



St. Mark Children's Day Out

PARENT HANDBOOK

FALL 2024-SPRING 2025

Director: Debra Wissman

601 W. Braker Lane

Austin, TX 78753

512-836-9073

Website: www.stmarkcdo.org

Email: stmarkcdo@yahoo.com



Welcome

Our Children's Day Out program was established over twenty years ago as part of the ministry of St. Mark United Methodist Church. St. Mark CDO became licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services in 2004. Our purpose is to provide a loving and caring Christian atmosphere to foster your child's spiritual, social, physical, emotional and intellectual development. We provide opportunities for children to explore their creativity through sensory exploration, music, motor development, art, listening reinforcement, indoor and outdoor play, group games and many more stimulating activities. Believing that each child is a child of God, we are called to minister to all children and their families. St. Mark CDO supports families and children who may need additional accommodations, to include home language, special needs; differing abilities, and/or cultural backgrounds to the best of our ability. St. Mark CDO is happy to provide therapy space for children whose physical therapist, occupational therapist, or speech therapist would like to visit the child during our school hours.

As a parent of an enrolled child in our program, you are always welcome to visit the program any time without prior approval. Together we will best serve the needs and interest of your child. Our office is always open. It is our hope that you will bring us your suggestions, compliments and concerns. Please stop in if we can be of any service to you!

In His Service,
Pastor Ashley Valenzuela
Debra A. Wissman

Director
St. Mark United Methodist Church
Children's Day Out
601 W. Braker Lane
Austin, TX 78753
(512) 836-9073 (St. Mark CDO)
(512) 836-5747 (Church Office)

Mission

Our mission is to create a loving, safe and enjoyable environment for your child while promoting Christian values and a love for learning. We do this by providing developmentally appropriate activities, encouraging exploration, fostering healthy relationships between child and adult, supporting positive interactions between children and following the Department of Family and Protective Services Minimum Standards.

Goals

The overall purpose of St. Mark Children's Day Out is to provide a developmentally appropriate environment for children. The following goals are necessary to meet that objective:

- Provide a learning and social environment for all children regardless of race, religion, physical and/or mental capabilities or limitations.
- Create safe and healthy surroundings that encourage play, exploration and learning.
- Teach basic Christian principles.
- Promote physical development through fine and gross motor activities.
- Develop each child's self-esteem and love of learning.
- Encourage each child to solve problems independently.
- Stimulate each child's cognitive development to bring greater understanding of the immediate world.
- Nurture each child's relationships to the local community.
- Foster awareness of the environment, its changes and our responsibility to it.

Contents

- I. General Information
 - A. Session Dates
 - B. Ages
 - C. Fees
 - D. Days a Child May Attend
 - E. Withdrawing From the Program
 - F. Parent Communication/Participation

- II. Our Program
 - A. Arrival/Pick up Times and Procedures
 - B. Curriculum
 - C. Supplemental Activities
 - D. Daily Routine
 - E. Daily Checklist
 - F. Clothing

- III. Health and Safety
 - A. Absences
 - B. Minor/Major Emergencies
 - C. Required Health Records
 - D. Medication
 - E. Meals/Nutrition

- IV. Additional Topics
 - A. Guidance
 - B. Separation Anxiety
 - C. Our Staff
 - D. Board of Directors
 - E. State Regulations
 - F. Policy Guidelines
 - G. Helpful Resources

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Daily Checklist/Required Forms/Reminders
- Emergency Preparedness Plan
- Information on Reporting Child Abuse
- St. Mark Employee Immunization Policy

Parent Handbook Agreement

I. General Information

A. Session Dates

1. Fall session starts Tuesday, September 3, 2024 and ends Thursday, December 19, 2024.
2. Spring session starts Monday, January 6, 2025 and ends Thursday, May 15, 2025.
3. Summer session starts Tuesday, June 3, 2025 and ends Thursday, July 31, 2025---
Summer hours 2025 are 8:45 am to 1:30 pm.

B. Ages

1. Generally speaking, there are five classes in the fall and spring and five classes in the summer. We are a play based program and there are no screens utilized in the classrooms. Please see page 19 for more information regarding screen time for children.
2. Fall and spring enrollment is open to children 18 months-5 years.
3. In the summer, a school age class is open for children 6-10 years.
4. Classes are divided by the following age groups:
 - Two's: 18 months and up
 - Three's: 24 months before September 1st
 - Four's: 3 years before September 1st
 - Pre-K: 4 years before September 1st
 - School Age: Summer after Kindergarten-5th grade (6-10 years)

C. Fees

1. Tuition

- a. We are open Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 am to 1:30 pm September - May and Tuesdays and Thursdays in June and July.

