given a code to enter the building. Families will be notified of any security code changes in writing. It is important that only adults access the code on the security pad. All other families entering the building may gain access by pushing the white button. To make certain that the center is kept as secure as possible, we ask that you not allow unknown people to walk in with you or enter the center upon your departure.



## SIGN IN – SIGN OUT POLICY

State law requires an adult sign your child in and out of the Center each day. We will not release your child to another child. Only persons listed on your enrollment sheet, as either emergency contacts or authorized pick-ups, will be allowed to sign out your child from the Center. If you send someone to pick up your child who is not on the list, you must notify the school in writing or by phone before pick-up time. Identification will be required when someone unfamiliar to our staff picks up your children.

## SECURITY SYSTEM/KEYPAD

The code and the keypad are intended for parents and teachers only. Please do not give the code to siblings or visitors. All visitors must check in the office to enter.

## ACCIDENT OR EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

If your child becomes injured at the center, the teacher in charge will administer simple first aid such as washing the injury, applying ice, and bandaging. The teacher will then fill out an injury report. One copy will go to the parent and one copy will go in the child's file. If the injury were serious, we would call the parent for instruction. If the child receives a serious injury that requires the services of a doctor, the following procedure will be followed:

- Call parent or guardian.
- Call one of the persons listed on the emergency card.
- Call the child's physician for his/her advice.
- In the case that the above three fail, we will call an ambulance or paramedic team and have the child taken to an emergency hospital with a staff person accompanying in the paramedic's van or ambulance. \*\*Any and all expenses incurred under #4 will be borne by the child's family or guardian. If an injury is severe, procedures 1-3 will be waived, and 911 will be immediately summoned.
- Safety -- The first teacher on duty in the morning will make a visual inspection of the rooms, and correct any potential hazards. Staff will use good judgment and prevention techniques to avoid injuries.

## **FIRE PREVENTION AND PROCEDURES**

- Monthly fire drills will be conducted; a log is kept for licensing
- Primary exit of the building is out the front door. The second exit is the back door. The third exit is through the windows.
- 911 will be called if needed.
- Fire extinguishers are in each hallway. 5. All staff are trained in fire procedures at their orientation.

## **TORNADO/ NATURAL DISASTER**

In the event of a tornado or other natural disaster, the tornado evacuation route posted at the front entrance will be used. All children and teachers will go to the basement. A monthly tornado drill is conducted from April-September, and a log is kept. In the event we would leave this building we will go to the School listed on the evacuation poster. If we cannot go there we will go to the Church basement where the cafeteria/info desk/phone is available for us to use.

## **ALLERGY PREVENTION**

Families are to notify the center regarding children's food or environmental allergies and health conditions. A list of children's food allergies is posted in each classroom and the kitchen, after the parent gives consent. Staff members familiarize themselves with the allergy list and consult the list as appropriate to avoid the risk of exposing children to substances to which they have known allergies. Due to the prevalence of peanut allergies, Cathedral Early Childhood Center is a "peanut free zone." However, we may serve some snacks that are prepared in peanut oil or in factories that also package peanut products. If your child has a severe allergy to peanuts or any other substance, please be sure to give complete details to administrative staff who will pass this information onto appropriate staff members.

The Special Needs/Medical Information Form will be given to any family that has a child with any special developmental, health or nutritional needs. This is to be completed by a parent before the start of the school year and updated as needed. It is to be signed by a parent and an administrator before being copied for the teacher and kept on file.

## BITING

Biting is a normal stage of development, commonly seen in infants, toddlers, and two-year-olds. Biting is a behavior that is very disturbing to all involved. When it occurs, biting cannot be ignored. Children bite for different reasons. Some of these reasons may include feeling frustrated or threatened, being unable to express their feelings or needs verbally, being excited or overstimulated, exploring cause and effect relationships, teething, and being hungry or fatigued. When biting happens, we clearly label it as unacceptable and explain the reason in words the child can understand. This is done after first caring for the child who was bitten. Our focus will not be on punishment for biting, but on effective techniques that address the specific reason for biting and that teach the child alternative acceptable behaviors. Delayed punishment at home will not be understood by the child. Incident reports will be written for the child who was bitten and to the family of the child who bit. We will work together with the families of the biter and the bitten child to keep them informed and to develop strategies for change. We will make every effort to modify the behavior quickly and the names of the children involved will remain confidential.

