
Children of Hope child development center

making a difference since 2007



Children of Hope Child Development Center

FAMILY HANDBOOK

Updated July 2025

Children of Hope Child Development Center

WELCOME!

Dear COH Parents,

Welcome to our School Family!

My staff and I are so happy to welcome you and your child to our school. Science has shown us that a child's brain grows and develops 90% in the first five years of life, and we at Children of Hope recognize the importance of these early years.

Our lessons, environments and interactions are all mindfully planned to nurture this important period of growth in your child and to instill in them a sense of self confidence and worth, and a love of learning. As we prepare each child for a successful transition to kindergarten, we will provide a safe, warm and caring place for your child to explore, make mistakes, manage and understand emotions, and become independent thinkers and problem solvers.

I encourage you to review this entire handbook and to ask me any questions if you are unsure or if there is anything you don't understand.

Thank you for choosing **Children of Hope Child Development Center**. We look forward to providing your child with a caring and enriching environment where he/she can thrive.

Sincerely,

Jessica Mueller

Preschool Director
childrenofhope@myesperanza.org
Children of Hope Child Development Center
#FillYourChildwithHope

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ABOUT US

Philosophy

The philosophy behind our curriculum is that children learn best by doing. This requires active thinking and learning by experimenting to find out how things work and to learn first-hand about the world in which we live. Our philosophy includes the components needed to nurture the learning and development that leads to kindergarten readiness. Our methodology is based on the standards and practices endorsed by the First Things First Quality First Program, The Creative Curriculum, the Arizona Department of Education's Infant/Toddler Developmental Guidelines and Early Learning Standards and the National Association of the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) Program Standards. All lessons are designed with this information based on early childhood development research and theory and developmentally best practices. An overview of curriculum is shared with families upon enrollment and/or during Home Visits. Monthly lesson plans and newsletters are shared with families electronically as well as hardcopy.

Children of Hope Child Development Center is committed to providing a positive first school experience within a Christian environment of understanding, acceptance and love. We understand the importance of these early years and our staff is focused on the miracle of each child. We are satisfied with nothing but the highest quality in our programs. We are focused on creating a classroom community that promotes positive relationships and where children make friends and learn social problem-solving skills in a Christian environment. Our curriculum supports the academic and the social/emotional growth of each child.

Mission

As an outreach of Esperanza Lutheran Church, Children of Hope Child Development Center is dedicated to providing a positive and hands-on Christian learning environment. We will nurture the students' spiritual, social-emotional, cognitive and physical growth through a child-centered, developmental curriculum. We form a true partnership with the family to build a strong foundation that will foster a life-long love of learning.

Certification

Children of Hope Preschool/Child Development Center is a non-profit corporation in the state of Arizona registered with the Internal Revenue Service under 501(c)3. Children of Hope follows all the Arizona Department of Health Services Child Care Facilities Regulations. We are dedicated to being an excellent resource for parents as early childhood educators of their young children.

We are licensed through the AZ Department of Health Services

We are a 5-Star Quality First Site!

We Participate in Quality First



Quality First – a signature program of First Things First – partners with childcare and preschool providers to improve the quality of early learning for kids birth to 5. Quality First funds quality improvements that research proves help children thrive, such as training for teachers to expand their expertise in working with young children and coaching to help providers create learning environments that nurture the emotional, social and academic development of every child.

Currently more than 900 childcare centers, homes and preschool programs in communities across Arizona participate in Quality First. All of these programs are licensed and regulated but participating in Quality First is voluntary. These programs are committed to quality improvement, going beyond regulatory requirements to help the infants, toddlers and preschoolers in their care be ready for success in school and beyond.

First Things First supports childcare and preschool programs enrolled in Quality First with:

- Coaching to build on what's great about a program and identify opportunities to improve
- Funding for the purchase of educational materials, equipment and other resources
- Financial support for teachers and caregivers to gain expertise in early childhood and how to nurture the development of young children
- Specialized assistance from a team of experts in child health, mental health and supporting children with special needs

Quality First Coach: Mechelle Bowman - Provides periodic visits or as needed to provide professional development and guidance of staff to implement developmentally appropriate best practice in settings and relationships

Child Care Health Consultant: Idolinda Khalsa RN, BSN - Conducts periodic visits or as needed to provide health and safety technical assistance, education and resources. The CCHC can observe, advise, provide professional development, refer to community services and provide technical assistance to our staff.

Smart Support Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant: Kelly Quintanar - Provides on-site visits as needed and consultation to provide professional development and guidance of staff to insure the social-emotional needs of the classroom, students, parents, and staff are being addressed and met.

