

The Ark

Parent Handbook

2019-20

ARK CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER POLICIES 2019-20
PARENT HANDBOOK

This handbook addresses policies considered to be part of the agreement for providing cooperative childcare between the Ark and parents.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A . INTRODUCTION

MISSION STATEMENT	3
PHILOSOPHY	3
CURRICULUM	3
OPERATION	3
ACCREDITATION	3
CALENDAR & HOURS	3
SPECIAL ACTIVITIES	4

B. GENERAL INFORMATION

RESOURCES	5
EXPECTATIONS	5
WHAT TO WEAR TO SCHOOL	5
PERSONAL BELONGINGS	5
TOYS FROM HOME	5
NO GUNS, WAR TOYS OR OTHER TOYS OF DESTRUCTION	5
NUTRITION AND SNACKS	6
LUNCHES	6
TISSUE, JUICE AND CRACKERS	6
FIELD TRIPS	6
SLEEPING MATS AND COVERS	6
NURSERY INFORMATION	6

C. ADMISSIONS AND PROGRAM INFORMATION

ADMISSIONS	8
NURSING BABIES	8
WAITING LISTS	8
ENROLLMENT PRIORITIES	8
CONTRACT	9
CHILDREN’S RECORDS	9
CHILDREN’S ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE	9
REGISTERED SCHEDULE/CHANGES	10
PARENT-ARK COMMUNICATION	10
AGE GROUPINGS	11
PROGRAM SUMMARY	11

DISCIPLINE	11
WEATHER EMERGENCIES.....	12
COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCE	12
SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT	13
DATA PRIVACY	13
FIELD TRIPS	13
ILLNESS	14
EXPOSURE TO COMMUNICABLE DISEASE.....	14
INJURY	14
MEDICATION.....	15
PETS	15
OUTDOOR EXPOSURE	16
AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT.....	16
LUNCHESS AND SNACKS	16
CLASSROOM DAILY SCHEDULE/LESSON PLANS.....	16
REST PERIODS	17
KITCHEN AND MEAL TIMES	17
FIRST AID	17
DRESS REQUIREMENTS FOR SAFETY	18

D. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

FIRE DRILL.....	19
MISSING CHILD	19
LOCKDOWN.....	19
EVACUATION.....	19
LIGHTNING	19

E. INSTRUCTION

CURRICULUM	20
POTTY TRAINING	20
MEDIA AS CURRICULUM/ENTERTAINMENT	20
PETS	20

A. INTRODUCTION

MISSION STATEMENT

The Ark Child Development Center is a Christian-based child development center that provides year round, part-time or full-time, weekday, childcare and preschool services. The Ark is open to all children regardless of race, creed, or nationality and is a nonprofit, nonpolitical organization. At the time of enrollment, a child must be between the ages of 6 weeks to 12 years old.

PHILOSOPHY

At the Ark we strive to help each child become the child God designed him or her to be physically, emotionally, socially, cognitively, and spiritually.

The Ark staff works as a team with parents to help each child become an independent and unique person.

Young children learn through hands-on experiences. Teachers are facilitators in creating those learning experiences as they develop the many skills they need from infancy through the elementary school years.

In our play-oriented environment, we have many small classrooms with high adult to child ratios to create a nurturing environment that enables children to learn and feel loved. Our large play yard with play structures and Fellowship Hall lend themselves to a wide variety of activities no matter what the weather.

CURRICULUM

The Ark's curriculum is play-based. Teachers provide a variety of hands-on age-appropriate experiences in which the children learn while they experiment and explore through fine and large motor, sensory, and creative activities. Dramatic play, music, and story time are a part of each day.

Each week we sing songs and hear Bible stories at chapel. We celebrate Christmas and Easter as Christian holidays along with other traditions.

Learning social/emotional skills and values through gentle guidance is an important aspect of our program.

Guidelines and training are provided by the state approved Focus Program.

OPERATION

The Ark Child Development Center is operated by a Board as an extension of the Council on Ministries of the First United Methodist Church.

ACCREDITATION

The Ark is an accredited 3 star organization with the New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department.

The Ark is also involved with FOCUS: New Mexico's third generation Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. Details about the Focus program and state regulations may be found at

www.newmexicokids.org

CALENDAR & HOURS

The summer session will begin the first week after Los Alamos Public Schools dismiss for the summer. The school-year session begins on the same day the Los Alamos Public Schools begin fall classes. Enrollment for each session is for the entire session only. A calendar of scheduled events and closures will be available the first day of each session. Calendars are available through the Ark office.

The Ark will be closed for Winter Break from noon on Dec. 24 through Jan. 1.

The Ark will be on limited availability during Spring Break, on Christmas Eve and Good Friday.

Parents will be required to notify the Ark they need childcare one month before Spring Break, Christmas Eve and Good Friday. Teachers will be scheduled based on need. These days are not included in the regular contracted hours but will be billed at the regular contracted rate.

The operating hours of the Ark will be Monday through Friday 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Special late fee rates apply for any child remaining after 5:30 p.m.

Please call the Ark before the scheduled pick up time if you are going to be late picking up your child. If children are not picked up by the time specified in the contract, additional charges will apply. If a child is not picked up by 5:30 p.m., the Ark may withdraw such child from the program and terminate the contract for that childcare. Should such late pickup occur without prior notification, the Ark may take one or more of the following actions:

- a. Attempt to reach you at home, work, or school.
- b. Call the people listed on the "Emergency and Authorization Card" as "persons to contact."
- c. Call Child Protective Services and/or the local police department.

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

Chapel is provided weekly. Children learn songs and hear Bible stories. Other special activities may be available. For example, the Ark facilitates children taking swimming lessons. Atomic City Transit provides transportation to the pool and the charge for lessons is paid separately. When special activities require an additional charge, the Ark staff will notify parents. The Ark celebrates all the major holidays. Classes may also celebrate holidays of other cultures.

-Halloween: a costume parade with parents welcomed.

