

**The Ark**  
Parent Handbook  
2021-2022



**ARK CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER POLICIES  
2021-2022 PARENT HANDBOOK**

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

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## **A. INTRODUCTION**

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, nonpartisan 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 indoor space 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.

We celebrate Christian holidays and traditions including Christmas and Easter. Each week we sing songs and hear Bible stories at chapel. Prayer is incorporated in our day including, but not limited to, prayer before meals.

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.

### **VISITORS**

Department of Health COVID restrictions do not allow visitors in the building. Normally, parents and friends are welcome to visit and observe the Ark programs at any time; however, everyone is required to check in with the office prior to entering the classroom facilities if visiting for more than child drop-off or pick-up. If a visitor or parent brings an unregistered child, he or she will be expected to remain with the child and keep the child under control.

The Ark will not allow any person to be active in the facility during center hours whom we know would be disqualified as a direct provider of care under the most current version of the criminal records check (as outlined in the New Mexico Administrative Code, Children, Youth, and Families General Provisions, 8.8.3). This includes, but is not limited to picking up, dropping off, volunteering in the classroom, attending fieldtrips, attending/participating in classroom or community events, and any other Ark events where the children are present.

## **CALENDAR & HOURS**

The school-year session begins on the same day the Los Alamos Public Schools begin fall classes. The summer session will begin the first Tuesday after Los Alamos Public Schools dismiss for the summer. 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:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Jr Day
- Presidents' Day
- One Friday in March for NAEYC Conference
- Memorial Day
- July 4<sup>th</sup>
- Labor Day
- Indigenous People's Day
- Veteran's Day
- Thursday and Friday for Thanksgiving
- Christmas break starting at close of business December 23 through January 1

The Ark is open and will have availability during Spring Break and Good Friday. Parents will be required to notify the Ark if they need childcare for Spring Break and Good Friday one month in advance. 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. Late Pick-Up fees apply for any child remaining after 5:30 p.m.

## **B. GENERAL INFORMATION**

Parents are expected to abide by the policies and rules of the Ark. 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.

### **PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

All items must be labeled with permanent marker. (blankets, clothing, diapers, drink, and food containers).

Bring at least two changes of clothing and a blanket for nap. Provide any external medication including sunscreen labeled for your child. Each child has a space to store diapers, wipes, bibs, and extra clothing as well as a hanger for coats and blankets plus a tack strip for art projects going home. Please take the blanket home weekly for laundering.

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.

### **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.

Toys of destruction, weapons, war toys and guns are forbidden 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).

### **LUNCHES AND SNACKS**

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.

We are an allergy friendly environment and, to the best of our ability, exclude nuts or items that may contain nuts. Classrooms will be considered off limits to foods that cause allergic reactions on a case-by-case basis with the Ark Director's approval.

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

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

### **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.

### **COVID CHILDREN'S ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE**

The Ark requires parents or another authorized adult to bring the child into the Ark each day. Parents call upon arriving in the parking lot to notify staff the child is being dropped-off or picked-up. A staff member will escort children to and from the care. Parents need to remain in or beside their vehicle. Health screen will be done when the child arrives for the day. Children must remain with their escort and holding hands may be necessary if the child is in danger of running into the parking lot or endangers others.

Children will be clocked in by Ark staff when the guardian phones the office to announce their arrival or upon staff conducting the health screen. Children should be dressed in clean clothes every day. Child should be bathed, fed, and changed. Arrival is a busy time and several children need the teacher's attention.

When leaving at the end of the day, the parent or other authorized adult will call the Ark office while waiting at their car in the parking lot. The child's escort will take all belongings including items in the refrigerator and medication with the child. The child will be clocked out no later than when they are leaving the building.



Older siblings are not allowed in the infant and toddler rooms but should wait at the doorway of the rooms.

Late fees will be applied for children picked up after the contracted time. If the Ark is not notified that a school age student will not arrive on the after-school bus, a fee of \$5 will be applied.

