



Small Blessings

Christian Early Care & Preschool

Ministry of
First United Methodist church
600 South Main St.
Eaton Rapids, MI 48827
517-663-0131

Parent



Handbook

Teaching life skills for your child's future through
Christian values and innovative education.

We have several children with peanut allergies, so **Note the center needs to be peanut free;** check your child's lunch for any peanut products

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Our Mission

Mission Statement:

Teaching life skills for your child's future through Christian values and innovative education.

Philosophy:

We believe that each child is a child of God. Providing a nurturing and safe environment will help develop each child's physical, emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual needs to their fullest potential. Our center admits all children regardless of race, color, nationality or religious background. We believe that caring for children and providing support for families is a ministry of the First United Methodist Church.

Goals:

- Provide dependable and nurturing care for each child that is supportive of parental needs
- Provide positive guidance methods that will encourage proper behavior without harming self-esteem.
- Provide a secure environment by adhering to a predictable daily schedule
- Provide "hands-on" educational activities to stimulate each child's curiosity and creativity
- Provide a balance of activities and experiences
- We use the HighScope curriculum for all lesson plans in each room
- Provide the opportunity to learn about God through stories, prayer, music and conversation
- Please note that no attempt is made to prejudice a child against the faith of his/her parents

Staff:

As a ministry of the First United Methodist Church, we request that all employees have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. We strive to employ individuals that demonstrate a positive moral and ethical character. Employees must meet the licensing requirements of the State of Michigan for childcare providers.

Requirements mandate 16 hours of Continuing Education yearly; we require 24 hours with 3 hours of cultural competences or special needs. American Red Cross Certification is required every two years for CPR, and first aid; Blood Borne Pathogens within six months of employment.

Screening Policy for Staff:

All Small Blessings staff are screened as follows:

- Fill out a pre-interview worksheet.
- Have an interview with the director and one other staff member.
- Work with Lead Teacher for two days.
- Before employment is offered, must be cleared by the Michigan Child Care Background Check.

Screening Policy for Volunteers:

All classroom volunteers must be at least 16 years of age and documentation from PSOR stating they are not on the Public Sex Offender Registry. Volunteers will not be left unsupervised with children.

Hours of Operation

Small Blessings is open year round, Monday through Friday 6:00am to 6:00pm.

We are closed on the following days:

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Fourth of July
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving
- Black Friday
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas

Small Blessings will charge tuition for all holidays and severe weather days. The operating expenses of the Center are the same whether you bring your child or not. Therefore, no reduction of your tuition will be made if your child misses a day. However, we do offer "free days" exceptions.

Severe weather closings will be posted on the WLNS schooling closing web site.

In the rare circumstance of staff shortage due to illness, the center will close.

Parents will not be charged for this day.

Licensing Notebook

- The licensing notebook is located by the Staff Wall.
- The licensing notebook contains all the licensing inspections and special investigation reports and related corrective action plans for the last 5 years.
- Licensing inspections and special investigation reports for the past 3 years are available on the child care licensing website at www.michigan.gov/michildcare.

Our Programs

Small Blessings provides several different child care placement options. Placement is dependent upon age, student teacher ratio and availability.

- Infant (6 weeks-at least 12 months/walking)
- Toddler (12 months/walking - 2 ½ years)
- Transition (2 ½ years - 4 years)
- Preschool all day care (4 years to Kindergarten)
- Significant Beginnings Preschool 8:30 am to 11:45 am (4 years - 5 years)
- School Age (Kindergarten - 12 years)

Look for Small Blessings on Facebook and on our Web Site at small-blessings.com.

Note that all eligible children are encouraged to participate in the First United Methodist Church Vacation Bible School each summer. Dates and times will be posted in May, and you will be responsible to enroll your child in this free program.

Enrollment & Fees

Forms:

The child information card must be filled out in its entirety before your child can start. Your child's immunization records, the Registration form, all permission slips completed/signed, and the Licensing Notebook form signed must be returned to the Child Care Director prior to your child's first day of attendance. You will have 30 days after initial registration to get the Health Appraisal to the Director. Immunization records need to be updated for infants every 3 months and for toddlers every 6 months, every year for Preschool and School Age. All forms must be updated on a yearly basis, and are due in the Director's office by September 1st.

Registration:

Pre-registration is necessary for all programs. A Supply Fee of \$75.00 for a single child or \$100.00 for a family must accompany the initial registration forms and is non-refundable. This fee is annual and due every September 1 along with updated enrollment forms. This fee is used to fund the purchase of paint, paper, art supplies, and other activity or project needs for the entire year.