Tuition for 2024-2025 is:

One day: \$215

Two days: \$290 / **Summer Tuition 2025 \$400 per month**

Three days: \$365

Four days: \$440

Prices are per child/per month. Tuition is due by the 5th of each month and all fees paid to St. Mark CDO are non-refundable if for any reason the school must close, especially in light of recent COVID-19 closures during the Spring of 2020. There are absolutely no refunds under any circumstances of monies paid to the CDO!

- b. Beginning with the 2023-2024 school year, parents will pay the registration fee of \$150 when registering their child beginning February 1st. Additionally, parents will also pre-pay their child's May tuition for the following year by the last day of spring classes the current year. In Spring of 2025, our last class day is May 15, 2025. **If the \$150 registration fee is paid after May 15, 2025, the May 2026 tuition is due with the \$150 registration fee at the same time.**
- c. Unfortunately, there also no refunds for missed days due to illness or personal reasons. Additionally, if your child will not be at school for an extended time due to family vacation, or any other reasons, tuition must still be paid as usual to hold your child's spot since we have a waiting list. **If a child misses his/her usually enrolled day/days he/she may not switch days.**
- d. Fundraising is a part of our program and the way in which we meet our budgeted expenses and provide new age appropriate learning tools for the classrooms. We do not mandate that CDO families participate in fundraisers as all fundraisers are purely voluntary. The CDO Board identifies and decides on fundraisers when they set the budget each August for the school year that begins in September. Any ideas or questions about fundraisers should be directed to the Director. Additionally, if families want to make a monetary contribution to the preschool at any time, they are invited to do so.

2. Registration

Registration fees apply for each fall and summer session. Fees are due when your child is enrolled and ensures a spot is saved for them.

Registration fees are: Fall \$150 Summer \$100 Wait-list fee \$25

3. Supply Fees

Each October, March, and June a supply fee is collected for the fall and spring semesters. The supply fee is used for paper towels, soap, construction paper, paint and other classroom items. Supply Fees are per child and are non-refundable.

One day: \$90

Two days: \$100

Three days: \$110

Four days: \$120

4. Additional Fees

- a. Tuition is due by the 5th of each month. A \$5 late fee is applied for each day tuition is overdue. PayPal and ZELLE are preferred forms of payment.
- b. Pick up time is at 1:30 pm. A \$5 late fee is applied for each child not picked up by 1:35 pm with a charge of \$1 per minute until the child is picked up.

D. Days a Child May Attend

1. Children may attend 1 to 4 days a week on a set schedule. If a family choose only one day of attendance, the enrolled day must be Monday.
2. Days are chosen at registration based on availability.
3. All children in the summer must enroll for both Tuesdays and Thursdays for both June and July.

E. Withdrawing From the Program

1. Withdrawal from the program requires 30 days written notice in order to use the tuition deposit as your child's last month's tuition.
2. If your child has not attended, the registration fee is non-refundable.
3. If your child has withdrawn and re-enrolled within the same school year, registration will be waived.

F. Parent Communication/Participation

1. We strongly encourage parent participation and feedback. Parents are always welcome to visit the school and/or attend any special events like Open House, Breakfast with Santa, petting zoo, and class parties.
2. Keep us posted of any address, cell, home or work phone number changes. In case of an emergency it is important that we have the most up-to-date information. Please email the director with information changes immediately after change to print and add to child's permanent file.
3. You will be notified in writing of any changes to the parent handbook, new operational procedures or any other information regarding licensing, health or fire inspections.

4. Monthly newsletters and weekly e-mails from the Director will provide information about our school activities. You will be notified of these and any other important news at least 48 hours in advance. Also, teachers will utilize their own note keeping techniques for individual experiences and or concerns expressed by children or their parents. This information will be shared between the classroom lead teacher and the parents.
5. Registered students who are not enrolled on the specific day of a special event or class party are welcome to join in during the event/party only. Parents must remain with their child during the activity to ensure proper student/teacher ratios.