### **STANDARD CHILDREN'S ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE**

The Ark requires parents or another authorized adult to bring the child into the Ark each day. Parents clock students 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. Children should be dressed in clean clothes every day. Child should be bathed, fed, and changed. Arrival is a busy time and several children need the teacher's attention.

When leaving at the end of the day, take home all belongings including items in the refrigerator and medication. The parent will clock out when they leave the building with the child. 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.

Late fees will be applied for children picked up after the contracted time. If the Ark is not notified that a school age student will not arrive on the after-school bus, a 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 in the child's file) is to pick up the child, the Ark must be notified in writing. If the Ark is not notified in writing that the person has permission, the child will not be released unless parents are able to verify verbally or in writing authorization.

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.

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 as emergency contact persons 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 can be 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.

### **CLOTHING**

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

One-piece outfits should be avoided for preschool classes because these are difficult to manage at bathroom times. All clothing, including hats and boots, should be labeled with the child's name or initials. Please periodically check the classroom and lost and found for missing articles.

For safety 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.

Please remember outdoor activity is very important for young children. If children are dressed properly for the weather, there should not be any health risk. In winter, children should wear mittens, snow pants, hats, snowsuits, coats and snow boots for cold, wet weather. In summer they need cool tops, shorts, and a sun hat. Children will play in Fellowship Hall during extreme weather.

### **Extra Clothing**

Children shall have a complete extra set of clothes kept at the Ark in case they are needed for toilet accidents, mud or spills.

**WEATHER EMERGENCIES**

The Ark is closed or delayed when the Los Alamos National Laboratory closes or delays for weather. 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. Since staff is paid, no credit is given for snow days.

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 well-being 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.

## C. PROGRAM INFORMATION

### ADMISSIONS

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 and staff.

#### Registration Materials

Registration materials are online. The contract and physician statement 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.

#### 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, an annual report is required at the time of admission.

Exemptions from immunizations 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.

#### 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.

- 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.

### WAITING LISTS

Anyone wishing to have a child on any waiting list needs to do so electronically by following the link on the Ark's website. 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 or church employees.
- Children/grandchildren of returning families.
- Children/grandchildren of First United Methodist Church Los Alamos members.
- Enrollment requests from new families.
- Priority will be given to full-time (32 or more hours weekly) over part-time schedules.

## **TUITION**

The tuition is based on a published rate structure established by the Ark Board. Tuition is based on the number of hours contracted each week. Families will be billed prior to the beginning of the month for all weeks ending in that month. These payments are due on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month. If not paid by the 15<sup>th</sup>, a late fee of \$10 will be charged. Special payment arrangements may be made with the Ark office.

If the unpaid balance exceeds \$300, the case will be taken to the Executive Committee for review. A satisfactory arrangement for paying the bill must be agreed upon by the Executive Committee and the child's parent or guardian, or the child's space will be forfeited and legal action may be taken to recover all outstanding fees. Registration for re-enrollment will not be allowed until all financial obligations have been paid in full or other arrangements have been made.

When checks are returned by the bank for insufficient funds, the Ark Board requires the parent/guardian to bring the balance due plus a \$25 fee in cash, money order or cashier's check before the child can return to the Ark.

If a student account has an overage or credit, that amount will be applied to the next month's bill or refunded upon request to the person who made the payment.

## **CONTRACTS**

Parents enrolling their children in the Ark must sign a formal contract prior to the child attending. The contract will include the attendance schedule for the child being enrolled, registration fees, deposits, and weekly tuition. If a schedule change is made, there is a fee of \$40 per family and a new contract will be issued. The parent(s) and the Ark director or assistant director will sign the contract.

## **SCHEDULES AND SCHEDULE CHANGES**

Children are registered for specific full or half-hour increments on specific days. Tuition is charged regardless of the child's attendance. 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. If a child is unable to attend on a scheduled day, another day may not be substituted.