Why quality matters

- 90% of a child's brain develops before age 5. The positive, nurturing relationships young kids have with adults — from parents to childcare and early learning professionals — shape their learning now and throughout their lives.
- Parents are their child's first and best teachers, and a large number of children in Arizona spend their day learning from other adults, whether in regulated early childhood settings — such as child care centers, homebased programs or preschools — or informal child care with family, friends or neighbors.

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- No matter the setting, quality matters for infants, toddlers and preschoolers. Quality early learning settings help children develop skills — like motivation, self-control, focus and self-esteem — that are crucial to their success now and once they enter school.

Definition of Family

In this handbook we refer to family as a parent, legal guardian, sponsor or anyone else who provides for the well-being, best-interest and responsibility of the child in our care. Home and school are a young child's two most important worlds. Children must bridge these two worlds every day. If home and school are connected in positive and respectful ways, children feel secure. We build a true partnership with the family because we truly value the family's role in a child's education and recognize how important it is that we work together.

Hours of Operation

Childcare/preschool services are provided from 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM Monday through Thursday.

Holidays

We are closed for certain holidays: Labor Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, MLK Jr. Day, President's Day, and Good Friday

Admission & Enrollment

All admission and enrollment forms must be completed, and enrollment fee paid prior to your child's first day of attendance.

An enrollment fee of \$250.00 is due at the time of enrollment. This fee is non-refundable.

Based on the availability and openings, our facility admits children from 2 to 5 years of age.

Our process for introducing children to our program includes a tour of the school if requested and a Home Visit with the Lead Teacher prior to the first day of school.

Children are admitted without regard to race culture, sex, religion, national origin, or disability. We do not discriminate on the basis of special needs as long as a safe, supportive environment can be provided.

Inclusion

Children of Hope Child Development Center believes that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging in childcare. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage full and active participation of all children in our program based on his/her individual capabilities and needs.

Children with special needs will be given the opportunity to participate in the program to the fullest extent possible. To accomplish this, the childcare program may consult with agencies/organizations as needed, provided parental permission is granted (Authorization for Release of Information form). Parents may provide a full-time aide for their child if requested by Children of Hope staff and/or recommended by a child's physician. Inclusion of program staff on Individual family service plan (IFSP) and Individualized education program (IEP) case conferences is desired to ensure the childcare program provides the most supportive environment possible. All staff will receive general training on the benefits of inclusion of children with special needs and training on specific accommodations that any child in their classrooms may need. The knowledge of parents and health care professionals involved in the care of the child with special needs will be consulted to determine accommodations and or

therapy requirements. The individual written plan of care for children with special care needs will be followed in all emergency situations. The preschool director is responsible for making sure the plan shall be updated annually, at a minimum.

Non-Discrimination

At **Children of Hope Child Development Center** equal educational opportunities are available for all children, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, or parent/provider political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation or special needs, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state or local laws. Educational programs are designed to meet the varying needs of all students.

Family Activities

Each family is a child's first teacher. We value families as partners in the growth and development of children in our program. We encourage parents and other family members to be involved in the program, visit children's classrooms *, participate in events *, and provide feedback on the program. We offer a variety of ways in which families can participate in helping us establish and reach our program goals.

*Covid protocols may restrict certain aspects of our program

Please see the list of Family Activities at the end of this booklet.

Confidentiality

Unless we receive your written consent, information regarding your child will not be released with the exception of that required by our regulatory and partnering agencies. All records concerning children at our program are confidential.

Staff Qualifications

Our teachers are hired in compliance with the state requirements and qualifications as a base minimum. Typical staff certifications are as follows:

Position Title	Education/Certification	Experience
Lead Teacher	Bachelor's Degree Minimum	2 years
Assistant Teacher	Child Development Associate Credential	1 year

All teachers participate in orientation and at least 18 hours of ongoing training in the areas of child growth and development, healthy and safe environments, developmentally appropriate practices, guidance, family relationships, cultural and individual diversity, and professionalism.

We strongly discourage families from entering into employment arrangements with staff (i.e. babysitting). Any arrangement between families and our caregivers outside the programs and services we offer is a private matter, not connected or sanctioned by **Children of Hope Child Development Center**.