II. Our Program

A. Arrival/Pick up Times and Procedures

1. Classes meet from 9:00 am to 1:30 pm Monday-Thursday from September through May and Tuesday and Thursdays in June and July.
2. Our facility doors are unlocked from 8:55 am-9:30 am and from 1:15 pm-1:45 pm. At all other times, the doors to our facility are locked for the safety of the students and teachers. Please accompany your child to his/her classroom and be sure staff is present before departing.
3. Parents must sign students in and out each day on the classroom clipboard. This policy is based on licensing requirements. It helps us to document attendance and keep track of the children while in our care, especially during emergency situations.
4. Based on Minimum Standards children are ONLY released to those listed on the child's enrollment form. If there is a change, parents must notify us in writing with the date(s) and a parent signature. At pick up, the new person must provide picture identification.

B. Curriculum

1. There is a schoolwide monthly theme (i.e. animals) with weekly sub-themes (i.e. farm, wild, pets and ocean). We focus on monthly letters, numbers, shapes and colors. We also introduce a Bible theme each month. These are outlined on our curriculum school year Calendar of Learning, which is available for your reference and is included with the September newsletter.

2. Each class provides age appropriate activities that involve individual exploration, one on-one interactions and group participation.
3. The Pre-K class offers more structure based on your child's needs to prepare them for Kindergarten. Learning centers provide opportunities for journaling, art, math concepts, imaginative play, and gross and fine motor. Learning objectives are created from developmental milestone checklists for each age group.

C. Supplemental Activities

1. During the school year, we have many visitors and special events. These may include a petting zoo, Breakfast with Santa Claus, Donuts with Dad and Mother's Day Brunch. When activities with animals are scheduled, we will let you know and ask that you let us know if your child has any known pet allergies. We do not have class pets, so animal allergies are not a regular concern. During community helpers week, we invite a dental hygienist to discuss dental health and the children are given a toothbrush and toothpaste to take home. More resources regarding dental health can be found on page 20 of this parent handbook.
2. In the summer, there may be special water activities. The 2's, 3's, 4's and Pre-K classes have Splash Days with water play. There are no swimming pools at the CDO.
3. As a school and in the classrooms, we often celebrate holidays and birthdays. Any food items to be shared with the class must be store bought as per the health department. We have class parties to celebrate Halloween, Christmas, Valentine's Day and the End-of-Year. Please volunteer to bring an item for these events. Signup sheets will be posted by each classroom door. If you would like to bring a treat for your child's birthday, please inform his/her teacher. If invitations are passed out at school, please include every student in the class, otherwise, it is best to mail them. Older children are especially sensitive about exclusion from a birthday party.

D. Daily Routine

1. Upon arrival each classroom has free play. This includes table toys, free art, dramatic play, sensory table, reading books and much more.

2. Each week, all classrooms will participate in chapel time that is age appropriate. All are a very positive addition to our program that the children look forward to each week.
3. Starting around 10:00 am to 10:30 am each class will have snack. At morning drop off, please label and place your child's snack into his/her class snack bin. This helps teachers stay organized and avoids confusion looking through lunch boxes. Please send something your child can feed him/herself and does not require refrigeration and/or heating.
4. Students usually have an art, science or cooking project after snack or circle time. Please dress your child in something that you don't mind getting dirty. We believe children learn through play and we do not want to inhibit them in the process. We provide smocks for certain activities, but children can still get messy. We will do our best to use washable paint, markers and other supplies.
5. Children love the outdoors, so we try to play outside for at least 45-60 minutes every day in all temperatures of Texas weather, understanding that some days are too cold or too hot for extended periods of exposure.. At morning drop off, please label and place your child's water bottle into his/her class water bin. The bins are taken outside with the children. Please dress your child in weather appropriate clothing and shoes that have closed heels and toes. In the winter, please send your child with a jacket, hat, gloves/mittens labeled with his/her name.
6. After recess we have lunch. Children are only allowed to eat what you send them. We do not allow the children to share food with one another. Please provide items your child can feed him/herself and do not require refrigeration and/or heating. We ask that you avoid sending sodas and other sugary foods.

E. Daily Checklist

1. Snack, labeled and placed in the snack bin
2. Water bottle, labeled and placed in the water bin
3. Lunch, labeled and placed in cubby or on personalized hook utilizing frozen cold packs and/or thermos to keep food either cold or hot as necessary ...liquids and food hotter than 110' F are kept out of children's reach. For more information on nutrition and for children's menu suggestions, please see the resources listed on page 19.

4. Change of clothes, label each piece of clothing and assure it is weather appropriate.
5. Diapers/Pull-Ups, label each one Health department guidelines require you to label ALL of your child's belongings with first name and last initial.
6. We discourage children from bringing toys from home because toys can be lost or broken. If your child has a special blanket or stuffed animal, he/she may bring it to school until they feel comfortable leaving it in their backpack/cubby.
7. Please apply sunscreen and bug spray before school, especially in the summer. We do not apply bug spray; however on splash days and school aged summer field trips, we will reapply a child friendly commercial sunscreen as needed.