A \$40 rescheduling fee per family 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 replaced with an updated contract. New schedules begin the first Monday after a full week of the office having the schedule change request.

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.

**CONTRACTED HOURS**

Children are registered for specific full or half-hour increments on specific days. All children should be picked up at the hour specified in the contract. All children must be picked up by 5:30p.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. Additional charges will apply and the Ark staff will take steps to locate care for your child. Extra hour charges apply for hours before or after contracted drop-off and pick-up times while the center is open and are billed at 6% above the contracted hourly rate. Late Pick-Up is any time after the center’s normal operating hours and late fees apply.

Late Pick-Up (after 5:30)	
	Fee
1-5 minutes	\$5
6-10 minutes	\$20
11-14 minutes	\$45
15 minutes	\$75
After more than 15 minutes the charges are reapplied	

**DISCOUNTS**

Discounts will not be compounded; the highest discount eligible will apply.

- FUMC-LA church members are eligible for a 15% discount.
- Ark Board members are eligible for a 25% discount.
- Families with two or more children attending the Ark with a family total of 40 hours or more per week will receive a 15% discount for the youngest child’s tuition cost.

**WITHDRAWAL**

Each child is enrolled for the entire session or the balance of the session. Early withdrawal requires two weeks prior notice and two weeks tuition regardless of attendance. Any child enrolled as of May 1 for the school year session or July 16 for the summer session, will be charged tuition through the close of the session.

**DIENROLLMENT**

Unfortunately, sometimes there are reasons we have to disenroll a child from our program. We want you to know that we will do everything possible to work with the family to prevent a child from being disenrolled.

Immediate causes for disenrollment

- The child is at risk of causing serious injury to other children, staff or him/herself.
- Parent threatens physical or intimidating actions towards staff members.

#### Other actions for disenrollment

- Failure of child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time.
- Uncontrollable tantrums/angry outbursts.
- Ongoing physical or verbal abuse to staff or other children.
- Excessive biting.

#### Other actions for child's disenrollment

- Failure to pay/habitual lateness in payments.
- Failure to complete required forms including the child's immunization records.
- Habitual tardiness when picking up child.
- Parents exhibit verbal abuse to staff especially in front of enrolled children.

Prior to disenrollment, a parent will be called and correspondence will be sent home. The center will make an effort to work with the parent to correct the problem. If the risk to other children's welfare and safety persists, and/or the offensive behavior does not improve, the child will be expelled.

### **PROGRAM SUMMARY**

The Ark offers a variety of programs for children from 6 weeks to 12 years. Full-time care is 32 hours or more a week and part-time care is less than 32 hours.

#### **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

#### **School Age program**

Kindergarten through the age of 12:

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 contracted hourly rate plus 6%.

### **AGE GROUPINGS**

Age groupings are generally based on the child's age as of September 1 of each year. Groupings are flexible and a child may be moved from one group to another to meet special needs. 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.
- Lead 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.

## **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 are recorded in the system documenting the initials of the parent or guardian or a designated staff member after confirming the person is authorized to pick up the child;
- The contract 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.

## **DATA PRIVACY**

Records for a child attending the Ark are confidential, are retained 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. Parent/guardian may request a copy of the student's file. Student files may not be removed from the Ark office.

### **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.

### **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 teachers, other students and property, and to assume personal responsibility. Discipline may include brief, supervised separation from the other children or withdrawal of special privileges (e.g., losing the privilege to play with a specific toy).

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 supervised separation period is acceptable as long as the child is not deprived of food nor needed exercise. The supervised separation period is based on the child's age and severity of the problem. It will not exceed 1 minute per year of age, except at the request of the child. When the child requests additional time to calm down, they may have up to 15 minutes.

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.

#### **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.

#### **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." 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.

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

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, the Ark Director or FUMC Pastor 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 immediately contact the Executive Committee of the Ark Board, Ark Director, FUMC Pastor and Human Services. There will be no reprisals for reporting such an event. The staff member will be placed on investigatory paid leave pending Ark Board investigation and NMAC 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.

