

# Parent Handbook



## Policies and Procedures

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# Parent Handbook

## Policies and Procedures

### I. GENERAL INFORMATION

#### *Statement of Services*

School of Life preschool is a Christian preschool licensed by the State of Illinois, Department of Children and Families Services. We are licensed to care for no more than 28 children at any one time. We are inspected regularly to ensure that we meet licensing standards.

We are required to maintain a current, accurate written record of daily attendance for all of the children. Please assist us in meeting this requirement by signing your child(ren) in and out of the center on the required Daily Attendance Record.

School of Life Preschool will provide care for children between the ages of 6 weeks and 6 years. Childcare services are available without discrimination on the basis of sex, race, color, creed, disability, sexual orientation, national origin or ancestry. Your child must be going through the potty training process in order to be accepted to School of Life Preschool.

Childcare services will be provided between the hours of 7:30 AM and 6:00PM, Monday through Friday January through December. We have two sessions: School Year session and summer session. No service will be provided on New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Last week of June (staff training), July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving (and the day after), and Christmas Eve and Day. All regular fees will be charged for the holidays. If a holiday falls on a Saturday, we will be closed the previous Friday. If a holiday falls on a Sunday, we will be closed the Monday following.

#### *Purpose*

The mission of the School of Life Preschool is to provide quality foundation for our children that impact and inspire lifelong learning.

We provide a safe, affordable, high quality childcare. School of Life Preschool offers activities and experiences that will widen the child's horizon, encourage creativity and exploration, provide opportunities for physical development, mental and spiritual growth, and strengthen the child's self concept and capabilities. The School of Life Preschool staff is committed to the

families we serve, providing support and encouragement.

Our teachers are knowledgeable of the development capabilities and needs of young children and plan their curriculum to provide an abundance of successful experiences, opportunities to make choices, and enough structure to promote socialization and listening skills. Self discipline and respect for others will be encouraged, and safety will be provided through limits that are set firmly, consistently and lovingly by the teachers and staff members.

### ***Philosophy***

We believe that the Scriptures are the inspired, infallible Word of God and the final authority concerning human conduct, and as such are the foundation of true knowledge, wisdom, and understanding. We believe in one true God, the Creator and sustainer of all life and source of all truth.

We believe that through His son, Jesus Christ, we have been provided the way of salvation through a personal faith in Him.

We recognize the necessity of spiritual growth of the believer through a sanctified life evidenced by the fruit of the Spirit and we acknowledge the ministry of the Holy Spirit who is active in the church through the gifts of the Spirit.

We believe that God has given parents the responsibility of teaching His truths to their children and it is a ministry of the church to assist parents in this responsibility.

### ***Objectives***

From our philosophy evolves the following four areas of educational objectives:

- 1) The student's spiritual and moral growth
- 1) Their personal and social development
- 1) Their academic progress
- 1) The school's responsibility to the student's entire family

### ***Arrival and Departure Procedures***

Our preschool session is from 7:30 AM to 6:00PM

Students will not be able to enter the preschool until 7:30am. Please do not leave the children at the entrance door, but bring them into the classroom and be sure the teacher sees that they have arrived. Please be sure to sign your children in and out each day on the sign-in sheet on the desk in the main entrance. After the day session is completed, parents are to pick students up from the classroom and sign their child out on the sign-out sheet in the classroom.

If we have not heard from you by 15 minutes after the end of the day session, a staff member will attempt to contact you by phone one time. If you cannot be reached, the staff member will attempt to make phone contact with each of the persons listed on your Emergency Information Card filled out at the time of registration. Our staff will make up to 3 attempts to contact you or those listed on your card within the first 30 minutes after the day session has ended. If no phone contact has been made by this time, or no one is willing to come for your child, the preschool has the option of contacting our local police and requesting that they come and take responsibility for your child. At no time while waiting to be picked up will your child be left alone or with anyone other than the preschool director or classroom staff.