Child to Staff Ratios

Children are supervised at all times. We maintain the following standards for child to staff ratios, which are *lower* than the recommended state ratios:

	Child to Staff	Maximum Group Size
Toddlers	4 to 1	12
3-year-olds	7 to 1	14
4-year-olds	8 to 1	16
5-year-olds	8 to 1	16

Communication & Family Partnership

Brightwheel App Communications. Frequent notes, reminders, lesson plans, newsletters, sign ups, etc. from school staff will mainly be communicated via Brightwheel and will keep you informed about your child's activities and experiences at the school. It is very important to join your classroom Brightwheel group as this will be our main source of communication.

Bulletin Boards. Located throughout the school, bulletin boards provide school news, upcoming events, faculty changes, holiday closing dates, announcements, etc.

Newsletters. Monthly newsletters and other notes from the preschool director and your child's Lead Teacher provide school news, events, announcements, etc. These newsletters are posted on Brightwheel and may also be available in print and distributed in your parent mailboxes.

Email/Phone Number. We need an email address or a phone number (preferred) that you use regularly so that we may send you an invitation to Brightwheel, our main communication source.

Preschool Board of Directors. The Board of Directors is the primary governing body of Children of Hope. The Board is responsible for establishment of policy, the appointment of Directors, the preservation of the school's mission, strategic planning, finances, fundraisers and marketing. Meetings are open to the general membership, and we encourage attendance by any interested parents.

Family Visits. Family participation is encouraged. Visit our classrooms, volunteer, come along on a field trip, or celebrate a birthday with your child. (*Covid protocols may restrict)

Family Events. Family events are scheduled throughout the school year. These events include snacks, drinks and fun filled age-appropriate activities for families. Family Events allow families and children time to share, learn, and have fun. Families have an opportunity to be a part of their child's learning experience and connect with other families. (*Covid protocols may restrict)

Conferences. Family & teacher conferences occur twice a year. During these conferences, we will discuss your child's strengths, likes and dislikes, and styles of learning. We will work together to set goals for your child's growth and development. You may request additional conferences regarding your child's progress at any time. We encourage you to communicate any concerns.

Parents Grievance Policy

If a parent has a concern or complaint, please communicate **first** with the classroom Lead Teacher. Any further questions or concerns should be brought to the director's attention. If any person is not satisfied with the resolution, they may submit their grievance in writing to the preschool's Board of Directors.

Open Door Policy

We are delighted to have family members participate in our program. Parents/Guardians are welcome to visit the program any time during regular program hours. (*Covid restrictions may apply)

Open Door Policy does not mean the doors will be unlocked. For the safety and protection of the children, external doors will always be kept locked.

Our team will always do their best to speak with parents/guardians. Since staff days are devoted to caring for children, it is usually not feasible to have a long discussion during regular program hours. If a situation requires a longer discussion, kindly arrange for an appointment.

Publicity

Occasionally, photos will be taken of the children at the center for use within the center or on our website. Written permission will be obtained prior to use of photographs.

Unless the family indicates that they do not want their child to participate, we may use unnamed pictures of children for social media publicity.

CURRICULA & LEARNING

Learning Environment

We provide a rich learning environment with curricula that are developmentally appropriate to the specific ages in each classroom. We have a flexible day routine that allows children to advance at their own pace. We strongly believe that learning happens through play. Learning and exploring are hands-on and are facilitated through interest areas. Our program is designed to enhance children's development in the following areas: creativity, self-expression, decision-making, problem-solving, responsibility, independence, and reasoning. We encourage openness to that which is different from us, and the ability to work and play with others.

Curricula & Assessment

Children of Hope Child Development Center builds lessons upon the AZ Infant/Toddler Developmental Guidelines, AZ Early Learning Standards, The Creative Curriculum, Frog Street Toddler Curriculum, the recommended best practices of Quality First and the NAEYC Program Standards. As part of these guidelines and curriculum, we gather information about each child's developmental abilities and evaluate progress so we can modify and adjust what we are doing in our classroom to deliver the best individualized instruction for each child. This evaluation is communicated to families periodically during the school year using various formal and informal tools, forms, and resources.

As defined by the **AZ Infant/Toddler Developmental Guidelines** and the **AZ Early Learning Standards** we describe the key components of these content areas as:

Social Emotional: Social and emotional development is the foundation of children's cognitive development and life-long learning. This domain becomes the foundation for helping children understand themselves, form positive constructive social relationships and relate to the larger world.

Approaches to Learning: Children's ability to stay focused, interested, and engaged in activities supports a range of positive outcomes, including cognitive, language, and social and emotional development.