-Thanksgiving: as classes wish

-Christmas and other holiday traditions: both secular and religious activities.

-Christmas program

-Valentine's Day: as classes wish

-Easter: both religious and secular activities including an egg hunt.

-Fourth of July: parade and family picnic.

-Children's birthdays: parents are welcome to bring a special snack.

B. GENERAL INFORMATION

RESOURCES

The Ark has a parent library located by the time clock with books, magazines and articles of interest to borrow on parenting. Each month a newsletter is published to keep you up to date on what's going on at the Ark. Keep an eye out for information on Ark and community activities by the time clock.

EXPECTATIONS

Parents are expected to abide by the policies and rules of the Ark. If your child is older than the nursery, parents take turns bringing snack for the whole class. The Ark holds parent/teacher conferences to keep you up to date on your child's progress. We appreciate your help in fundraising, on field trips, on the Ark board or an occasional committee, providing helpful supplies for the classroom, and sharing your skills with the children.

WHAT TO WEAR TO SCHOOL

Provide simple clothing that is free of complicated fasteners or drawstrings. Provide sturdy, washable clothing. Provide jackets and sweaters for our ever-changing weather and mittens, snow pants, and snow boots for cold, wet weather. Please do not allow your child to wear one-piece outfits because these outfits are difficult to manage at bathroom times. Label all clothing including hats and boots. For safety on the playground and for walking field trips, children shall wear shoes with rubber soles, closed toes and closed heel or strap. Shoes need to fit properly, not too big or small. In winter, children should have available to them: Mittens, boots, shoes, hats snowsuits, or snow pants with coats. In the summer they should have cool tops, shorts, and closed toe shoes. Please periodically check the classroom and lost and found for missing articles. **Extra Clothes:** Bring a complete set of extra clothing to school in case of toilet accidents, mud, or spills. **Outdoor Play:** Daily outdoor activity is very important for young children and is planned whenever possible. In the winter we will go out as long as the temperature or wind-chill are above 20 degrees Fahrenheit (40 degrees for children under 2 years of age). The children will play in Fellowship Hall in inclement weather. It is our policy that children who are well enough to come to the Ark are well enough to go outdoors. If children are dressed properly, weather conditions should not pose any health risk.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

We have limited space in the hallways for bags and coats. Please do not let belongings accumulate. Boots or other belongings may not be left on the floor at the end of the day as the janitor vacuums nightly. Each child has a space on a tack strip for art projects and a hanger with an Ark bag. Please take the blanket home weekly for laundering.

TOYS FROM HOME

Except for toys that are needed in the opening days of school to help ease your child's transition from home to school, we ask that you leave your child's toys at home. If an item is brought to school, we cannot be responsible for it. It must be shared, and it must have the child's name on it. If you have a book or video that may interest all of the children, we will appreciate this being shared with the class, but ask that it be left for several days. We also appreciate occasional special music (CDs, DVDs, etc.) for curriculum enrichment. A cuddly toy may be left with a blanket for naptime.

NO GUNS, WAR TOYS OR OTHER TOYS OF DESTRUCTION

These items are taboo in our school. A child must have a means to express feelings of aggression. We suggest clay, (to pound for manual dexterity), hammer and saw (to use for visual-motor perception), punching bag, (to hit, and vent anger while developing perceptual abilities), finger-paints, (to soothe jangled feelings while practicing a developmental rhythmic movement).

NUTRITION AND SNACKS

Morning snacks are provided by parents. A snack menu will be posted the last week of the month in your child's room for the next month. If your child comes one or two times a week, please sign up for snack once a month. If your child comes three, four, or five times a week, please sign up for snack twice a month. If you miss or forget a snack, please send something non-perishable to keep on the snack shelf. Afternoon snacks are to be sent in each child's lunch daily.

LUNCHES

Each child needs to bring his/her own lunch. Lunches need to be labeled with the child's name and put in the "lunch" refrigerator. Some rooms have their own refrigerators. When possible, put food in containers where the child can open them by themselves. Hot items to be put in a microwave container may be labeled as such. Wash lunch boxes out daily. Please peel oranges and eggs and prepare other items that may be difficult for a child. Remember it's a long day so send a nutritious lunch and snack. The following foods are not allowed in lunches or snacks for children up to 6 years of age because they can cause choking: Hard candy, popcorn, nuts, marshmallows and corn nuts. Please slice carrots, hot dogs, grapes and string cheese lengthwise for children up to 6 years of age. Grapes must be cut in quarters. Do not send soda pop in lunches. Hard candy is not allowed for kids of any age. Do not put any medicines in sippy cups and/or lunch boxes.

TISSUES, JUICE AND CRACKERS

We ask that you provide one large box of tissues and shelf snack at least once a month. See your child's classroom snack calendar.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are planned on a regular basis. To ensure the safety of children on field trips and excursions, the Ark will provide the same responsible adult supervision for these excursions as is provided for the children while in attendance at the Ark. The field trips are a fun and educational part of the Ark. Parents are notified in advance and asked to sign a permission slip. A parent or authorized person must sign the permission slip before a child can be allowed to leave church property. On school release days or during the summer program, do not bring your child if he/she cannot go on the scheduled field trip. A yearly walking field trip form, for walking trips of less than one mile, must be on file with the registration and health forms. Any trip away from the Ark will involve at least two Ark staff members.

SLEEPING MATS AND COVERS (does not apply to after school children)

After lunch all children are expected to rest or nap. Stories, records and songs are used to settle the children down. From 1:00 to 1:45 each child will be expected to rest quietly on his/her mat. After that time children who are awake will be allowed to play quietly in the room until naptime is over (2:30-3:00). A mat and mat cover will be given to each child at the beginning of the week. At the end of the week the covers will be laundered by the Ark. Your child will need a small crib-sized blanket from home for napping. You will be responsible for keeping it laundered.