F. Clothing

1. Please dress your child in weather appropriate clothing that can get dirty, is comfortable and easy to undress for bathroom breaks or diaper changes. We use smocks for art activities, but children can still get messy.

2. Children need to wear socks and shoes with closed toes and heels at all times when in our care. Crocs with socks are fine.

III. Health and Safety

A. Absences

1. Please call or email us if your child will be late or absent at (512) 836-9073 or stmarkcdo@yahoo.com

Please keep your child home if they have:

- a. Fever of 100°F. Child must be fever free for 48 hours before returning to the CDO.
- b. Conjunctivitis, an eye infection referred to as "pink eye". An eye will generally be red and have thick yellow drainage and often have a burning sensation.
- c. Bronchitis. Often begins with hoarseness, slight elevation in temperature and cough. The cough may be dry and painful, but it gradually becomes productive, produces phlegm.
- d. An unidentifiable rash that has not been diagnosed by a physician.
- e. Impetigo. A bacterial skin infection causes red sores to break open, ooze fluid and develop a yellow-brown crust.

- f. Diarrhea, frequent watery or greenish bowel movements.
 - g. Vomiting, more than the usual spit-up for your child.
 - h. A severe cold with fever, sneezing and thick green nose drainage.
 - i. Any contagious disease: COVID, measles, chicken pox, mumps, rubella, flu, strep, etc.
 - j. An ear or throat infection diagnosed by a doctor. Child may return when medication has been administered for at least 24 hours.
 - k. Lice or any evidence of an infestation. Child may return after proper treatment and when all nits and eggs are removed.
3. Please notify us of any illness your child develops so we may inform other parents to look for symptoms in their child.
 4. We also ask that you keep your child home from school if they have any medical need (broken bones, severe seasonal allergies, surgery, etc.) that prevents him/her from participating comfortably in the child-care center activities including outdoor play.
 5. Your child must stay home if his/her medical needs result in greater need for care than the classroom teachers can provide without compromising the health and supervision of the other children in care.

B. Minor/Major Emergencies

1. If your child becomes sick at school, we will notify you so you can pick him/her up as soon as possible.
2. If your child has a minor injury, we will complete an incident report for you to sign at pick up. We will then make two copies, one for you and one for your child's file. If your child requires medical attention after an injury or incident at school, please inform us so we can arrange for you to complete the necessary portions of the form and report the incident to Department of Family and Protective Services as per our Minimum Standards for operating a licensed childcare facility.

3. If your child has a major injury or there is any other medical emergency, for everyone's safety, we will immediately call 911. We will then contact you.
4. If the school closes due to an emergency, we will notify parents as soon as possible. Please refer to the attached Emergency Preparedness Plan.
5. For bad weather days, please check Austin Independent School District status. If AISD closes or starts late, the CDO will be closed. Unfortunately, we do not offer refunds or make-up days.
6. Each morning your child will be given a visual screening by the teacher to identify potential concerns about his/her health. Teachers will also be attentive to changes in your child's normal behavior.

C. Required Health Records and Immunization Policy

1. St. Mark Children's Day Out **recommends** that all children who attend our program be immunized. This policy suggested for recommended immunizations was adapted and voted on by our St. Mark CDO board during our February 7, 2017 meeting. We are following the lead of Austin Regional Clinic who adopted a similar policy in the summer of 2015, choosing not to accept patients who do not follow a traditional immunization schedule, owing to the fact that many childhood illnesses have been diminished or eradicated because of immunizations. Your child's most current immunization record must be on file on or before his/her first day of attendance. You must also provide updated copies of immunization records as immunizations are given at well-check appointments or an affidavit for reasons of conscience for non-vaccinated children that is updated as per state guidelines.
2. A yearly health statement from your child's doctor is also required. This can be submitted after his/her next visit to the doctor, but must be current within one year of enrollment.
3. At 2 years of age, your child will need the Hep A vaccination because we are considered a day care or group setting.
4. At 4 years of age, your child will need a hearing/vision screening conducted by a physician. Licensing requires that we have proof of the vision/hearing screening within 120 days of your child turning 4 or enrolling in our program. A

licensed speech therapist visits our campus each fall and offers speech and hearing evaluations at a nominal fee that satisfies this requirement if a parent should choose this option or if a child was not cooperative at his/her 4 year well child check.