### **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 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 Early Childhood Education and Care Department through the Child Care Licensing Authority.

- The Licensing Authority will process any complaint regarding any childcare facility licensed or required to be licensed under the New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care 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.

## **ILLNESS**

If a child will not be attending the Ark the parents must notify the Ark by 9 a.m. You may call or email prior to school opening.

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 file, or if 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.

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

A child must stay home if he/she:

- Has a fever of 100.4+F or higher or has had one in the previous 24 hours.
- Has symptoms of a possible communicable disease; notify the Ark at once if the child has a confirmed diagnosis of a communicable disease. Symptoms may include
  - Chills or repeated shaking
  - Muscle pain
  - Headache
  - Loss of taste or smell
  - Sniffles
  - Sore throat
  - Abdominal pain plus a fever
- 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 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.

- 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. The Ark Office will notify ECECD and FUMC if necessary.

### EMERGENCY REPORTING OF DISEASES OR CONDITIONS

The following diseases, confirmed or suspected, require **immediate reporting** by telephone to Epidemiology and Response Division at 505-827-0006.

#### Infectious Diseases

Anthrax\*  
Avian or novel influenza\*  
Bordetella species (including pertussis)\*  
Botulism (any type)\*  
Cholera\*  
Diphtheria\*

*Haemophilus influenzae* invasive infections\*  
Measles  
Meningococcal Infections, invasive\*  
Middle East Respiratory Syndrome  
Plague\*  
Poliovirus, paralytic and non-paralytic  
Rabies

Rubella (including congenital)  
Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)\*  
Smallpox\*  
Tularemia\*  
Typhoid fever\*  
Viral hemorrhagic fever  
Yellow fever

#### Other Conditions

Acute illnesses or conditions of any type involving large numbers of persons in the same geographic area

Severe smallpox vaccine reaction

Other illnesses or conditions of public health significance

Illnesses or conditions suspected to be caused by the intentional or accidental release of biologic or chemical agents\*

Suspected foodborne illness in two or more unrelated persons\*

Suspected waterborne illness or conditions in two or more unrelated persons\*

#### Infectious Diseases in Animals

Anthrax  
Plague

Rabies  
Tularemia

### ROUTINE REPORTING OF DISEASES OR CONDITIONS

Infectious Diseases (Report case within 24 hours to Epidemiology and Response Division by fax at 505-827-0013 or by phone at 505-827-0006; or contact the local health office)

Arboviral disease  
Brucellosis  
*Campylobacter* infections\*  
Chikungunya virus disease  
*Clostridium difficile*\*  
Coccidioidomycosis  
Colorado tick fever  
Cryptosporidiosis  
Cysticercosis  
Cyclosporiasis  
Dengue  
*E. coli* 0157:H7 infections\*  
*E. coli*, shiga-toxin producing (STEC) infections\*  
Encephalitis, other  
Giardiasis  
Group A streptococcal invasive infections\*  
Group B streptococcal invasive infections\*

Hansen’s Disease/Leprosy  
Hantavirus pulmonary syndrome  
Hemolytic uremic syndrome  
Hepatitis A, acute  
Hepatitis B, acute or chronic  
Hepatitis C, acute or chronic  
Hepatitis E, acute  
Influenza-associated pediatric death  
Influenza, laboratory confirmed hospitalization only  
Legionnaires’ disease  
Leptospirosis  
Listeriosis\*  
Lyme disease  
Malaria  
Mumps  
Necrotizing fasciitis\*  
Psittacosis

Q fever  
Relapsing fever  
Rocky Mountain spotted fever  
Salmonellosis\*  
Shigellosis\*  
St. Louis encephalitis infections  
*Streptococcus pneumoniae* invasive infections\*  
Tetanus  
Trichinellosis  
Toxic shock syndrome  
Varicella  
*Vibrio* infections\*  
West Nile Virus infections  
Western equine encephalitis infections  
*Yersinia* infections\*

## **INJURY**

Parents will be notified of any head injury regardless of severity. 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.