NURSERY

Items to Bring (all items must be labeled with permanent marker): diapers, baby wipes and kleenex when requested, at least two changes of clothing, clean bibs daily,

Food preparation: Food, snack, lunch should be prepared in plastic containers or baby food jars that can be warmed in the microwave. Cut food into 1/4 inch cubes or smaller for infants and 1/2 inch cubes or smaller for toddlers

Drink preparation: Must be **labeled** in plastic bottles or containers that can be warmed in microwave.

What Not to Bring:

Medicines in baby bottles, sippy cups, and/or lunch boxes

Toys (except for crib mobiles)

Crunchy or chewy snacks (i.e., raw carrots or peas, pretzels, chips or fun fruits)

Balloons

Nursing Babies: Mothers are welcome to come to the Ark to nurse babies. Nursing babies must be able to take a bottle easily from a non-parent caregiver. If babies are not bottle trained upon admission and are not consolable by a caregiver, the baby will be sent home until he/she can easily take a bottle from a non-parent caregiver.

Arrival: Child should be dressed in clean clothes every day. Child should be bathed, fed, and changed. Do not expect the nursery caregiver to feed or change your baby when you arrive. This is a busy time and several babies need the teachers' attention. Parents are responsible for unpacking all their children's belongings (food, bibs, blankets) and repacking at days end.

Departure: Take home all belongings. Check refrigerator for leftover food, medicine, etc. Parents who plan to visit during the day are asked to take their child out of the classroom to play.

C. PROGRAM AND ADMISSIONS

ADMISSIONS

Pre-Admission Conference

A pre-admission conference visit with parents/guardians and their child is required. Visiting the Ark allows both parents and child to become comfortable with the environment, staff, and schedule.

Registration Materials

A registration card, signed contract, and non-refundable registration fee is required prior to receiving an admission packet. The admission packet should be turned in to the Director as soon as it is received by the Ark Office. These forms must be completed and turned in no later than one week prior to the child's first day at the Ark to ensure sufficient time for verification of immunization records prior to attendance.

Reserving Space for Newborn Children

Expectant parents or parents of a newborn infant may reserve a position at the Ark by paying the registration fee and monthly tuition even while the child is not in attendance. A two-week grace period will be granted at no cost for a child less than 6 weeks old providing one of the following is paid:

Currently enrolled families will pay a non-refundable deposit equal to two weeks of care.

Parents with no children enrolled will pay a non-refundable deposit equal to one month's care.

In either case, the deposit will be applied to the second month's bill. Subsequent months will be billed in full.

Admission Packet

A report of current physical examinations, signed by the child's source of medical care, must be submitted prior to enrollment. This must include current immunizations, health care summary and name, address and phone number of the doctor. Updated reports of physical examinations/immunizations (birth, 2 mos., 4 mos., 6 mos., 9 mos., 12 mos., 18 mos., and 24 mos. of age) must be submitted. For children more than 24 months of age, and an annual report is required at the time of admission.

Exemptions from immunizations for religious or other grounds may only be accepted if approved by the Health Services Division of the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. Exemptions are for a period not to exceed nine months and do not extend beyond the school year in which they are approved. A medical exemption must be submitted and must be signed by a physician.

NURSING BABIES

Nursing babies must be able to take a bottle easily from a non-parent caregiver prior to attendance at the Ark. Mothers are welcome to come to the Ark to nurse babies; however, formula or breast milk must be on hand at all times in case the mother is not able to arrive in a timely fashion.

WAITING LISTS

Anyone wishing to have a child on any waiting list should come to the Ark office to fill out the waiting list form. If this is not possible because of current locale, other arrangements will be made. No waiting list information will be taken over the phone.

Waiting lists will be maintained for all age groups.

At least once a year, families on the current waiting list will be contacted to determine if they wish to remain on the list.

Vacancies will be filled from the current waiting list, according to Enrollment Priorities.

ENROLLMENT PRIORITIES

The Ark Director will use the following priority guidelines in determining rosters for classrooms.

Children/grandchildren of Ark employees.

Children/grandchildren of returning families.

Children/grandchildren of First United Methodist Church Los Alamos members.

Enrollment requests from new families.

Priority for classroom slots is by number of hours requested for registered.

CONTRACT

Parents enrolling their children in the Ark will sign a formal contract. A sample contract is included in the appendices. The contract will include the attendance schedule for the child being enrolled. The contract will include information on registration fees, tuition, credits, payment, enrollment, withdrawal, and schedule changes. The parent(s) and the Ark director and/or the office manager will sign the contract.

CHILDREN'S RECORDS

The Ark will maintain a complete record for each child, including drop-ins, completed before the child is admitted and kept at the program for twelve months after the child's last day of attendance.

Personal Information

Name of the child, date of birth, gender, home address, mailing address and telephone number;

Names of parents or guardians, parents' or guardians' current places of employment, addresses and work telephone numbers;

A list of people authorized to pick up the child and an authorization form signed by parents or guardians:

Date the child first attended the Ark and the date of the child's last day at the Ark;

A copy of the child's up-to-date immunization record or Public Health Division approved exemption from the requirement;

A record of any accidents, injuries or illnesses that require first aid or medical attention and any observations of recent bruises, bites or signs of abuse or neglect;

Written authorization from the child's parent or guardian to remove a child from the premises to participate in off-site activities;

A record of the time the child arrived and left the facility and dates of attendance initialed daily by a parent, guardian, or person authorized to pick up the child;

The enrollment agreement signed by a parent or guardian with an outline of the service and the costs.

Emergency Information

Information on any allergies or medical conditions suffered by the child;

The name, address and telephone number of two people in the local area to contact in an emergency when a parent cannot be reached;

The name and telephone number of a physician or emergency medical facility authorized by a parent or guardian to contact in case of illness or emergency;

A signed authorization giving the Ark permission to seek transportation for the child in a medical emergency and an authorization for medical treatment signed by a parent or guardian.

Retention Requirements

Superseded records shall be destroyed after one year.