D. Medication

1. Based on Minimum Standards, we only administer medications such as Epi-pens nebulizer treatments and inhalers for life saving measures for children with diagnosed illnesses where all might be necessary in a medical emergency. .
2. If your child has a medically diagnosed food allergy, a FARE (Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan) form must be completed with clear directions provided to CDO staff and signed by a medical doctor in case of allergic reaction on the first day your child attend St. Mark CDO.

Meals/Nutrition

3. St. Mark CDO is a NUT FREE school. The CDO Board voted at their monthly meeting held on March 7, 2017 to initiate a school wide NUT FREE policy beginning Monday, March 20, 2017. This includes all nuts and nut products. Please inform us if your child has diet preferences or sensitivities or refrains from certain foods due to personal or religious reasons. Teachers are trained annually on food allergies and follow proper precautions.
4. Since we do not provide meals or snacks, we are not required to make sure food items meet daily nutritional value. Nutritional guidelines from Texas Rising Star are included at the end of this handbook on page 19. If a child forgets their snack or lunch, we will make every effort to provide a healthy choice or call parents to provide.
5. Human milk is the best source of nutrition for infants and breastfeeding supports optimal health and development. We are happy to provide an appropriate, comfortable place to nurse on our premises. We will also allow your child to consume prepared breast milk while in our care. More breastfeeding information and resources are listed on page 19.

E. Potty Training at the CDO

1. While beginning potty training has been proven statistically to occur best at age 2.5 - 2.75 years, many families in our program over the years have started

potty training their children at earlier ages. Since it is not developmentally appropriate to ask a child to potty train before aged 2 or immediately after, the CDO board has established guidelines to assist parents with this milestone, understanding that children who use the potty routinely at home can sometimes have difficulty using the potty at school until mastery is achieved. This may be in part because at home it is more feasible to take a single child to the restroom at set times. Even a child who has language will be resistant to stopping classroom or playground play to ask to be taken to the restroom. Younger children are just not able to verbalize their needs in a larger group setting. Potty training will be supported by the teaching staff:

- *When the child can ask to go potty as needed and has the capacity to hold their bladder or bowel movements until one of the two teachers can safely get them to the restroom since bathroom facilities are not contained in the bathroom and our teachers are not able to take your child to the potty at regular set intervals due to safety concerns for the other children in their care
- *When a child can manipulate his/her own clothes by pulling them up and down to facilitate avoiding a potty accident
- *When the child can stand and sit well on their own
- * When a child has had no potty accidents at home for one month

If these milestones for potty training are **not** met, the toddler teacher has the directive to ask parents to return their child to pull ups or diapers while at school in order to insure sanitary classrooms.

Please understand that while this policy may be inconvenient for parents to be asked to return their child to pull-ups while at school, the potty training process can take up to 2 years for a child to realize their diaper is wet and be able to tell us that they need to urinate. Starting the process at a time when the child is more developmentally appropriate to handle all facets of the process will assure quick success!

IV. Additional Topics

A. Guidance

1. Safety is our number ONE priority. We strive to make sure your child is supervised at all times. To ensure this, we keep child/teacher ratios lower than licensing requires.
2. We provide a nurturing environment by using positive examples and language. We praise children when they are kind and help others. We redirect children by using positive phrases such as "walking feet" and "use your words".
3. Physical and emotional punishment is not allowed. Staff will be immediately dismissed if they do not adhere to this strict policy. Please see the attached

Discipline and Guidance Policy. You will need to sign the statement verifying you have read it. We will keep that page in your child's permanent file.

4. If a child is demonstrating inappropriate behavior, (biting, hitting, throwing toys, etc.), the child will spend time away from the activity or classroom. The teacher or Director will discuss what happened and will encourage the child to think about his/her behavior. We believe this helps children learn how actions impact others.
5. If a child continues to demonstrate inappropriate behavior that violates the rights of others, we will establish a plan with the parent(s), the Director and the teachers. If there is no improvement, the child may be dismissed from the program.

B. Separation Anxiety

1. If this is the first time your child will experience a school setting, your demeanor will greatly affect his/her initial adjustment. Your child will sense any reservations on your part so a positive attitude must be maintained to assure a smooth transition.
2. While a majority of children have little difficulty adjusting to new situations, some experience teary separations. If this is the case on the first day, a brief stay with your child is recommended. Reassure them of your return and depart promptly. Call the school as often as you like to check on your child. We will be honest about his/her progress
3. We also advocate for scheduled parent/teacher conferences to check your child's progress in adjusting to the preschool setting or for developmental updates.
4. Let us know if your child has continued difficulties adjusting to school. Our teachers are dedicated to helping you and your child feel comfortable in our program.