Language and Literacy: Vocabulary and language, phonological awareness, letters, words, print, comprehension, books and other texts, and sources of enjoyment

Mathematics: Numbers, patterns and relationships, geometry and spatial awareness, measurement, data collection, organization and representation

Science: Physical science, life science, earth and the environment

Social Studies: Family, community, spaces and geography, people and how they live, people and the environment, and people and the past

Physical Development, Health and Safety: Gross and fine motor development, health, hygiene and safety

Fine Arts: Dance, music, drama, and the visual arts

Technology: awareness of technology, basic operations and concepts, technological tools, and people and technology

For information about your child's day, please see copies of daily schedules and lessons plans posted in each classroom and shared on Brightwheel.

Family Chapel Time

Each month we meet with the Pastor and the Family Ministry Coordinator of Esperanza Lutheran Church at Family Chapel Time. **Parents are invited and encouraged to attend Family Chapel services each month(dates on lesson plans).**

Chapel Time includes a lesson and music.

The purposes of these services include:

- To let each child know they are unique and loved
- To give the children a personal worship experience
- To provide a spiritual unity for our school by singing praises to God
- To know that Jesus is their friend and that we strive to treat others with love and kindness as He taught

Classes, individual students, teachers, pastors and other outside speakers may be a part of the chapel services.

Developmental Screening

Children of Hope Child Development Center uses the Ages and Stages Questionnaire twice a year to gather information on the social/emotional and cognitive development and progress of each child. To coincide with curriculum-based assessment(s), we monitor each child's achievement of developmental milestones, share observations with parents/guardians, and provide resource and referral information as needed for further screenings, evaluations, and early intervention and treatment. The developmental screening process is a collaborative one, involving parents/guardians and done in conjunction with the child's primary care provider and health, education, and early intervention consultants. Developmental screening, such as for speech & language, is conducted with written consent from the child's parent/guardian(s).

Outings and Field Trips

Weather permitting; we conduct at least 30 minutes of supervised outdoor play and/or walking trips around the campus and garden 1 to 2 times a day for all children. Children are accounted for at all times.

From time to time, there will be supervised field trips, and we require you to join your child on the trip. *Permission Slips* for each trip must be signed by the child's family.

For field trips, please dress your child appropriately for the season. Walking shoes are a must. Sandals and flip-flops are not appropriate for walking and make it difficult for your child.

The safety of children and staff will be guarded in all activities of childcare programs. Proper restraint systems (seat belts) and the correct use of them are critically important during travel to/from the childcare program as well as during field trips. All field trips will be taken in family cars, which have or use individual seat belts and car seats for each child.

Transitions

Your child's transition in childcare should be a positive and exciting learning adventure. We will work with you and your child to ensure the smoothest possible transition occurs as new routines and new people are introduced.

Transition from home to center

Prior to your child's first day, you will have an opportunity to tour the center, meet with your child's peers (Back to School Park Day) and teachers (Home Visits), and communicate any anticipated concerns. Home Visits are valued, special times between Lead Teacher and families as they initiate or reinforce relationship, allowing for a smooth transition into the school year. At this time please share any information that will help us best support your child.

Transition between learning programs

Children are transitioned to the next program based on age, developmental readiness, state licensing requirements, and space availability. During the transition, current and future teachers will meet to propose a plan to introduce your child into the new program. Feedback regarding readiness will be shared at parent/teacher conferences and throughout the year.

Transition to elementary school

Transition activities such as a field trip to a local elementary school is a potential part of your child's education at our school. We will provide you with information on local schools, kindergarten round-ups, what to expect in elementary school, kindergarten readiness and ideas on how to talk to your child about going to elementary school.

Transition for Lunch Bunch and Enrichment Classes after school

Children who enrolled in the 3's and/or Pre-K classrooms may continue with after school opportunities for continued play and learning at our school. The school will provide staff to ensure that your child arrives at the designated classroom in a timely manner. An additional fee applies for our Lunch Bunch program and Enrichment Classes.

Electronic Media

Our normal daily routine does not include electronic media (television/TV, video, DVD) viewing and computer use but from time-to-time, we may use a television show or video without advertisements as a teaching aid and discussion stimulator. All Electronic Media will be screened prior to use and will consist of non-violent and high-quality educational material. Our focus is to provide your child a positive experience with increased understanding of the world. Electronic Media will be offered occasionally, used to meet a developmental goal, and limited to no more than 15 minutes per week per child.

Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is vital for all children because it sets social goals and promotes respect for all people and the environment we inhabit. We utilize books, music, games, and a wide range of activities as aids to teach our children respect for our world and the diversity of life upon it.