CHILDREN'S ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

The Ark requires parents or another authorized adult to bring the child into the Ark each morning, clock them in, and get him/her settled. Parents and children who arrive before 7:30 a.m. must wait in the foyer. Children may not be checked in before 7:30 a.m. Children must be clocked in, fed, in clean clothes and clean diaper before going into class. The child should be taken to the designated classroom and the separation time should be as brief as possible.

When leaving at the end of the day, the parent or authorized adult will clock the child out. The child will be clocked out after they have been picked up from the teacher and the parent and child are ready to leave the building. It is the parent's responsibility to make sure that the Ark staff responsible for the child is aware of the child's arrival and departure from the Ark.

Older siblings are not allowed in the infant and toddler rooms, but should wait at the doorway of the rooms. For safety reasons, please do not leave your car running when dropping off or picking up children.

Late fees will be applied for children picked up after the contracted time.

If the Ark is not notified that an afterschooler will not arrive on the afterschool bus, a late fee of \$5 will be applied.

Persons Authorized to Pick Up Child

At the time of enrollment, parents must register the names of persons authorized to pick up the child. It is the

parent's or guardian's responsibility to inform the Ark of any changes in the names of persons authorized. The Ark will release children to authorized persons only. The Ark will require photo identification or other official identification before the child is released to a person unknown to the staff.

If someone other than an authorized person (as indicated on the Emergency and Authorization Card) is to pick up the child, the Ark must be notified in writing.

In the event of a divorce, separation, or joint custody ruling, both parents will be granted equal access to their child/children unless legal documentation is provided to the staff and the Director.

Releasing a Child

If someone new (whose name is not on the emergency card) comes to pick up the child and the Ark has not been notified in writing that they have permission, the child will not be released until the following procedure has been followed:

1. Identification will be requested of the person intending to pick up the child.
2. The parents will be contacted on the phone for verification of authorization.

All court orders, written permission release notes from parents, and information on children's release, will be communicated with staff with a need to know. These orders/notes will then be transferred to the child's file.

When the Ark has been notified by the Human Services Department that an individual is suspected of child abuse, a child will not be released to that individual.

When no one arrives to pick up child

In the event that a child is still at the Ark after closing and there has been no contact from parents, the following steps will be taken:

1. The Ark staff will attempt to reach the parents at home, work or school.
2. The Ark staff will call the people listed on the Emergency and Authorization Card as persons to contact when it is after closing time and the Ark has not been notified.
3. By thirty minutes after official closing time, if no person authorized to pick up the child has been contacted, Child Protection Services and/or the local police department will be called. Before leaving, staff in charge will leave a note for the Ark Director and for the morning staff explaining the situation, including the name and telephone number of the Child Protection Services personnel/policeman who picked up the child.

REGISTERED SCHEDULE/CHANGES

Children are registered for specific full hours and days. All children should be picked up at the hour specified in the contract. All children must be picked up by 5:30 p.m. If parents are delayed by an emergency and will be late picking up a child, parents must call the Ark before the closing time. If children are not picked up by the hour specified in the contract, additional charges will apply and the Ark staff will take steps to locate care for your child.

Parents are only guaranteed the times and days for which a child is registered. The Ark may not be able to accommodate a request for additional or fewer hours.

A \$20 rescheduling fee will be charged when schedule changes are made, unless made at the request of the Ark. The teacher and the Director must approve changes. If a schedule change is approved, the existing contract will be modified and initialed by all parties involved.

Voluntary reduction in registered hours may result in the loss of space for a child or parents may continue to be responsible for the payment amount as stated in the contract.

If a child is unable to attend on a scheduled day, another day may not be substituted without making prior arrangements. If another day is scheduled, payment will be made for the scheduled day as well as the extra day.

PARENT-ARK COMMUNICATION

The Ark staff communicates with parents in a positive and supportive manner that encourages the parent-child relationship. Any information provided to the Ark with regard to family issues or personal issues will be handled confidentially. Opportunities will be made to communicate with parents when they drop off and pick up their children. If there has been an unusual or special circumstance during the day, this information will be

passed on to the parent(s) verbally or in a written note. Serious incidents (e.g., child abuse, injury, etc.) will be communicated verbally and in writing to affected parents.

Parents are expected to read the operating procedures in the Parent Handbook and other materials sent home. Parents should feel free to be a part of the Ark, offering suggestions, comments, and constructive criticisms, as well as financial and moral support.

Parents are discouraged from cell phone usage that would interfere with communication with the teacher during drop-off and pickup.

Parent-Teacher conference will be offered during fall and spring for pre-K classes and three times per year for infant and toddler.

AGE GROUPINGS

Age groupings are generally based on the child's age as of Sept. 1 of each year. Groupings are flexible and a child may be moved from one group to another to meet special needs. All but the youngest groups intermingle at various times throughout the school day according to individual interests, needs, differences and capabilities. Because the classrooms for children 3 years old and up do not have adjoining bathrooms and sinks, children in diapers cannot be accommodated in these rooms.

Children who are at the Ark ten hours per day may experience up to three different teachers during the day:

Early morning teacher: Greets all children arriving by age group.

Preschool teacher: Facilitates the preschool class, feeds children lunch and prepares children for rest.

Afternoon teacher: Supervises rest period and plans and supervises the afternoon activities.

PROGRAM SUMMARY

The Ark offers a variety of programs for children from 6 weeks to 12 years. These programs include:

Nursery care

6 weeks to 2 years old: full-time care or part-time care

Preschool program

2 years to 5 years old: full-time care or part-time care

3 years to 5 years old:

Part-time childcare 7:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Monday-Friday

Hours extended beyond preschool hours

Afterschool program

Kindergarten to 6th graders:

Before and after school care daily with extended hours on Wednesdays, conference weeks, teacher work days, winter break, spring break, and summer months

Extra hours will be billed at the same cost per hour that the contract is based on.