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.

## **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 maintain the kit and perform quarterly check to ensure it is fully stocked.
- Make sure blood is disposed of separately from normal trash.

## **MEDICATION**

The Ark will follow state regulation 8.16.2.25 regarding medications. The 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.

Faculty 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.

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. 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.

Upon arrival parents are required to notify the director and classroom staff about medications needing to be given to their child. Parents will need to fill out the Medication Permission Form prior to leaving medication at the school. Medication and the permission form will be placed in the metal box in the classroom refrigerator upon arrival. Medication must be taken home at departure daily. When the medication is no longer needed, it shall be returned to the parent or guardian.

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 Ark will not administer medication with an expired date.

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.

## **KITCHEN AND MEALS**

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.

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- 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.



## **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. Prior to the drill, the Ark Director or designee will ensure a member of the church staff or volunteer is available to stop traffic using safety cones kept under the table outside the Ark office. Parents are asked to refrain from moving their vehicles in the parking lot until the cones have been removed once the children are back in the building.

### **MISSING CHILD**

It is the Ark's 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.

### **LIGHTNING**

#### **Predicting**

The Ark Director and Assistant director 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.

#### **Protecting**

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.

Terms used in alerts:

Watch: Risk of hazardous weather event is significantly increased but presence, location or timing is unclear.

Warning: Hazardous weather is occurring, is imminent or has a high probability of occurring.

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

A daily schedule for the children's activities will be posted in each room. The schedule includes time for projects, free play, outdoor play, snacks and bathroom times. The schedule will be developmentally appropriate for the age group. Teachers are expected to write lesson plans on a weekly basis to be turned in to the Director by the preceding Thursday of each week. The Director will initial and return the lesson plan to the teacher by Friday afternoon. The lesson plans will be posted in the teacher's classroom by Monday morning in accordance with Focus regulations.

### **CLASSROOM DAILY SCHEDULE**

A daily schedule for the children's activities will be posted in each room. The schedule should include times for projects, free play, outdoor play, snacks and bathroom times. The schedule will 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. After lunch, all preschool children are expected to rest or nap. Stories and songs are used to settle the children down. A mat and mat cover will be given to each child at the beginning of the week. Your child will need a small blanket from home for napping. Parents are responsible for laundering blankets at least weekly.

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 must remain on their mat and 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 that appropriate accommodations can be met. A doctor's statement may also be required.
8. Room must be light enough to provide light equivalent to a soft night light.

### **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.

### **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. Sunscreen should be provided by the parents as detailed in the Parent Handbook. Dr. Robert Thomsen, a Los Alamos 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       |

### **SPECIAL ACTIVITIES**

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. Other activities may be offered to children at the Ark with additional charges. When special activities require an additional charge, the Ark staff will notify parents at least a week prior to the event. The Ark is not obligated to provide support for community activities.

The Ark celebrates all the major holidays. Classes may also celebrate holidays of other cultures.

- Children's birthdays: parents are welcome to bring something special.
- Halloween: a costume parade with parents welcomed.
- Thanksgiving: at the class's discretion
- Valentine's Day: at the class's discretion
- Easter: both religious and secular activities including an egg hunt.
- Fourth of July: parade and family picnic.
- Christmas program
- Christmas and other holiday traditions: both secular and religious activities.

### **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 (see Clothing p. 8), 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. 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.

### **PETS**

Pets are seen as an educational resource for children. The director must approve of all pets at the facility at least a month in advance. The Ark will inform parents or guardians and obtain permission slips for participation with pets before they are in the facility. A staff member will be present with pets at all times.

- 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.

### **MEDIA AS CURRICULUM**

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. School Age 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.