Celebrations

Our holiday policy encourages an enhanced understanding of and respect for different cultures and beliefs of children, families, staff and community. We celebrate with a school-wide Halloween party and Thanksgiving Feast, classroom Christmas parties, Annual Christmas Program, classroom Valentine parties, school-wide Easter Egg Hunts and Mother's Day Teas.

We especially want to celebrate your child's birthday! School friends enjoy sharing the event. You may provide a special treat for the class with healthy choices encouraged. State law requires that all baked goods be store-bought and packaged (under certain circumstances, baked goods can be homemade...see Nutrition). Feel free to decide with your child's Lead Teacher so we can plan accordingly to celebrate your child.

Rest Time

After lunch, all children less than 6 years of age, may participate in a quiet rest time. Children are not required to sleep and may be given quiet activities.

Toilet Training

The most important factor in making the toilet learning experience successful and as low-stress as possible is a family/teacher partnership that supports the child. Research indicates that children cannot successfully learn how to use the toilet until they are physically, psychologically, and emotionally ready. Many pediatricians say that most children under 24 months of age are not physically capable of regulating bladder and bowel muscles. Most positive toilet training occurs only after children show signs of physical control or awareness of their bodily functions and when they demonstrate an interest or curiosity in the process. We are committed to working with you to make sure that toilet learning is carried out in a manner that is consistent with your child's physical and emotional abilities and your family's concerns.

Independent toileting skills are required for those beginning in the 3's and older classes. The 3's and Pre-K classrooms are not licensed for diaper changing and our staffing plan does not allow for it. Frequent accidents in the 3's and Pre-K classes will require parent conference and a success plan. In the Toddler (2's) Class, children are not required to be potty trained and daily diapering records are kept. Toddler Teachers provide regular communication with parents on the child's toilet training progress.

To be successful child must be able to:

- cooperate with adults
- stay dry for at least two hours at a time during the day or be dry after naps
- understand words about the toileting process
- have regular and predictable bowel movements
- express verbally, through facial expressions or posture the need to eliminate
- follow instructions
- get to and from the bathroom area help and pull diapers or pants up and down

Make toilet learning part of normal curriculum, reading stories, singing songs, discussing various steps of toileting, and taking trips to the bathroom. Training should be given to caregivers upon hire, and practices assessed on a regular schedule. If the child shows resistance to learning, he or she may not be ready for the process or find it too stressful. Let the child guide the process. If a power struggle occurs stop the training and start again at another time.

Parents and Caregivers should:

- Talk about signs that indicate the child is ready to begin toilet learning.
- Agree on how to work on the toilet learning process together.
- Use normal routines to establish regular toileting times to help make toileting a habit.
- Encourage practice runs to the toilet whenever the child gives a signal (facial expressions, grunting, holding genitals, squirming).
- Help children understand the association between relieving themselves and the bathroom by taking them there, talking about relieving themselves then flush the toilet and explain where the waste goes.

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- Teach proper hygiene habits. Show children how to wipe carefully from front to back, and to always wash their hands after using the toilet.
 - Try to keep the child's daily schedule, routines and rituals consistent between home and childcare. Try to take them to the toilet before they relieve themselves so they can experience success.
 - Use the same words to describe body parts, urine, and bowel movements at home and in childcare. It is best to use proper terms that will not offend, confuse or embarrass the child or others.
 - Read the same or similar books about using the toilet at home and in childcare.
 - Give the child opportunities to ask questions and watch for reactions that will show how the child perceives and feels about using the toilet.
 - Use the same method of praise and reinforcement at home and in childcare. Rewards such as food or candy aren't recommended. Verbal praise is best.
 - Handle toileting accidents the same at home and in childcare. Provide plenty of changes of clothing for the child in care so there is always clean clothing in the event of an accident.
 - Taking children to the toilet when they indicate they have the need is important, watch for signs.
 - Establish a regular schedule and try to put the child on the toilet before they relieve themselves. Be consistent.

The Arizona Department of Health Services Office of Child Care Licensing Surveyor recommends a suitable area for changing a pull-up, which is considered a diaper.

Note: "Changing a child from the floor or on a chair puts the adult in an awkward position and increases the risk of contamination of the environment" (Caring for Our Children, p. 108, 2011). A changing table is recommended for all soiled and wet diaper changes. The table allows for a well-organized procedure. Steps are recommended for older children, so the adult does not have to lift a heavy child. This can promote independence of the child and help reduce the risk of back injury for the adults. If a decision is made to change a wet diaper in the restroom the procedure listed in "Appendix 8: Changing Diapers, Pull ups, and Soiled Underwear" is recommended. The procedure is the same as changing a diaper. Sanitary practice is very important because disease causing germs are found even in wet diapers/pull-ups. All "Pull-ups" that are soiled with stool must be changed on a changing table.