DISCIPLINE

Discipline is meant to be clearly understood by the child, consistent, and explained to the child before and at the time of any action. Discipline is to encourage the child to be fair, to respect property, and to assume personal responsibility and responsibility for others. Discipline may include brief, supervised separation from the other children (e.g., time-outs) or withdrawal of special privileges (e.g., losing the privilege to play with a special toy). Duration of time-outs are dependent upon the child's age and severity of the problem (approximately one minute per one year of age). When the child requests additional time to calm down, the time-out can be up to 15 minutes.

The lead teacher or director is responsible for informing parents about unacceptable behavior on the day it occurs. Parents shall also be informed of any disciplinary measures taken. The Ark and State of New Mexico prohibit the following practices:

Physical punishment of any type, including shaking, biting, hitting or putting anything in a child's mouth;

Withdrawal of food, rest, bathroom access or outdoor activities;

Abusive or profane language, including yelling;

Any form of public or private humiliation, including threats of physical punishment;

Unsupervised isolation of the child;

Discipline will:

be consistent and age appropriate;

include positive guidance;

include redirection;

include clear limits that incorporate the child's ability to become self-disciplined.

Staff will use positive statements when changing an unacceptable behavior. A time-out session is acceptable as long as the child is not deprived of food nor needed exercise. The time-out period is not to exceed 1 minute per 1 year of age, except at the request of the child.

If the child is involved in an incident that involves injury of another child or damage to property an Incident Report will be created that must be signed by the parents and turned in to the Ark Office. If the child has constant or serious disciplinary problems, a letter will be sent to the parents for resolution. If the behavior continues, the Ark Director will request a meeting with the parent(s) to discuss the behavior problems.

If the child's behavior still remains unacceptable, the Ark reserves the right to withdraw the child from the program and terminate the contract with the parent(s) or legal guardian(s).

Discipline policies and procedures will be given to all staff and parents who will sign the Staff Orientation Form and Parental Agreement Form respectively to acknowledge they have read and understand these policies and procedures.

WEATHER EMERGENCIES

No credit is given for snow days. The Ark is closed or delayed when the Los Alamos National Laboratory closes or delays for snow days. If LANL is open and the schools are closed for snow days, the Ark will be open 7:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. When LANL closes early, children must be picked up immediately. The Ark will close 30 minutes after LANL closes and late pick-up fees will apply.

If the Ark is closed or delayed, the Ark voicemail message will also be updated to reflect the closure or delay.

In the event of severe weather while the children are at the Ark, the children's safety and wellbeing is the staff's prime concern. In the event of a tornado warning, all children will be moved to interior rooms. If the schools close and the highway department advises no unnecessary travel, parents will be notified immediately and asked to pick up their children.

Staff will be paid regularly scheduled hours for snow days.

COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCE

When areas of concern arise, the problem should be brought to the attention of the classroom teacher who will hear the suggestion and/or grievance and attempt to work through the problem. If any problem is not resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, the Ark Director should be notified.

If the complaint concerns the care provided by a caregiver, the information must be provided in writing to the Ark Director and the Ark Board. Any problem that cannot be resolved through the Ark Director will be brought to the Ark Board for resolution.

When complaints are received that cannot be resolved by the Ark Board, the complainant may file an official complaint with the New Mexico State Child, Youth and Families Department through the Child Care Licensing Authority. The complaint procedures are:

The Licensing Authority will process any complaint regarding any childcare facility licensed or required to be licensed under the New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department's Licensed Child Care Center and Before and after School Regulations.

The Licensing Authority will investigate any complaint in which the health, safety or welfare of a child could be in danger.

The Licensing Authority will refer any complaint involving abuse or neglect of a child to the Protective Services Division of the Children, Youth and Families Department.

A Licensing Authority representative receiving complaints should ask complainants to identify themselves and for all information necessary to document the complaint. The Licensing Authority cannot assure anonymity to any complainant.

The Licensing Authority will provide a written report on the results of the investigation to both the

licensees of the facility that is the subject of the complaint and the complainant.

If the Licensing Authority finds the complaint is unsubstantiated, it will be so labeled and the Licensing Authority will take no further action.

If the Licensing Authority finds that a complaint is substantiated, it will make the complaint part of the Licensing Authority's file on the facility. The following additional actions will, at the discretion of the Licensing Authority, be taken:

The Licensing Authority will require the facility to submit and comply with a written plan of correction; and/or

The Licensing Authority will sanction the facility administratively including, without limitations, suspension or revocation of a license; and/or

The Licensing Authority will file criminal charges and/or pursue civil remedies.

SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT

Any suspected child abuse or neglect will be reported to the Human Services Department. "Every person, private citizen, or professional, in New Mexico who has reason to believe that a child under 18 has been abused is mandated by law to report the suspected abuse. Failure to do so is a crime. No person regardless of his or her relationship with the child or family is immune from reporting suspected abuse. A person making a report in good faith is immune from both civil and criminal liability."

Allegations of child abuse shall be promptly investigated and corrective or disciplinary action taken as warranted.

Complaining parties shall be required to swear or affirm that the facts stated in the complaint are true to the best of the person's belief, knowledge, and information.

The complaint file, including the name of the complainant as well as the name(s) of all those providing statements, shall be kept confidential. All information and documents pertinent to a complaint shall be kept confidential. All information is to be logged (documented) and kept in written form.

A complainant alleging child abuse by Ark staff should contact a member of the Ark Board, a mentor, or the Ark Director in writing or in person advising of the situation. All written and verbal complaints should include the employee's name, type of abuse, date, description of incident, and names of people involved. The person receiving the complaint will document the information and begin an investigation. There will be no reprisals for reporting such an event. The staff member will be placed on investigatory paid leave pending Ark Board investigation.

Any caregiver that suspects a child enrolled at the Ark is being abused will report such suspicions and information directly to the Ark Director and Human services immediately

DATA PRIVACY

Records for a child attending the Ark are confidential and will only be accessible to the parents/guardians of the child, staff members working with the child and Ark Director and Board members with a need to know. Records will also be available to persons designated by the state to review records for licensing purposes.