## POLICY ON SICKNESS

Please do not bring your child to Cathedral Early Childhood Center if he/she is displaying illness or has a fever. Please respect the staff's judgment when they determine that a child should not attend Cathedral Early Childhood Center because of illness. These limits are designed to help ill children recover and to avoid the spread of disease. Listlessness, diarrhea, fever, or crankiness may all be symptoms of illness, and it is our policy to isolate children showing such symptoms. Parents need to pick up their child promptly if he/she is ill. Cathedral Early Childhood Center "illness policy" goes along with the requirements set by the state of Missouri guidelines *"A child or staff person with any of the following conditions or behaviors is a ill child or adult and must be excluded from a center not licensed to operate a sick care program."*

***If the child becomes ill while at the center, the child must be isolated from other children in care and the parent called immediately. The center must exclude a child:***

- Who has a reportable illness or condition that is contagious, (Parents must inform us within 24 hours if their child has a contagious disease.)
- With chickenpox until the child is no longer infectious or until the lesions are crusted over;
- Who has vomited since arriving that day;
- Who has had 3 abnormally loose stools since arriving that day;
- Who has contagious conjunctivitis or pus draining from the eye (pink eye);
- Who has a bacterial infection and has not completed 24 hours of antibiotics
- Who has unexplained lethargy and is unable to participate in all the regular activities of the day;
- Who has a 100 degree Fahrenheit temperature or above before fever reducing medication is given;
- Whose temperature has not been below 100 degrees for 24 hours
- Who has an undiagnosed rash or a rash attributable to a contagious illness or condition;
- Who requires more care than the teacher can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children in care
- Who has lice or knits and has not been free of one or both for 24 hours

## **MEDICATIONS GIVEN AT THE CENTER**

*To administer medicine the following procedures must be followed:*

- The license holder must get written permission from the child's parent before administering any medicine, diapering products, sunscreen lotions, and insect repellents.
- The license holder must follow written instructions from a licensed physician or dentist before administering each medicine, prescription or non-prescription. Medicine with the child's name and current prescription information on the label constitutes instructions.
- All medicine must be kept in its original container and have a legible label stating the child's name. The medicine must be given only to the child whose name is on the label. The medicine must not be given after

an expiration date on the label; any unused portion must be returned to the child's parent or destroyed.

- Sunscreen will be supplied by the each family.. A diaper rash ointment must be labeled with the child's name and used only for the individual child whose name is written on the label.
- Medicines, sunscreen lotions, and diaper rash control products must be stored according to directions on the original container and so they are inaccessible to children."

## GENERAL POLICIES

### PARENTAL VISITS

Parents are welcome to visit the Center at any time. We encourage your involvement and support. Feel free to request a conference (with the Director/Coordinator, or your child's Teacher) concerning your child's progress. In addition to this we encourage parents to check their child's journals for correspondence. If you would like to volunteer in your child's classroom, please visit with the ECC Coordinator regarding the required preparation steps.

### ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE TIMES AND REGULATIONS

Upon arrival at the Center children are to be brought into the building and signed in by listing the time of arrival. When picking up your child please sign out and list time of departure. Children will only be released to those authorized by you. Any changes in your authorization should be made known to us as soon as possible. The sign-in / sign-out sheets are required by the State office.

### DRESS

Children may wear whatever is comfortable and practical. Please label coats, hats, etc. with your child's name or initials. We have both an indoor and outdoor play period. Please be sure that your child is dressed appropriately. For comfortable outdoor play during colder weather, hat, mittens, and boots are necessary. During the warm weather extra play clothes are needed. Tennis shoes are the most practical footwear. Please do not have your child wear flip flops. For infants and children being toilet trained, practical clothing is expected: i.e. pull-on pants with elasticized waistbands. All children should have at least one complete change of clothing in case of accidents or spills.

## CHILD RECORDS

The information in your child's record is considered confidential and will remain in a locked cabinet on-site at all times. Only those who are directly related to the care of your child, center administration, national accrediting agencies or the state health department will have access to the record without your written permission. As a parent/guardian, you may have access to your child's record within 24 hours of the request to view the record.