Withdrawal:

It is your right to withdraw your child at any time. However, we respectfully request a written two-week notice to properly allocate staff. Withdrawal forms are available upon request from the Child Care Director. If you wish to re-enroll your child in the future, you will once again be charged the Supply fee to your account regardless of the amount of time between enrollments.

Tuition:

Tuition is due weekly unless authorized by the Small Blessings Director. State of Michigan licensing regulations requires Small Blessings to employ staff based upon enrollment, therefore we are unable to refund tuition for days that a child is absent. We accept personal check or money order made payable to Small Blessings, and we also have the use of the Square as a form of payment. You will receive a bill by Thursday of each week for the following tuition period. This bill must be paid in full by the following Monday in order for your child to remain enrolled at the center. The Director can provide you with the most current full-time and part-time tuition rate schedule. CDC payments are accepted. Children whose tuition is paid by CDC may attend only after approval has been received by the Director.

Disenrollment:

We reserve the right to dis-enroll your child at any time for, but not limited to:

1. Failure to pay fees on time.
2. Delinquent account balance in excess of \$500.
3. Failure to comply with policies.
4. Lack of parental cooperation, communication, or respect for this Center.
5. When a child's behavior creates an unsafe environment for the children.
6. Lack of attendance as per Attendance Policy.

Delinquent Accounts:

In the event that your account becomes delinquent, we will make every effort with you to establish a mutually agreeable payment plan. If an agreement cannot be reached for whatever reason, we will take additional actions to collect any outstanding balances. Small claims court fees, legal fees, collection agency fees, and any other fees will be charged to your account if we are forced to settle a payment dispute in this manner. We also reserve the right to turn over any account 45 days overdue to a collection agency.

Availability:

Enrollment is based on availability. Enrollment is accepted on a first come first serve basis, with priority given to full time children. We require parents commit their child to a regular weekly schedule.

Past 6:00 p.m. Fees:

If a pickup occurs after 6 PM, a late fee of \$25 will be charged for the first 15 minutes, with an additional \$5 per minute thereafter. This fee will be added to your next scheduled billing.

Bad Check Fee:

In the event that a check is returned to us due to insufficient funds, we will add to your account the cost we are charged by the bank.

Moving Room Policy:

As per licensing ratio, your child must be a certain age to be a part of each room. When your child reaches the right age, they are eligible to move up to the next room. But note that your child may not be able to move to the next room until an open spot is available for them.

Preschool Room

Because it disrupts the Preschool class, we try to move Transition children in June, August, and January. In order to move to the Preschool Classroom children must be potty trained.

Diaper charge:

Please note, if your child runs out of diapers, there will be a \$5.00 charge for each diaper the center needs to supply for your child. You will receive two warnings that your child is low on diapers. If your child runs out of wipes you will be charged for the wipes plus a surcharge of \$5.00.

Policies & Procedures

Attendance Policy:

The days you registered your child for are reserved for your child, consequently you are charged those days whether they are here or not. If the need for care changes you must give at least 48 hours' notice, with the understanding that there may not be space available. Having staffing for your child must be adhered to as licensing requires a specific teacher/child ratio.

All planned absences of more than a week need prior approval by the director. The center reserves the right to withdraw your child(ren)'s placement for said nonattendance. All unexplained and unapproved absences constitute immediate withdrawal.

All attendance issues are best addressed through communication directly to the director.

Absence:

If your child is going to be absent, we respectfully request that you inform the childcare center at **663-0131**. Report your child's absence in the Tadpoles app. If your child is enrolled in the school age program, we suggest that you also notify the

Eaton Rapids Public Schools Transportation department at 663-2214. Please remember that Michigan licensing regulations requires Small Blessings to schedule staff based upon enrollment, therefore we are unable to refund tuition for days that a child is absent.

Medication Administration Policy:

It is Licensing's policy that administration of medication can only be performed with written authorization.



- A parent or guardian must complete a Medication permission slip.
- Prescription medication must be in the original pharmacy container, display the child's name, physician's name, medication name, strength of medication, medication instructions, and expiration date.
- Over the counter medication must be in the original container displaying distribution directions. Directions will be adhered to.
- All over the counter medications stating, "consult your doctor" must have a doctor's note stating the amount to be given.
- Diaper ointments and sunscreen authorizations can be done annually.

Health Policy:

Our Center is only equipped to care for healthy children. We do not provide "sick" childcare. Children may not attend if they have any of the following symptoms.

- A temperature of 100° or more.
- Diarrhea or vomiting. (2nd diarrhea episode child must be sent home.)
- Nasal discharge or discharging eyes.
- Head lice.
- An unidentified rash.