FIELD TRIPS

To ensure the safety of children on field trips and excursions, the Ark will provide the same responsible adult supervision for these excursions as is provided for the children while in attendance at the Ark. Parents or authorized persons are notified in advance and must sign a permission slip before a child can be allowed to leave church property.

Parents should not bring the child if he/she cannot go on the scheduled field trip. When children come dressed inappropriately for a field trip, parents will be called to provide appropriate dress or take the child home.

Under special circumstances to be determined by the Ark Director, a child who is unable to participate in a field trip will remain at the Ark under the supervision of the Ark Director or designee.

A yearly walking field trip form, for walking trips of less than one mile, must be on file with the registration and health forms.

Any trip away from the Ark will involve at least two Ark staff. The ratio will be at least one adult for every:
four 2 year olds

five 3 year olds
five 4 year olds
eight 5 year olds and above

All field trips must have prior approval by the Ark Director.

Timecards for the class must be taken on the field trip.

Staff will have access to a cellular telephone with the phone number on file with the Ark Director.

A first aid kit will be taken on any field trip.

ILLNESS

A child will be sent home if he/she appears to have symptoms of illness during the day (see the list below).

The parent will be contacted and must arrange for the child to be picked up within 30 minutes of the call or late pick-up fees will apply. A sick child will be kept in the office until the parent arrives to pick him/her up.

If a parent or their authorized person cannot be contacted because of inadequate information on the child's emergency card, or if telephone answering machines or voice messaging does not produce a return call within 15 minutes, the late-pick-up fees will begin. Failure to comply after two incidents will be cause for withdrawal. The late-pick-up fees for a sick child will appear on the next billing statement.

If a child has a minor accident while at the Ark, necessary treatment will be given and an Ouch Report must be signed by the parents and returned to the Director.

If a child will not be attending the Ark the parents must notify the Ark by 9 a.m. The Ark has voice mail, so a message may be left prior to 7:30 a.m.

Parents may not bring sick children to school. Children who appear ill when they arrive will not be admitted.

The following are Ark policies:

A child must stay home if he/she:

Has a fever of 100.4+F taken under the arm or a fever of 101+ taken orally or has had one in the previous 24 hours.

Is taking an antibiotic and has not been on the antibiotic for 24 hours.

Has diarrhea more than once in the last 24 hours, even if caused by taking an antibiotic.

Has an eye discharge or crusty eyes. A child with conjunctivitis must stay out for 24 hours after medication starts and until all redness and discharge are gone.

Has a constant cough or croup.

Is fussy, cranky, and generally not him/herself.

Has vomited in the last 24 hours.

Has a runny nose (yellow or green).

Has an undiagnosed body rash.

Has diaper rash that is bleeding, has blisters, or oozing sores.

Has symptoms of a possible communicable disease; these are usually sniffles, reddened eyes, sore throat, headache, abdominal pain plus a fever; notify the Ark at once if the child has a confirmed diagnosis of a communicable disease.

Is unable to play outside; if your child is well enough to be at the Ark, the child is well enough to go outside.

Has a doctor's appointment for a suspected illness. Do not bring them to school prior to the appointment.

Children absent due to any notifiable or communicable disease (as published by the office of epidemiology of the New Mexico Department of Health and posted at the Ark) will not return to the Ark without a signed statement from a physician.

EXPOSURE TO COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

The child may come to the Ark if he/she has been exposed to a communicable disease. However, the Ark Office must be notified as a precautionary measure.

Ark Office will notify CYFD and FUMC if necessary.

INJURY

If necessary, an ambulance or paramedics will be called for an injury. In case of a serious injury, the Ark will

make an immediate attempt to contact a parent or guardian. If parents cannot be reached, the Ark will call the child's physician. In case of a non-serious head injury, the parents will be notified promptly.

Until the arrival of a parent, physician, ambulance, or paramedics, the Ark Director, or designee will be in charge and will make all decisions about the care of the child. The parents will assume responsibility for any resultant expense not covered by their insurance.

The Ark will maintain a parent's signed consent form agreeing to this provision. It is the parent's responsibility to keep the Ark informed about phone numbers, emergency numbers, and other pertinent information.

The Ark is required to make an incident report to the Licensing Authority on all accidents, illness or injuries that require medical care beyond on-site first aid.

MEDICATION

The Ark will follow state regulation 8.16.2.25 regarding medications.

Ark will keep all medications in a locked and identified container inaccessible to children and will refrigerate medications when necessary. If the refrigerator is inaccessible to children, medications do not need to be in a locked container in the refrigerator. Epi-pens are to be kept in the classroom in an identified container inaccessible to children. When the child goes outside or on a field trip, the child's teacher will carry the epi-pen or inhaler.

Facilities will give prescription and non-prescription medication only with written permission from a parent or guardian, to be administered according to written directions from the prescribing physician. In addition, the Ark will require the parents to complete a Prescription Medication Permission Form before Ark staff can administer medications.

A designated staff member will be responsible for giving medication to children. The designated staff member will ensure non-prescription and prescription medications have a label with the child's name and the date the medication was brought to the facility. The Ark will keep non-prescription and prescription medication in the original container with written instructions, including the name of medication, the dosage and the hours and date the child should receive the medicine. Medication shall not be sent to the Ark in a child's baby bottle, "sippy" cup and/or lunch box.

The child's teacher or Ark Director will be the staff member responsible for administering medication at the Ark. In the absence of the child's teacher, the Ark Director will be responsible for administering medication or for documenting the designation of a designee who is properly trained.

Parents are responsible for placing medicine in the metal box in the refrigerator upon arrival, notifying the nurse or Ark Director, filling out the Medication Permission Form, and picking up the medicine upon departure each day.

The Ark has the right to refuse to administer any medication. Parents are responsible for keeping the medication updated (i.e., Epi-pens, inhaler, etc.) and notifying the staff in writing of any changes. A new prescription will require a new prescription medication permission form.

The designated staff member will keep a written record of the dosage, date and time a child is given medication with the signature of the staff who administered the medication. This information will be provided to the parent or guardian who picks up the child on the day the medication is given. The parent or guardian will initial and date acknowledgement of the information received.