## COMMUNICATION

- Communication between parents and staff of the Cathedral Early Childhood Center is essential in maintaining an effective program. This communication will take place through various methods:
  - Daily verbal communication between parents and teachers or administrators of the center
  - Teacher newsletters will go home with the children from the teachers at certain times (weekly or bi-weekly)
  - These letters will inform as to what is happening in the classroom curriculum, as well as to notify of upcoming special events and activities
  - Daily lesson plans and activities are posted for parents to read
  - These will include calendar or policy changes or reminders, special events, review or clarification of center policies and guidelines, and general center or Parish happenings
  - Parent/Teacher conferences will be held twice a year, once in the fall and once in the spring
  - An annual survey allows you to rate and comment on all aspects of the program.

## **PUBLICITY INFORMATION**

If photos of your child are asked to be taken for publicity purposes, we will have you sign a release form.

## **ADMISSION POLICY- NON-DISCRIMINATION**

Cathedral Early Childhood Center is operated on a non-discriminatory basis and no one shall be excluded from enrollment because of race, color, national or ethnic origins, or family orientation. We are able to accommodate children with special needs, provided we are able to understand the state of the child's health and physical and emotional development and to assess whether or not we can meet the child's needs.

If at any time we feel we are not able to meet the needs of a child in the program, a conference will be called between the parents, the Center Director and the child's teachers to determine a course of action based on the needs of the child. Cathedral Early Childhood Center reserves the right to request an outside evaluation of the child's physical, emotional and cognitive development to assist in determining the proper placement of a child in the program.

## **CONTRACT FOR CLIENTS**

All care provided is based by contract, requested numbers of days and hours, with a minimum of 3 days per week. Contracts are written for one year, July 1- June 30. Contracts for the Summer program are for the months of June, July and August.

## **TERMINATION POLICY / NOTICE AND/OR SCHEDULE CHANGES**

By signing your contract you indicate your intentions of attending the entire year (or through June 30th for those joining during the contract year). We understand that family circumstances can change during the year. To terminate services, we require a two-week written notice. This allows us to fill the vacancy in a timely manner. Please pay your bill in full before your child's last day at the center. Changes in your child's schedule need to be made with the Director/Coordinator; if possible, *two weeks in advance of the date you wish the change*. Cathedral Early Childhood Center reserves the right to terminate the contract upon two weeks written notice.

## PAYMENTS / TUITION

Tuition will be paid on a weekly , bi-weekly, or monthly (if paid by the 15th of the current month). This is part of the contract. If a payment is missed, the child will not be accepted for further care until all back charges are paid. A charge of \$20 is made for all checks which do not clear the bank. After two returned checks all further payments must be made in the form of a cashier's check. (All checks should be made payable to Cathedral Early Childhood Center). Children not picked up by 6:00 P.M. , a "Late Fee Charge" of \$1.00/minute until the parent arrives will apply. The front desk wall clock shall be the official time instrument used in cases of overtime. Please be prepared to pay at the time of pick-up or the following morning. Even if you contact the center of your delay, the late fee will be assessed.

## REGISTRATION PACKET

Included in this packet are forms we use to collect vital information to better care for your child and to respond in case of an emergency. These forms are confidential and the contents will not be discussed with anyone but our staff.

- Enrollment
- Medical/Health form
- Contract for enrollment
- Registration fee
- Copy of Immunization Record
- Child Medical Examination Report-it is best to have the Child Medical Examination Report on the first day. If you are unable to get a doctor appointment you have 30 days from the date of enrollment to have it completed and signed by the child's physician. If your child has had a physical exam within the last six months, your Dr. can sign the form and send it through the mail or may be faxed.
- Child Profile Sheet
- Medication Consent form
- Parent's specialized instructions for Infant/Toddlers
- Special Needs/medical Information Form (if applicable)
- Release Form – photo, health screen and campus access Parents are responsible for making changes in address, phone number, etc.



## GLOSSARY

NAEYC--National Association for the Education of Young Children Accreditation  
QRS—Quality Rating Service

## RESOURCES

Accreditation [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org)

Discipline [www.lovingguidance.com](http://www.lovingguidance.com)

Protecting God's Children [www.virtus.org](http://www.virtus.org)

Referral Network [www.thefamilyconservancy.org](http://www.thefamilyconservancy.org)

Missouri Standards [www.dese.mo.gov](http://www.dese.mo.gov)

Childcare Aware <http://mo.childcareaware.org/>

Early Learning in Kansas City [www.marc.org](http://www.marc.org)