The child may return to the Center when:

- The child has been free of the previously listed symptoms for at least 24 hours without any form of medicine.
- Having had an administration of an antibiotic for at least 24 hours.
- No nits or lice remain in a child's hair.

If a child becomes ill during the day, staff will remove the child from the group and an authorized individual will be called to come remove him/her from the premises. The authorized individual will be expected to pick the child up in a timely manner. For the child not picked up in a timely manner there will be an added charge of \$8.90 per hour. A sick child notification will be sent home with the child stating when they may return. Please notify the center if your child has been exposed to or contracted any communicable disease. If absent for three or more days due to illness, it is a possibility that the Director may require a Physician's release before re-admitting your child into the center.

A word about biting: During a child's early years, especially up to the age of three, biting is one of the most common ways to exhibit anger or frustration. This aggressive behavior can begin before one year of age and last past three years. It is normal for children to deal with their angry feelings this way. We will make every attempt to curb this behavior; however, this is not always possible. We understand that it is very upsetting to parents to learn that another child has bitten their child. Please try to remember that almost all children, especially in group situations bite others as well as get bitten.

A word about potty training: Staff will begin potty training at a parent's request. Note because the Preschool Room does not have space to change diapers, a child may not move up to the preschool room until they are potty trained.

Emergency Medical Care:

Your child's enrollment form gives Small Blessings permission for emergency medical care. Parents will be notified when an injury requires the center to administer emergency medical care. If a parent objects to the signing of this form based on religious grounds, a written objection statement must be provided to the childcare center. All staff members are trained in both CPR and First Aid and will adhere to all State Licensing mandated medical emergency protocol. If your child receives a minor injury during her or his day at Small Blessings, an Ouch Report on Tadpoles will be sent home detailing the incident and attending staff.

Request for Unexpected/Additional Care:

School Age Children

Small Blessings cannot accommodate school age children during the normal school day. Care for school age children will only be provided when the school system is closed.

Preschool Age Children

A request to serve preschool age children who do not regularly attend the Small Blessings pre-school portion of the day, may or may not be accommodated based on the circumstances of the request. When the request is based upon behavioral issues, a meeting between the Director and the parent will be held to determine if service can be provided and/or the conditions of service.

Toys:



Each room provides a wide range of activities for your child's enjoyment. To avoid hurt feelings from lost or broken toys, please leave all toys at home



Special Needs:

Children with special needs will be accepted into our program under the guidelines of the American with Disabilities Act. For any children with special needs, we request the parent/guardian sit down with the director and lead teacher to plan ways to meet your child's needs. A written plan of care for your child will be written up to be followed in all emergency situations. All staff is required to take at least 3 hours of training a year on the benefits of inclusion of children with special needs. The center is barrier free and handicapped accessible.

Discipline Policy:

Center employees will use only positive discipline methods that will guide children into pro-social behavior without harming the children's self-esteem. Center staff will model pro-social behavior.

- Focus on "Do's" instead of "Don'ts" (Tell the child what is the correct behavior).
- Set limits on behavior and have classroom rules posted in a positive manor.
- Avoid the use of the word "no" except in extreme situations; no harsh tones.
- Staff will use redirection or conflict mediation for discipline first.
- Time away from the situation is the last resort. Staff will:
 - Explain the reason why the behavior is unacceptable
 - Remove the child from activity
 - Will talk out the issue/behavior with the child.
 - Time away from the group will be long enough for the child to calm down
 - Parents will be notified of the situation
- Staff must use appropriate touches at all times
- No form of physical punishment (i.e. spanking, hitting, shaking, etc.) is used or tolerated; Nor the refusal of meals or snacks, naptime, or bathroom use.
- These examples are cause for immediate termination.
- Staff may use reasonable physical force when necessary to:
 - Protect him/herself, the child, or others from immediate physical injury.
 - Obtain possession of a weapon or dangerous object from the child.
 - Protect property from physical damage.

Transportation Policy

Transportation for field trips will be done by Dean Transportation. Each April a fund raiser is held to pay for each field trip. In in order for your child to go on the field trip, a permission slip must be signed by parent or legal guardian

Tornado Procedures:

Evacuation procedures will be practiced during tornado season to familiarize everyone with escape routes and safe spots.

Tornado Watch - If the National Weather Service has issued a tornado watch we will monitor the weather by radio. Our day will proceed as planned except that any out-of-center activities will be canceled. All children will remain in the Center.

Tornado Warning - In the event that the National Weather Service has issued a tornado warning, cover will be taken immediately using the emergency evacuation procedures posted on each classroom door. After the evacuation of the Child Use Area, the Director and an assistant will "sweep" the Center to ensure all children are within the shelter area. Once sheltered, all caregivers will remain calm and help the children remain calm during the storm. The Director will keep updated by use of the weather radio and by visually monitoring the storm.