Special notes: Safety is of special consideration when placing a child on a toilet. We will never leave a child unattended. Unsupervised access to toilet areas is unacceptable even when fostering independence during toilet learning. Plenty of encouragement and praise will be given. A child will never be forced to sit on the toilet. Accidents are just that; expect urine and soiling "accidents". We avoid using harsh language when an accident occurs, and we work to build a child's success and self-esteem with verbal rewards and praise.

GUIDANCE

General Procedure

Children of Hope Child Development Center is committed to each student's success in learning within a caring, responsive, and safe environment that is free of discrimination, violence, and bullying. Our center works to ensure that all students have the opportunity and support to develop to their fullest potential and share a personal and meaningful bond with people in the school community.

Thoughtful direction and planning are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Communicating consistent, clear rules and involving children in problem solving help children develop their ability to become self-disciplined. We encourage children to be fair, to be respectful of other people, of property, and to learn to understand the results of their actions.

Discipline Policy

We have created a discipline policy that reflects our philosophy of positive guidance with children. All actions of the teachers, assistants and director are founded in the basic assumptions that every individual is unique and, therefore, deserves respect and love, for anything the child owns, and for anything the child produces or does. Positive methods of simple discipline which encourage the child's own self-control, self-direction, self-esteem and cooperation are emphasized (ex: Conscious Discipline, Love & Logic). Children will be positively redirected toward what the child should do or how they should behave as an alternative to the current behavior. Redirections and appropriate choices are given as a guidance method, which entails stopping the undesirable behavior and directing the child to an alternative activity or desirable activity. At times a child may be removed from the others for a quiet talk and for an opportunity to calm themselves. Discipline practices that are negative or involve humiliating or striking a child or showing anger in any way, will never be used.

Challenging Behavior

Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self-control and kindness.

Each student at **Children of Hope Child Development Center** has a right to:

- Learn in a safe and friendly place
- Be treated with respect
- Receive the help and support of caring adults

When a child becomes verbally or physically aggressive, we intervene immediately to protect all the children. Our usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to show them how to solve problems using appropriate interactions. When discipline is necessary, it is clear, consistent and understandable to the child. We maintain a zero tolerance to bullying. If you have any concerns about this at any time, please report it to the Director of the Center.

Physical Restraint

Physical restraint is not used or permitted for discipline. There are rare instances when we need to ensure a child's safety or that of others and we may restrain a child by gently holding her or him only for as long as is necessary for control of the situation.

Notification of Behavioral Issues to Families

If a child's behavior/circumstance is of concern, communication will begin with the parents as the first step to understanding the child's individual needs and challenges. We will work together to evaluate these needs in the context of our program.

On rare occasions, a child's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for care. Examples of such instances include:

- A child appears to be a danger to others.
- Continued care could be harmful to, or not in the best interest of the child as determined by a medical, psychological, or social service personnel.
- Undue burden on our resources and finances for the child's accommodations for success and participation.

TUITION AND FEES

All payment and fee processing will be completed by the Preschool Director and offered via Brightwheel. He/she will oversee the collection of tuition and other fees and contacting families regarding payment issues. If you have a question or concern regarding a payment or fee, please contact our Preschool Office.

Tuition Rates

Families contract for a 10-month schedule as indicated on the *Enrollment Agreement* Form. Tuition is based on a yearly amount and broken into 10 equal installments, August to May for preschool. Payment for this contracted schedule is required every month whether or not your child attends; this enables us to pay teachers a stable salary every week all school year. No credits are given for sick or vacation days, holidays, staff training closure or closure due to inclement weather. Lunch Bunch Program and Enrichment Classes are available throughout the year for additional fees.

Payment

Payment is always due in advance with no deduction for any absences, holidays, or closures due to inclement weather, power outages, or other situations beyond our control. Payment is due monthly by 2:00 PM on the 10th of every month, as outlined in the *Enrollment Agreement*.

A non-refundable registration fee of \$250.00 is due annually upon enrollment and this fee will be pro-rated for multiple enrollment of siblings.

Methods of Payment

Several methods of payment are available for families' convenience. Families are strongly encouraged to pay via our Brightwheel App with either AutoPay or manually. Cash, checks,

and/or money orders can be accepted in the office if need be. Any checks are to be made out to Esperanza Lutheran Church.