When the medication is no longer needed, it shall be returned to the parent or guardian.

The Ark will not administer medication with an expired date.

PETS

Pets are seen as an educational resource for children.

The Ark will inform parents or guardians before pets are in the facility.

Pets will not be allowed in the kitchen, bathrooms or infant rooms.

All pets will be inoculated as prescribed by a veterinarian and a record of proof of inoculation will be on file in the Ark office prior to the pet's presence at the Ark.

The Ark will not allow on the premises pets or other animals that are dangerous, contagious or vicious.

Graduation certificates for basic obedience training will be on record in the office for all canines.

The children will be taught to care for and handle the pet in an appropriate manner. Signed permission is required before children may touch animals that are brought into the classroom. Reptiles, amphibians, live poultry, ferrets and farm animals will not be in direct contact with children under the age of five.

OUTDOOR EXPOSURE

Daily outdoor activity is very important for young children and is planned whenever possible. In the winter we will go out as long as the temperature or wind-chill are above 20 degrees Fahrenheit (40 degrees for children under 2 years of age). The children will play in Fellowship Hall in inclement weather. It is our policy that children who are well enough to come to the Ark are well enough to go outdoors. If children are dressed properly, weather conditions should not pose any health risk.

These rules apply for once in the morning and once in the afternoon. Dr. Robert Thomsen, dermatologist, recommended these maximum exposures:

- 0-6 months old
 - do not apply sunscreen
 - do not take out in the sun
- 6-12 months old
 - apply sunscreen
 - can be outside 10 minutes
- 1-2 years old
 - apply sunscreen
 - can be outside 20-30 minutes
- over 2 years old
 - apply sunscreen
 - can be outside an hour

Sunscreen should be provided by the parents.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

The Ark will be sensitive to, although not subject to, Americans with Disabilities Act. An evaluation of the suitability of Ark facilities will be performed when a request for enrollment of a physically disabled child is made, in consultation with the Ark Board and the church trustees. When a physically disabled child does enroll at the Ark agreed upon modifications to the playground and building will be made as soon as possible to provide reasonable access.

LUNCHESES AND SNACKS

The following foods are not allowed in lunches or snacks for children of any age because they can cause choking and/or allergic reactions:

hard candy peanuts tree nuts
products with peanuts or tree nuts in them

Soda pop may not be purchased and shall not be provided in a lunch.

The following foods are not allowed in lunches or snacks for children 6 weeks to 6 years because they can cause choking:

corn nuts popcorn miniature marshmallows

Carrots, hot dogs, and string cheese must be sliced lengthwise, and grapes must be sliced in quarters for children 6 weeks to 6 years. Oranges and eggs must be peeled. Parents should prepare other items that may be difficult for a child to handle.

Each child needs to bring his/her own lunch. Lunches need to be labeled with the child's name and put in the lunch refrigerator. Lunches will be refrigerated until lunchtime as required by state law. It is the parent's responsibility to wash lunch boxes out daily.

Hot items may be labeled as such. If there are items to be put in the microwave, send the items in an appropriate container.

Classrooms will be considered off limits to other foods that cause allergic reactions on a case-by-case basis with the Ark Director's approval.

Medicines shall not be sent to the Ark in sippy cups and /or lunch boxes.

CLASSROOM DAILY SCHEDULE/LESSON PLANS

A daily schedule for the children's activities should be posted in each room. The schedule should include times for projects, free play, outdoor play, snacks and bathroom times. The schedule should be developmentally appropriate for the age group assigned. Lesson plans are turned in to the Ark Director for prior approval on Thursday. Lesson plans for that week will be posted every Monday morning in accordance with Focus regulations.

REST PERIODS

The Ark will provide physical care appropriate to each child's developmental needs that will include a supervised rest period.

1. Children under the age of six who attend the Ark for more than five hours will have a rest period.
2. Children who do not sleep will be allowed to get up and participate in quiet activities that do not disturb the other children.
3. The distance between cribs, cots or mats must permit easy access by adults to each child without moving children, cribs or mats.
4. Each child will have an individual bed, cot, mat or linens clearly labeled to ensure each child uses the same items between washings.
5. Cots or mats will have a nonabsorbent, cleanable surface. Mats will be at least 3/4 of an inch thick. All linens will be laundered at least once a week. Mats, cots and linens will be laundered before being used by another child.
6. The Ark will provide a crib for each infant and, when appropriate, each toddler under the age of two. No child will sleep in a playpen. A child may sleep on a mat at age 1. Infants will not be allowed animals, blankets or pillows in their crib.
7. Children with disabilities or medical conditions that require unusual sleeping arrangements will have sleeping arrangements appropriate for their health and safety. Parents will need to provide documentation prior to enrollment so appropriate accommodations can be met. A doctor's statement is required.
8. Room must be light enough to provide light equivalent to a soft night light.

KITCHEN AND MEAL TIMES

The Ark staff will abide by the following regulations:

- Children will not be allowed in the kitchen except under careful supervision.
- Dining areas and the kitchen will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before and after use.
- Cleaning materials for the kitchen will be used only in the kitchen and will be stored separately from food.
- Food requiring refrigeration, including formula, will be kept at 41° Fahrenheit or below, and frozen food will be kept at 0° Fahrenheit or below.
- Refrigerators and separate freezers will have working thermometers.
- Food brought from home will be labeled with the child's name and refrigerated or frozen if necessary.
- Bottles of infant formula or breast milk will be labeled and refrigerated.
- All food will be protected from insects, rodents and other vermin.
- Staff/child ratios must be maintained at meal times.
- Adults must sit with children at meal and snack times.
- Children will not be allowed to share drinking or eating utensils nor allowed to share food.
- Toddlers shall be offered water from a cup.
- Toddlers shall be encouraged to hold and drink from a cup, use a spoon, and to use their fingers for self-feeding.
- Staff will use food service gloves while serving food.