Fire Procedure:

Fire drills will be conducted quarterly. Smoke detectors are in each classroom with one in the hallway. The pull alarm is located in the hall by the outside exit doors. Caregivers are responsible for the children's safety. Children will be organized and evacuated through the closest unobstructed exit to the designated meeting place, which is the South West corner of the parking lot.

For any child with special needs a Tornado and Fire Procedures plan will be written.

Use of Pesticides/Exterminators:

A licensed exterminator routinely inspects the church facilities and classrooms, and if warranted pesticides are used. The church grounds are occasionally sprayed with weed killer or fertilizer, which for the safety of the children is done on the weekends.

In September when parents are required to annually review their enrollment sheets, the Center will provide all parents with a notification of the Pest Management Policy. This will be both a notification sent home via Tadpoles, and a posted notice on the hallway bulletin board. In addition to this notification, if at any time pesticide, weed killer, or fertilizer application is used we will advise you three (3) days prior with a notification that will give the date and estimated time of application and what specific chemical will be applied. This notice will also be sent home with your child via Tadpoles, and one will be posted to the entry door. In no instance will children be allowed in any room where a pesticide has been applied for four hours after completion of the application.

General Information

Child Abuse:

The Child Protection Law, Act 238 of 1975, states all childcare providers are mandated reporters of any suspected abuse. If reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect occurs, it must be reported by the caregiver.



Food/Nutrition:

We serve a mid-morning snack, afternoon snack, and lunch family style with the teachers eating with the children. The center provides the snacks and milk, but lunch is provided by the parent. **The lunch must be labeled with the child's name and date.** The center does not provide breakfast, however if brought from home we will serve it to your child; label with your child's name.

The children do have access to the drinking fountains throughout the day. Note we have several children with peanut allergies, so **our center tries to be peanut free**; check your child's lunch for any peanut products. Parents are welcome to send in commercially prepared treats on special occasions such as birthday or holidays, however inform the appropriate staff prior to donation.

Parent are required to provide all necessary bottles and food for children in the infant room. All bottles must come prepared, labelled, and with a cap. The label must have the child's **first and last name, date, and time of preparation.**

Clothing:

At Small Blessings we provide a wide variety of activities for your child to experience. Please dress your child in clothing that you will not mind if it gets dirty. We take precautions to guard against dirtying clothing but occasionally accidents happen. It is your responsibility to provide your child with at least one extra set of clothing. Please provide with proper seasonal attire, remember that we play outside year round. In the winter, snow pants, winter coat, boots, hat, and mittens are necessary. Remember to label all of your child's clothing!

Nap Time:

Small Blessings provides a daily naptime. Each child will have his/her individual cot. Parents may provide a sheet and one small blanket. Please remember to label your child's bedding. It is the parent's responsibility to launder bedding weekly. A quiet activity time is provided for the children who no longer require a sleep time.

Fundraising:

As a non-profit organization, the center may occasionally participate in fundraising projects. Parent participation is a vital component of fundraising success.

Field Trips:

The children participate in a variety of local fieldtrips. Notification of such will be communicated with parents. In order for your child to participate in the event it is necessary to have a signed permission slip returned to the center. Parents are welcome to participate in all fieldtrip events.

Donations:

Your tuition payments are not deductible as charitable contributions. However, if you wish to make a contribution of either cash or supplies, please see the Director. You will be provided a receipt for the value of the contribution upon request.

Photography and Publicity:



As a result of the many activities and fieldtrip events, the center actively documents your child's experience. We occasionally use photographs for publicity such as for the newspaper, postings on social media, or brochures. There is no compensation for the use of a photograph in which your child appears.

Advisory Board:

The Small Blessings Advisory Board includes the Pastor, the Child Care Director, a representative from the Church's Staff Relations Board, and finance board. The Board also includes parent representatives - please do consider if your calling is to serve on this board and to discuss this with the Director. The Board meets once a month during the school year, and may meet once during the summer months. The Board serves as an advisory board, and helps to organize fundraisers and capital improvements (such as painting, playground maintenance, etc.) Monthly Board meetings will be posted on the calendar of events on our web site so that all families will have the opportunity to share their suggestions with the Director or the parent representatives on the board.

Current Board Members:

Marty DeBow, Pastor
Annette Winzeler, Director
Sue Shoultz, Board Chairperson
Steve Peters, Finance Board Representative
Chris Broughan, Parent Representative
Jessica Hahn, Parent Representative
Erin Norton, Parent Representative