Late Payment Charges

Late payments can pose serious problems for our programs and as a result, the business does not have the latitude to allow families to accrue a balance equal to more than one month of tuition. **Late payments will result in the imposition of late payment fees. Failure to pay childcare payments will result in childcare services being terminated.**

If payment is not received on the day that it is due, a late fee of \$25.00 will be added to your next tuition payment for each day that it is late. Repeated late payments will result in your family being required to set up automatic payments or credit card payments.

Any payments made will be applied to the oldest charges and late fees may still apply if the account is not paid in full by the next tuition due date.

If payment is more than 60 business days past due, we may attempt to recover payment in small claims court and/or your account may be sent to a 3rd party collections agency. You will be responsible for all expenses associated with these actions including all court and attorney fees.

Returned Checks/Rejected Transaction Charges

All returned checks or rejected ACH (automatic debits) or credit card transactions will be charged a fee of \$25.00. This charge may be collected electronically. Two or more returned checks or rejected transactions will result in your account being placed on “cash only” status.

Late Pick-up Fees

Late pick-up is not a normal program option and will only be considered as an exceptional occurrence. Late fees of \$15.00 will be assessed.

Other Fees

- From time-to-time there will be additional fees associated with special activities or field trips. These fees are due prior to the event, activity or trip.

Credits & No Credits

- **Families contract for a specific monthly schedule** as completed on the *Enrollment Agreement* Form. Payment for this contracted schedule is required every month whether or not your child attends; this enables us to pay teachers a stable salary every week all year. No credits are given for sick or vacation days, holidays, staff training closure or closure due to inclement weather, infectious disease (except as noted below), or weather-related or environmental issues.
- **Weather-related or Environmental Disaster or Pandemic** – in the event of a serious crisis during which we are prohibited from operating, families shall pay 50% of tuition for the next month. If we are closed beyond one month, families can opt to pay 50% of tuition for virtual options. Payment of your Tuition allows us to retain staff, pay operating expenses, and hold open your child's spot for when we are safely able to reopen.
- **Credit may be given for Serious Illness/Injury** – In the unfortunate event of extenuating circumstances such as your child is hospitalized, absent due to a serious

contagious disease or serious illness or injury, credit may be issued. A written doctor's note is required to receive a credit.

ATTENDANCE & WITHDRAWAL

Absence

If your child is going to be absent or arrive after 8:30 AM, please contact the preschool director and teacher via Brightwheel. We will be concerned about your child if we do not hear from you.

Vacation

While we recognize the value of family vacations, the preschool does not provide credit for vacation days.

Withdrawal

A written notice, four weeks in advance, is required by the center when a child is being withdrawn. Failure to notify will result in payment of one month's tuition.

Transfer of Records

Whether transitioning to the next program setting or to a new classroom, your child's records will be transferred internally.

If your child is transitioning to a new school, a written request from you with instructions to where the records should be sent is required.

Closing Due to Extreme Weather

Should severe weather or other conditions (i.e., storms, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, loss of power, loss of water) prevent us from opening on time or at all, notification to the families will be announced on Brightwheel.

If it becomes necessary to close early, we will contact you or your emergency contacts as soon as possible. Your child's early pick-up is your responsibility to arrange.

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

General Procedure

We open at 8:00 AM. The playground is open before school if you arrive early. Please do not leave your child prior to the classroom doors opening at 8:30 AM. Parents are expected to accompany their children and sign them in.

We close at 2:00 PM. Morning only classes dismiss at 12:00 PM. Please allow enough time to arrive, sign your child out, and leave by closing time.

Covid policies and procedures may apply which include physical distancing and masks. (See Covid-19 Policies and Procedures).

Cell Phone Usage

The times you spend on our campus dropping off and picking up your child are the primary windows of time we have to communicate with you about your child. In order to make the best use of these opportunities, as well as to be attentive to your child and other children, we ask that you NOT use your cell phone at any time while visiting the preschool.

Authorized & Unauthorized Pick-up

Your child will only be released to you or those persons you have listed as Emergency and Release Contacts on the AZDHS Emergency Form and as Family or Approved Pickups on Brightwheel. If you want a person who is not identified as an Emergency and Release Contact to pick-up your child, you must notify us in advance, in writing. Your child will not be released without prior written authorization. The person picking up your child will be required to show a picture ID as verification. Please notify your pick-up person of our policy.

In order to safeguard your child, we will need copies of any court ordered custody agreements. Without a custody agreement, we are not able to prevent the release of your child to a parent.