FIRST AID

The Ark will:

- ensure that all staff are currently certified in first aid and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR).

have a first-aid kit and first aid manual together in a location easily accessible to adults and inaccessible to children.

have, at a minimum, Band-Aids, gauze pads, flexible roller gauze, triangular Band-Aids, safety pins, eye dressing, pens/pencil, notepad, charcoal, cold pack, insect sting preparation, poison control number, small splints, adhesive tape, scissors, tweezers, soap, non-porous bags and gloves, sealed packages of alcohol wipes, and a thermometer in the first-aid kit.

require staff to wear non-porous, single-use gloves when changing a diaper or when handling a blood spill, bloody diarrhea, bloody nose or any other blood.

clean blood contaminated surfaces first with hot soapy water then with a disinfecting solution effective against HIV and Hepatitis B and approved by the Environmental Protection Agency. Surface must be left wet with the disinfectant for 10 minutes.

have the Ark Director or nurse maintain the kit and perform quarterly check to ensure it is fully stocked.

make sure blood is disposed of separately from normal trash.

DRESS REQUIREMENTS FOR SAFETY

The basis for determining appropriate dress for students is to ensure students will be safe. Students should wear simple clothing that is free of complicated fasteners or drawstrings. Jackets and sweaters are recommended for our ever-changing weather. Mittens, snow pants, and snow boots should be worn for cold, wet weather.

One-piece outfits should be avoided because these are difficult to manage at bathroom times.

All clothing should be labeled with the child's name or initials.

For safety on the playground and for walking field trips, children shall wear shoes with rubber soles, closed toes and a closed heel or strap. Shoes need to fit properly, not too big or small. If the child has inappropriate dress, the parent will be called to provide appropriate dress or take the child home.

Children shall have an extra set of clothes kept at the Ark in case they are needed.

D. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

FIRE DRILL

Fire safety is a regular part of the curriculum for the children and the emphasis is on safety procedures. The Ark will conduct at least one fire drill each month.

During a fire drill, no one will be permitted to enter or leave the Ark parking lot to ensure child and staff safety. Parents in the parking lot are expected to keep their vehicles in place to ensure child and staff safety. Prior to the drill, the Ark Director will ensure a member of the church staff or volunteer is available to stop traffic using a safety cones kept under the information table outside of the Ark office..

MISSING CHILD

It is the Ark's strict policy that no child is ever left alone.

If a child cannot be located within 10 minutes on Ark property or within 5 minutes if not on Ark property, the Ark will notify the child's parents and local police department for their assistance.

The Ark will report immediately by phone to the Licensing Authority and follow-up in writing any incident that involves a lost or missing child. The Director or designee will notify the Ark Executive Committee.

LOCKDOWN

A lockdown may be instructed during situations such as the presence of a hostile or armed intruder inside a building. A lockdown requires locking doors, windows, and barricading oneself to block entry to a facility. Drills need to be practiced every 3 months.

EVACUATION

In the case of an emergency where evacuation is deemed necessary, an audible alarm will be sounded. (Alternatively, each room will be verbally notified.) If the children are evacuated to an alternate location, parents or their designee should first check at Trinity on the Hill Episcopal Church. Parents may call the Episcopal Church at 662-5107 if they suspect the children have been moved there. If the children need to be evacuated out of Los Alamos, we will go to St. John's United Methodist Church in Santa Fe, 1200 Old Pecos Trail, phone 982-5397, next to the Children's Museum on Cordova Road. If the children are evacuated anywhere else, a person shall be posted near the First United Methodist Church to notify parents of the location.

LIGHTNING

The Ark Director and Office Manager will monitor National Weather Service alerts to determine when thunder and lightning are possible. They will notify the teachers so classroom schedules can be adjusted to keep children off the playground or inside during periods of lightning activity.

If thunder can be heard, lightning is close enough to be a hazard and children should immediately be taken inside. Outdoor activities should be suspended until 30 minutes after the last strike of lightning is seen and after the last sound of thunder is heard.

E. INSTRUCTION

CURRICULUM

When the Ark staff develops a new curriculum the Grow Committee of the First United Methodist Church is authorized to review and approve it. The curriculum will be of high quality and will conform to all regulations of the state of New Mexico.

All curricula will be age appropriate and include indoor and outdoor activities, as well as incorporating provided faith-based curriculum.

All teaching staff will be issued curricula at the beginning of each session.

A daily schedule for the children's activities should be posted in each room. The schedule should include times for projects, free play, outdoor play, snacks and bathroom times. The schedule should be developmentally appropriate for the age group assigned. Lesson plans are turned in to the Ark Director for prior approval on Thursday. Lesson plans for that week will be posted every Monday morning in accordance with Focus regulations.

Chapel is provided weekly. Children learn songs and hear Bible stories.

POTTY TRAINING

Potty training is provided for children and will be implemented according to the Ark Potty Training Agreement signed by the teacher and parents. When children indicate an interest in the potty, teachers will contact parents to see if they are interested in training. The teacher may request that parents provide children with items of clothing that can be removed for potty activities without removing shoes. After children are potty trained, wiping by staff is provided if needed.

MEDIA AS CURRICULUM/ENTERTAINMENT

Media can be a valuable extension of the education process when used as a tool to complement the curriculum. Research has proven that the morning hours are the best time for learning; therefore any use of media during this time must directly support the curriculum. Media is defined by the state as videos, video games or anything viewed on a screen including tablets and phones.

Children under the age of 2 thrive on personal contact and videos should not be used.

Children above 2 years of age shall have a maximum viewing time of 6 hours per month but not to exceed one full-length movie (90 minutes) in one day. The limit shall be one video per week.

Afterschoolers can be shown G-rated movies without parental approval. Non-G-rated movies require parental approval.

All videogames played must be rated E.

The director must approve any exceptions to these policies.

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The Ark will not allow on the premises pets or other animals that are dangerous, contagious or vicious.

Graduation certificates for basic obedience training will be on record in the office for all canines.

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