C. Our Staff

1. Our staff consists of well-trained women who enjoy working with children. Most of our teachers have teaching degrees, college degrees and/or valuable experience.
2. All staff complete a fingerprint screening and an FBI background check.

3. All staff are trained in CPR and first aid when hired and then completes a recertification class every two years.
4. Our staff is trained annually in recognizing child abuse and neglect. We are legally required to report suspected abuse. To ensure that all children are safe please join us in this effort. If you ever suspect abuse call the Abuse Hotline at 1-800-252-5400. See the attached handout entitled "Information on Reporting Child Abuse" for more detailed information.
5. Every year each teacher acquires 24 hours of annual training in child development. Teachers may acquire hours by attending workshops throughout the year and they may also complete some hours through self-study courses.
6. The Director, Debra Wissman, has a BA in Theology, is certified by the Department of Family and Protective Services Child Care Licensing division and has over 25 years in serving children and families. She meets all the requirements to direct a licensed child care center. Each year she acquires 30 hours of training in child development and administration.
7. Teamwork is important to provide the best care for your child. We consult each other, and the CDO Board for advice and guidance.

D. Board of Directors

1. The Board of Directors is the governing body for our school. They jointly oversee our operations and define our policies.
2. The Director, the Pastor, church members and CDO parents form the CDO Board. Please contact the Director if you would like to join. It is a wonderful way to help make decisions that involve the CDO and the children.
3. The CDO Board currently meets on the second Thursday of each month at 6:00 pm. The meeting is open to all parents. You are always welcome to come and see how we run the school. Childcare is provided.

E. State Regulations

1. This program is a licensed child care facility through the Department of Family and Protective Services. We comply with their Minimum Standards. We have multiple copies if you would like to review one, or you may access them through DFPS

website at www.dfps.state.tx.us or phone 512-834-3426. Our license # is 1574005

2. Licensing performs one unscheduled visit annually to inspect our center and ensure we are in compliance. The most recent inspection report is posted on the bulletin board near the main entrance. If you have further questions concerning our license, you may contact our representative, **Lisa Barker**, Child Care Licensing Inspector, 14000 Summit Drive, Suite 100, Austin, TX 78728, phone 512-853-0152 email lisa.barker@hhs.texas.gov website www.txchildcaresearch.org
3. We have yearly health and fire inspections to ensure our building is safe. These reports are in the office and available for your review.
4. Minimum Standards requires us to inform you of the following Texas Penal Code: Any area within 1000 feet of a child care center is a gang-free zone. Criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity occurring in this zone are subject to harsher penalty.
5. Our playground is closed for public use during hours of operation.

F. Policy Guidelines

1. Policies are reviewed annually and updated as necessary. We have established these policies to provide a safe and caring environment for your child. You will be notified in writing of any changes. We understand reminders are helpful when new policies are implemented.
2. If an enrolled child presents with ongoing challenging behaviors and all efforts are made by the teacher and director to communicate expectations and concerns to parents in an collaboration with strategies to address said behaviors, the following steps will be taken assure the safety and well being of all enrolled children at the center, including but not limited to dismissal from St. Mark Children's Day Out. :
 - a. Written behavior reports addressing challenging behaviors signed by parents
 - b. Parental conference with the Director, teachers, and members of the Board to discuss our program's objectives of health of safety and expectations of behavior.
 - c. Continued conversations to assure all expectations are being corrected positively **OR** dismissal if behaviors despite corrective action are not met.

3. Annual developmental assessments are completed in early spring by our lead teachers for each age group. Assessments help us to determine a child's developmental progress but since our teachers are not clinicians, any specific concerns will be shared with parents but ideally questions after the assessments are completed and distributed to parents should be directed to a child's pediatrician. Teachers use these assessments to guide lesson planning. Assessments are distributed to parents after giving families the opportunity to meet with the lead teachers by appointment only for a conference to discuss the assessments. Parents and Teachers sign the written assessment and a copy is saved in a child's permanent file for the time specified by Childcare Licensing.

G. Helpful Resources

1. Feel free to read and post items on our Parent Bulletin Board. As you walk into the main entryway it is on the wall to the left.