Children will only be released to persons listed on the enrollment form. If anyone other than the child's parent or someone who is listed on the enrollment form is to pick up a child, we need to be notified in writing. The person picking up the child may need to show a driver's license or other picture ID (must be at least 16 years old).

If the parent or other authorized person arrives to pick up a child and that person appears to be intoxicated or under the influence of drugs, all reasonable steps will be taken to prevent the person from leaving with the child, including offering to call a cab or another contact person. While we cannot legally withhold a child from the legal guardian, we will not hesitate to call the local authorities if we feel the child is in danger.

### ***Personal Belongings***

Children will be assigned a cubby to place their personal belongings in.

- Everyday your child should bring a book bag labeled with his/her name. This will be used to take home art projects, other papers, and special notes. Parents, please check the bag daily.
- Each child should bring to school in the book bag a complete change of clothing clearly marked with the child's name. If soiled clothes are sent home, please be sure labeled replacements are brought back the next day.
- Periodically your child's class will have a special show or tell time, at which time your child may bring something from home to share. Watch for notices and calendar announcements. Items should be labeled with child's name.
- Children should bring a soft toy, small pillow and blanket for naptime.
- Please do not allow your child to bring toys, candy, or gum to the preschool.

### ***Clothing***

Children should be dressed in comfortable play clothes that will allow participation in all kinds of activities and will not be ruined if soiled with dirt, grass stain, or paint. For safe climbing, rubber-soled shoes are recommended rather than slippery leather-soled shoes. Buckled or step-in shoes encourage the child's self-reliance and help the teacher. Please do not send your child in open-heeled shoes or in sandals without heel straps.

Children will go outdoors daily whenever possible. An outside temperature, with wind chill, of 20 degrees F or above is a primary guiding factor. Boots should be provided for rain and snow. Mittens, caps, scarves, and extra pants or snow pants should be provided in cold weather. Please make sure all items are clearly labeled.

### ***Communication Between Center and Parents***

Parents are welcome to visit the childcare program at any time during the hours of operation unless parental access is prohibited or restricted by a court order. If so, we will need a copy of the order. Please understand that we cannot legally limit access to a parent if there is not a copy of a court order on file at the center.

It is important that we communicate daily concerning the needs and interests of your child. If there are issues or concerns that need to be discussed, please work with me to arrange a convenient time to talk on the phone at naptime or in the evening so we can give the issue the attention it deserves. To foster communication, on a regular basis School of Life Preschool provides scheduled CONFERENCES / WRITTEN NEWSLETTERS / PARENT BULLETIN BOARD in entry way / DAILY SHEETS will be in your child's cubbies.

To protect each family's confidentiality, School of Life Preschool will not disclose personal information regarding a child or facts learned about a child or a child's family to anyone who is not authorized to receive this information.

All childcare providers are mandated reporters of suspected child abuse or neglect. If a child care provider suspects a child has been abused or neglected, that employee is required to report the abuse or neglect to child protective services or the police.

## **II. ENROLLMENT AND DISCHARGE OF ENROLLED CHILDREN**

All children will be enrolled for a trial period of 60 days. During the trial period either the provider or parent may terminate childcare without advance notice.

Parents must meet with us to discuss their child's specific needs and to review program policies. We will make a reasonable accommodation for a child with disabilities as specified under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

We will inform you of any updates that are needed and give you 1 WEEK to submit the updated forms.

Children may be enrolled on a full-time basis (25 hours per week or more). No child may be regularly enrolled for less than 20 hours.

A child may be discharged from the center for reasons such as, but not limited to:

- Failure to pay fees on due date (grounds for immediate termination, without advance notice).
- Lack of parental cooperation.
- Inability of childcare program to meet the needs of the child. We will consult with the parent concerning how any problems might be solved before ending the care arrangement. The parent will be referred to other community resources.
- Repeated failure to pick up the child at the scheduled time.
- Failure to complete and return required forms.

We will give a 1 WEEK written notice of our intent to discharge a child, and try to inform parents of local resources that may be of help to them, except when the discharge is due to parent's failure to keep current with fees owed. Should the parent remove the child during the notice period we initiate, fees will not be charged for the remaining unused days.

Parents must give a 2 WEEK written notice of their intent to withdraw the child(ren), and will be required to pay for those 2 WEEKS whether or not children continue to attend. All outstanding fees must be paid.



### **III. PAYMENTS AND REFUNDS**

Fees are to be paid each week on the first day your child is enrolled. If there will be a third party payment, as from an employer or the state, a special payment schedule will be arranged and detailed in the contract. Parents will be responsible for any specified co-payments or unpaid amounts.

School of Life Preschool DOES charge a registration / enrollment fee of \$50.00. This fee plus one week tuition must be paid at time of registration.

We will establish a regular rate based on your child's hours of enrollment. Additional fees will be assessed for additional hours if care is part-time or hours exceed the agreed upon hours of attendance per week

A full-time rate is offered for children who will be in care for 40 hours or more, 5 days per week.

There will be an extra fee assessed for late payment or late pick up of a child. There will be reductions for additional children from one family.

No refunds will be given for days when children do not attend due to illness, vacation or other reasons.

Unpaid balances cannot be carried over from one month to the next. Parents who do not pay by the 20th of the month will be notified that their children are not to attend the preschool on the 1st day of the new month.

Should financial difficulties prevent payment by the due date of each week, parents must contact the preschool to explain the reason and make suitable arrangements for payment.

For current fees, see rates on page 14 of this booklet.

## **IV. CHILD ABSENCES**

If your child will not attend on a regularly scheduled day please let us know within 1 HOUR before your child's scheduled arrival time.

If a child who is scheduled to arrive at the center does not arrive within 60 minutes after the specified time on the written agreement signed by the parent, and we have not been notified in advance of the child's absence, we will attempt to contact the parent or guardian to determine the child's whereabouts.

If a child is expected to arrive at the center from someplace other than home and does not arrive as scheduled, we will immediately attempt to contact that facility, and the parent if necessary, to determine the child's whereabouts.

## **V. HEALTH**

### ***Child Illness / Injuries***

Children who are ill are not to be brought to the center. The following are examples of children who are ill:

- A temperature of 101 degrees F by mouth, 100 degrees F under the arm or higher
- Vomiting or diarrhea has occurred more than once in the past 24 hours
- A contagious disease such as chicken pox, strep throat or pink eye
- An unidentified rash
- Has not been on a prescribed medication for at least 24 hours or continues to have symptoms of illness
  - Has a constant, thick, colored nasal discharge
  - A fresh cold with the following symptoms: very runny nose, glassy or watery eyes, frequent coughing or sneezing.
  - Lack of appetite, listlessness, irritability, unusual fatigue, etc.

Your child must be fever-free, diarrhea-free and nausea-free for 24 hours without medication before returning to the Preschool.

If a child has ringworm, impetigo, pinkeye, or any other similar infection, he/she must wait at least 24 hours after appropriate medicine has been started to return to the Preschool. A child who has contracted chicken pox may return 7 days after the first breakout and all lesions are scabbed over.

Upon arrival each day, your child will be observed by his or her teacher for symptoms of

possible illness or contagious disease and will be sent home if such symptoms are present.

We do not have the facilities to care for sick children. If a child should become ill while at the center, parents will be contacted immediately. Sick children will be isolated within sight or hearing and made as comfortable as possible. Children should be picked up within 1 HOUR. If the child is not picked up within 2 HOURS, the emergency contact person on the child's enrollment form will be called.