2. IMPORTANT Contacts

Abuse Hotline 1-800-252-5400

Local Child Care Licensing Office (512)834-3195

DFPS website: www.dfps.state.tx.us

Health Resources

Nutrition education, such as sample menus <https://www.freshbaby.com/wp-content/uploads/2022-Pack-A-MyPlate-Lunch.pdf> <https://www.superkidsnutrition.com/recipes-kids-meal-plans/meal-plans-by-age/>
https://www.marybridge.org/file_viewer.php?id=602&title=Feeding+Toddlers+and+Preschool+ers
<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/kids-healthy-eating-plate/>

Screen time

<https://learningworksforkids.com/play-diet/> <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/childrens-health/in-depth/screen-time/art-20047952>

https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFFGuide/Children-And-Watching-TV-054.aspx

Oral Health <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/oral-health/article/oral-health-resources-families> <https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/oral-health/oral-health-resources-for-families/>

Breastfeeding:

Local Support resource: <https://www.texaslll.org/group-austin/>
<https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/index.htm> <https://www.babylist.com/hello-baby/best-online-breastfeeding-resources> <https://www.nutrition.gov/topics/nutrition-life-stage/breastfeeding> <https://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/learning-breastfeed/finding-breastfeeding-support-and-information>

Health Benefit

<https://www.texaschildrenshealthplan.org/benefits>

Daily Checklist

Health guidelines require you to label ALL of your child's belongings with first name and last initial.

- ✓ Snack, labeled and placed in the snack bin ✓
- Water bottle, labeled and placed in the water bin ✓
- Lunch, labeled and placed in cubby with necessary ice packs and/or thermos for food temperature regulation
- ✓ Change of clothes, label each piece of clothing ✓
- Diapers/Pull-Ups, label each one

Required Forms

The first five items need to be submitted by your child's first day of school.

- Admission information
- Parent handbook agreement form
- Discipline and Guidance agreement form
- Immunization record signed from pediatrician or office staff
- FARE (Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan) Signed health statement after your child's next doctor's appointment
- Hearing/vision screening results after your child's 4 year check-up

Reminders

Sign your child in and out each day. You must accompany your child to their classroom. Staff must be present before leaving your child.

- Label all belongings with your child's first name and last initial; lunch, snack, water bottle, diapers, extra clothes, jacket, etc.
- Notify us of any changes to your child's records; phone number, address, emergency contact, shot records, allergies, additional people who can pick up your child, etc. Some changes need to be submitted in writing, dated and signed.
- Call or email if your child will be absent, (512) 836-9073, stmarkcdo@yahoo.com ➤
- First and last month's tuition is due on or before your child's first day of school. ➤
- Tuition is due by the 5th of each month. All fees paid are non-refundable

St. Mark Children's Day Out Emergency Preparedness Plan 2023-2024

The Director, Board and staff have diligently evaluated options to prepare us for emergencies related to mechanical, weather, or environmental threats. As the result of these efforts the following procedures are established.

Containment

- When it is safest to remain inside due to environmental factors, the hallways of the CORE building are deemed the safest place.
- If evacuation to the main church hallway is possible, we will enter the church office via the sidewalk to the door nearest the CORE building.
- If lock-down is required due to community safety concerns, the hallways of the CORE building will be used. This will ensure access and visibility through windows is minimized. Teachers will console children to reduce noise.
- If a classroom lock-down is necessary, the teachers and staff have been instructed how to establish safe procedures within their classroom.

Evacuation

- If it is safe to do so, we will evacuate to the other two buildings on St. Mark property.
- If immediate evacuation of the St. Mark property is necessary, we will walk east across the field to Walnut Creek Elementary, 401 W. Braker Lane, Austin, TX 78753, 512-414-4499.
- If our safe shelter is not available at Walnut Creek Elementary within walking distance, the teacher's vehicles will be used to transport children.
- Children younger than 24 months and children with special needs will be carried by available staff to assure a quick and efficient evacuation.
- Teachers will be accountable to have their class clipboard that contains daily sign-in sheets to assure attendance and accountability, emergency medical authorization forms, and emergency contact forms as well as emergency backpacks with supplies.

In All Emergencies ✓ Staff will call 911 and ensure medical attention is provided. ✓ Once safety is obtained, families will be contacted. The Director or her designee will determine the best order to call families.

- ✓ As dictated by Minimum Standards the Director or her designee will contact our representative or Statewide Intake at 1-800-252-5400.
- ✓ The Director or her designee will communicate to the public and media.