If a child has been out for 5 consecutive days, parents must provide a doctors note upon return. Children may return to the center when they are symptom free, have been appropriately treated or have been given medical approval to return to childcare. We will follow procedures on personal cleanliness and communicable diseases in accordance with licensing rules and the guidelines for exclusion of children from child care as adapted from the Division of Public Health.

We will report all communicable diseases, when required, to the local health department and to parents of all enrolled children. Parents of all enrolled children WILL be notified when their child has been exposed to an illness other than a communicable disease.

Superficial injuries will be washed with soap and water and covered with a bandage or treated with ice. Parents will be told about the minor injury when the child is picked up at the center or delivered to the parent or other authorized person.

Our staff has received training in first aid. We will follow standard emergency medical procedures for treating injuries. A head injury will be treated as a serious injury, and parents will be notified as soon as possible. All staff has current certification in infant and child cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) including training in the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED).

If there is a need for emergency medical treatment, 911 will be called and the child will be taken to The University of Chicago Medical Center, located at 5841 S. Maryland Avenue Chicago, IL 60637 | 773-702-1000. Should an ambulance be needed, parents will be responsible for any costs. Parents will be contacted as soon as possible after contacting 911.

All medication administered, accidents or injuries occurring during the time the child is in care, marked changes in behavior or appearance and any observation of injuries to a child's body received outside of my care will be entered into the center's medical logbook. As a licensed childcare center, we are required to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the local authorities.

### ***Medications***

We WILL administer medications. Prescriptive and non-prescriptive medication will only be given to children per doctor's order and when parents have completed the authorization form provided. All medicine must be in its original container bearing the label with child's name, dosage and administration directions. We will not exceed the age-related dosage on the label of any medication without a written doctor's authorization. Blanket authorizations, such as dispensing Tylenol at our discretion, are not allowed.

Prior to applying sunscreen or insect repellent to a child, we will obtain a written authorization from the child's parent. The authorization shall include the brand and the ingredient strength.

### ***Smoking***

Smoking any cigarettes or e-cigarettes is not permitted on the premises of the center during licensed child care hours.

### ***Insurance***

School of Life Preschool is covered by liability insurance for our premises and operations.

## **VI. NUTRITION**

We will follow USDA guidelines when planning our menus. No child will go without nourishment for longer than 3 hours. We will offer the following meals and snacks to all children in attendance at the times identified in the daily schedule.

Breakfast

Lunch

P.M. snack

If your child has special dietary needs (medical condition or personal choice) or has food allergies, parents must notify the center in writing. Food from home may be allowed in these circumstances.

MONTHLY records of meals and snacks are available for your review will be posted in the Monthly News Letter and will be posted on the News Board in the front lobby.

Birthdays will be celebrated at snack time. Special treats from home are welcome, and small cupcakes, cookies or ice cream are easiest for the kids to eat.

School of Life Preschool DOES participate in the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program.

## VII. DAILY ACTIVITIES

We do include religious instruction or practices in our daily activities. We do offer prayers before meals and snacks. We do offer a religious education curriculum (A Beka).

We celebrate the following occasions: Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving and each child's birthday.

Classroom visitors and field trips to area parks, zoos, museums, are planned regularly.

We will plan activities and provide children with a variety of experiences. Some of the activities will include:

- Language development: Books, music, story time, finger plays, flannel board stories
- Large muscle skills: Balls, hula hoops, bean bags, swinging, outdoor play
- Small muscle skills: Arts / crafts, stringing beads, pegboards, blocks
- Creative expression: Dramatic play, puppets, music / instruments, flannel board
- Self-help skills: Assist with mealtime preparation, dress self for outdoors
- Literacy skills: Books, story board, alphabet and writing games

Children will go outdoors daily when weather permits. The children may be kept indoors during inclement weather such as any of the following:

- Heavy rain
- Temperatures above 90 degrees F.
- Wind chills of 0 degrees F. or below for children age 2 and above.
- Wind chills of 20 degrees F. or below for children under age 2

There is an outdoor play space on the premises of the center.