Additional Information

- Emergency Evacuation Diagrams are posted in each classroom.
- All staff, teachers and substitutes will be trained in these procedures.
- Parents will receive this plan with their Parent Handbook.

Reporting Child Abuse According to the Law in the State of Texas

Texas has both civil and criminal laws to protect children from abuse and neglect. If you suspect that a child is being abused or neglected, the law requires that you report it. [Texas Family Code Section 261.101 (a)]

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) is the agency to call if the suspected abuse or neglect involves a person responsible for the care, custody, or welfare of the child or someone who lives in the home with the child. Child Protective Services (CPS), a division of DFPS, is responsible for conducting civil investigations of alleged abuse or neglect by caregivers or household members. You may also report suspected abuse or neglect to any local or state law enforcement agency. Law enforcement agencies are responsible for criminal investigations, which focuses on figuring out who committed a crime. The CPS investigation is a civil court matter that focuses on the welfare of the child and family.

You are protected by law from liability when you make a report or provide information in good faith during a CPS investigation. However, you are not protected from civil or criminal liability if you report your own abuse or neglect of a child **or** intentionally file a false report against someone else. (Texas Family Code, Section 261.106).

Failure to report suspected child abuse and neglect is a criminal offense (Texas Family Code, Section 261.109).

To report to DFPS, call the 24-hour, toll-free abuse hotline at 1-800-252-5400 from anywhere in the United States to report abuse or neglect that happened in Texas. The important thing is to call and report what you suspect. You will be given a call ID number to prove that you made the call. You can call back and use the call ID number to give additional information about the same case. Anonymous callers are welcome, but they will not be given a call ID number. The identity of the reporter is confidential and is not revealed to anyone but law enforcement, unless disclosure is ordered by a court (Texas Family Code Section 261.201).

St. Mark Children's Day Out Employee Immunization Policy

Effective September 1, 2014, St. Mark Children's Day Out has implemented the following immunization policy for all of its employees to be in compliance with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Minimum Standard Rule #746.3611, which requires a policy for protecting children from vaccine-preventable diseases. While the safety of our employees and the children in our care is paramount, we have elected to make immunizations for vaccine-preventable diseases optional to the employees.

Vaccines that we currently recommend our employees receive:

- *Influenza (annually)
- *Pertussis (Tdap)
- *COVID 19 series of vaccines and boosters as recommended by Center for Disease Control

If the employee is not exempt from having these immunizations, St. Mark Children's Day Out recommends that employees consider these immunizations.

The employee will indicate below if there are any exemptions that would prevent them from receiving an immunization for a vaccine-preventable disease.

A copy of this policy, signed by the employee, will be kept in the employee file.

If the employee decides that these immunizations are appropriate and beneficial for their health and well-being and receive the immunization, they are asked to provide the Center Director with documentation that the immunizations have been received.

St. Mark Children's Day Out will encourage the use of protective medical equipment to protect employees and children in care from exposure to possible disease. In addition to hand washing, the protective medical equipment would include gloves, masks and hand sanitizer. The use of protective medical equipment will be based on the level of risk the employee presents to children by the employee's routine and direct exposure to children. Employees should not be in direct contact when they are ill or exhibiting signs of illness. St. Mark Children's Day Out will monitor information provided to the public through the Center of Disease Control and/or other sources to determine the level of risk the employee presents.

There will be no discrimination or retaliatory action against any employee who does/does not receive immunizations for vaccine-preventable illness. The use of protective medical equipment will not be considered retaliatory when used by employees of St. Mark Children's Day Out.

All employees will be required to sign this policy and the signed policy will be retained on file. The information related to whether or not an employee chooses to have immunizations for vaccine-preventable diseases will be kept confidential. Failure to sign this policy will result in the employee not being able to work directly with children.

Parent Handbook Agreement

I _____ acknowledge that I have received or read
Parent/Guardian Name

on the school website a copy of the **2024-2025 St. Mark United Methodist Church Children's Day Out Parent Handbook.**

I understand that the handbook outlines all policies and procedures that apply to my participation and my child's enrollment at the school.

I understand these operational procedures have been established in compliance the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Minimum Standards for Licensed Child Care Centers.

I have read and understand the contents of this handbook and will act in accord with these operational policies as a condition of my child's enrollment at the school.

If I have any questions or concerns at any time about the handbook or school practices, I can contact the Director at (512) 836-9073.

If I have any questions or concerns related to licensing requirements, I can contact Child Care Licensing at (512) 834-3426.

Parent/guardian Printed Name

Child's Name

X

Parent Signature