Rest or naptime will be provided for all children younger than five years of age who are in care for more than four consecutive hours. Children who do not sleep may get up after 30 minutes, and children who awaken early will be allowed to get up when they awake. We will help children that are awake find appropriate activities.

All children will sleep on a COT covered by a sheet, which we will launder. You are encouraged to bring a blanket and or pillow, which you will launder at the end of each week.

We occasionally take field trips, including walks around the neighborhood. Emergency information for each child will be taken whenever the children leave the premises.

Hand washing Children and staff members must wash their hands upon entry, before and after meals, and when contact is made with bodily fluids. Hand sanitizers are not allowed.

### *Typical daily schedule*

#### Pre - School

7:30- 8:30 – Hand washing, Breakfast, activity time

8:30- 9:30 - Phonics, Writing or Reading (later in year) Activity Time  
(Science/Social Studies/Fine Arts)

9:30- 10:00 - Numbers/Numbers Writing Phonics

Review 10:00-10:30 – Hand washing/bathroom, Snack  
time

10:30-11:00 - Play

Stations 11:00-11:30 -

Gym time

11:30-12:00 – Hand washing,

Lunchtime 12:00-12:30 - Recess time

12:30-12:45 - Bathroom time/Hand

washing 12:45-1:00 - Story time

1:00-2-30 - Naptime

2:30- 3:25 - Bathroom time/Hand washing, Snack time, Quiet play/ Stations

3:25-3:30 - Preparation for dismissal

#### Extended - day schedule

3:30-4:00 - Recess time

4:00-5:00 - Activity  
time

5:00-5:30 - Bathroom time/ Hand washing, Snack

5:30-6:25 - Recess time

6:25-6:30 - Preparation for dismissal

#### Infant/Toddler

8:30 – 9:00 am - Welcome! Good Morning! Children arrive; teachers greet parents and interact with the babies.

9:00 – 9:30 am - Play time, floor time, tummy time, play gym or snuggles and singing.

9:30 – 10:00 am - Breakfast for older babies / bottles offered to younger babies, holding, snuggling, rocking, singing or reading.

10:00 – 10:15 am - Diaper Routine.

10:15 – 10:30 am - Touch and sensory exploration activities with discovery baskets.

10:30 – 11:00 pm - Outdoor/gym time, stroller walks, easy pushes on the baby swing.

11:00 – 11:30 pm - Diaper routine then quiet time.

11:30 – 12:30 pm - Lunch time for older babies / bottles offered to younger babies, holding, snuggling, rocking, singing or reading

12:30 – 2:30 pm - Diaper routine then afternoon nap.

2:30 – 3:30 pm - Diaper routine then snack for older babies/ bottles offered to younger babies, holding, snuggling, rocking, singing or reading.

3:30-4:30 pm - Outdoor/gym time, stroller walks or easy pushes on the baby swing.

4:30-6:00 pm - Diaper routine then play time, floor time, tummy time, play gym or snuggles and singing. Greet parents and say goodbye to children.

Please keep in mind: This schedule is only a general guideline this schedule is flexible and will be changed to adjust to baby's needs. Naps, snacks, lunch and bottles will be adjusted to baby's own schedule. Outdoor play will depend on the weather. Diapers are changed every 2 hours or more often if needed. Parents are welcome to visit unannounced at any time.

Baby Group Time - During the day, when babies are up, awake, happy and being social we will place the babies near each other for a baby group time experience. This will be a fun learning experience for the babies to see each other as we interact with the baby's using this week's theme with puppets, pictures or stuffed animals, reading a story, acting out a finger play or singing songs.

Outdoor Play - Outdoor play time for a young baby may consist of a walk in the carriage, sitting in teachers lap while hearing songs or stories, rocking in a chair with teacher or gentle pushes in a baby swing (when baby can sit up unattended). Older babies outside time may consist of (same as above) or sitting on a playpen pad or a thick blanket outside with age appropriate toys.



Discovery Baskets - Older babies will have fun each day exploring the discovery baskets which contain materials to explore at their own pace. These items will be fun sensory items of different shapes and textures.

## **VIII. CHILD GUIDANCE & DISCIPLINE**

Children's behavior will be guided by setting clear limits or rules for children. We will talk with children about expected behaviors and model those behaviors consistently for them. We will state positively what children can do, using specific terms (e.g., "you need to walk" rather than "don't run"). Undesirable behavior will be redirected to another activity. Children will be given a wide variety of age-appropriate activities to choose from and will be given the attention they need before they demand it. Behavior management will be for the purpose of helping children develop self-control, self-esteem and respect for the rights of others.

We understand that there will be times when a child will become distraught, fussy or will not stop crying. Our first action in these situations will be an attempt to determine the cause of the distress. It may be related to a basic need such as hunger or comfort, or it may be that the child just needs some extra time and attention. We understand that crying is normal, and that all children will have times when they cannot stop crying. At these times, we will stay calm and will do whatever we can to soothe your child. Sometimes this may mean just allowing the child to cry for a few minutes and then trying again. However, there also may be times when we need your advice or assistance, and we won't hesitate to call you if we feel that it is necessary.

We DO use "time outs" to deal with unacceptable behavior.

A "time out" or "take a break" may be used when other techniques have not been successful. A time out will be used to remove a child from a situation that has gotten out of control before a child can hurt himself or others. Time outs will never exceed five minutes and will not be used with children under three years of age. When used, the time out will immediately follow the behavior. We will stay with the child and talk about what behavior was unacceptable, and what else he/she might have done or said instead. Rather than use a specific time-out chair or corner, we will have the child "take a break" near the others so the emphasis is on relax / cool down rather than isolation and punishment. The child will be praised after completing the time out and will be helped to rejoin the group.

We recognize that no single technique will work with children every time. If a child exhibits unacceptable behavior, we will request a conference with parents to consider how to deal with the behavior. If the behavior continues, the next steps may include referrals to appropriate community resources, and / or discharge of the child from care.

In accordance with Licensing Rules for Family Child Care Centers, actions that may be psychologically, emotionally or physically painful, discomfoting, dangerous or potentially injurious are prohibited. Prohibited actions include spanking, hitting, pinching, shaking,

slapping, twisting, throwing or inflicting any other form of corporal punishment on the child; verbal abuse, threats or derogatory remarks about the child or the child's family; physical restraint, binding or tying the child to restrict the child's movement; enclosing the child in a confined space such as a closet, locked room, box or similar cubicle; withholding or forcing meals, snacks or naps; actions that are cruel, aversive, humiliating or frightening to the child; or punishing a child for lapses in toilet training. These forms of punishment will NEVER be used, even at a parent's request.

## **IX. TRANSPORTATION**

We DO NOT provide transportation. We will transport children to FIELD TRIPS. You will be notified in advance of the date, time and destination of any field trip requiring transportation.

We DO contract for transportation services. Contracted transportation services are provided through LOCAL CHICAGO TRANSPORTATION AGENCIES.

Public transportation IS NOT used for field trips requiring transportation. Children will never be left unattended in a vehicle.

Whenever children are being transported while in the preschool's care a written attendance checklist to make sure that all children are accounted for by name and sight at each transition, inclusive of each time a vehicle is exited. If we transferring the children to another responsible adult, we will be sure the adult acknowledges the transfer before leaving the child

We will obtain the driving record of any person who will be transporting children.

## **X. PETS and PEST MANAGEMENT SUMMARY**

Typically we will only have fish in the as classroom pets.

We have a pest management company that comes in bi-monthly to ensure that we are free of pests. We will send home a notice indicating that our pest management company has sprayed the building to ensure that we have no pests in the building. All the baits are stored in locations that our students CANNOT get to.