If a child has not been picked up after closing and we have not heard from you, attempts will be made to contact you, and the contacts listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. Provisions will be made for someone to stay with your child as long as possible, but if after two hours we have not been able to reach you or a person listed as an Emergency and Release Contact, we will call the local child protective services agency.

Right to Refuse Child Release

We may refuse to release children if we have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger the child. To protect your child, we may request that another adult listed as an Emergency and Release Contact pick-up the child or we may call the police to prevent potential harm to your child. Reoccurring situations may result in the release of your child from the program.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

What to Bring

- **Toddlers:** backpack with diapers and wipes, and at least two changes of clothes per day
- **Preschoolers:** backpack, lunch box (if needed) at least one change of clothes, socks and shoes.

Please label all items brought from home with your child's name (i.e., clothes, backpacks, lunch boxes, etc.) to prevent items from becoming misplaced or lost. We are not responsible for lost or damaged items. Soiled clothing will be sent home on an as-needed basis for laundering and return to the preschool.

Cubbies

Upon enrollment each child will be assigned a "cubby." Cubbies are labeled with your child's name and photo. Please check your child's cubby daily for items that need to be taken home.

Lost & Found

You can look for lost items and bring found items to the Lost-and-found Box located at the preschool office. Please note that we are not responsible for lost personal property.

Toys from Home

We request that you do not allow your child to bring toys from home into the school unless they are part of a show-and-tell activity.

NUTRITION

Foods Brought from Home

Food brought from home is permitted under the following conditions:

- Perishable food to be shared with other children must be store-bought and in its original package.
- On certain occasions and under certain circumstances baked goods may be made at home if they are fully cooked, do not require refrigeration and were made with freshly purchased ingredients and are nut free. A list of ingredients is required, and there must be enough food for all children.
- Foods should be labeled with the child's name, date, and type of food.
- Children will not be allowed to share food provided by the child's family unless the food is intended for sharing with all the children, such as for a birthday celebration.
- Leftover food will be discarded except for foods that do not require refrigeration and/or come in a commercially wrapped package that was never opened.

Lunch Box Suggestions for a Balanced, Nutritional Lunch.	
Bean & cheese dip Tortilla chips (crackers) Tropical fruit salad Broccoli Milk	Chicken strips Whole Wheat Roll Orange wedges Broccoli Milk
Cheese quiche Fresh fruit cup Broccoli Milk	Whole Wheat Macaroni & Tuna Salad Green Beans Carrots Milk

Food Prepared for or at the Center

Food prepared for or at the center will be properly planned, prepared and portioned according to the Child and Adult Care Food Program (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/care/>) and the state requirements for food service.

Food Allergies

If your child has a food allergy, you must notify us in writing so that we can make arrangements with you for appropriate substitutions. The written notification should list appropriate food substitutions and must be updated at least annually.

Food allergies can be life threatening and each child with a food allergy should have an action plan for emergency care completed by the family physician.

Meal Time

We practice Family Style dining. At snack time the dining table is set with glass cups, utensils (when needed) and napkins, and the food is placed in small bowls from which the children can help themselves. At lunch time, food is brought from home. Everyone sits at the same table. Children are encouraged to serve themselves from food passed around each table at snack time*. Good table manners are modeled and encouraged. Snacks are donated by request. Monthly menus are posted for viewing by parents/caregivers. (*Covid may restrict family style dining)

All teachers are trained in first aid for choking and are present at all meals.

Children 24 Months and Older

- No child shall go more than 4 hours without a meal or snack being provided.
- Children are encouraged to self-feed to the extent that they have the skills. Children are encouraged, but not forced to eat a variety of foods.
- Round, firm foods that pose a choking hazard for children less than 4 years of age are not permitted. These foods include: hot dogs, whole grapes, peanuts, popcorn, thickly spread peanut butter and hard candy.

HEALTH

Immunizations

Immunizations are required according to the current schedule recommended by the U.S. Public Health Services and the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org. Every August, we check with the public health department or the American Academy of Pediatrics for updates of the recommended immunization schedule. Our state regulations regarding attendance of children who are not immunized due to religious or medical reasons are followed. Unimmunized children are excluded during outbreaks of vaccine preventable illness as directed by the state health department.

All caregivers, teachers, and staff are required to be current with all immunizations routinely recommended for adults by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Physicals

Annual physicals are strongly encouraged according to the current recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org. Families are responsible for assuring that their child's physicals are kept up-to-date and that a copy of the results of the child's health assessment is given to the program.

Illness

We understand that it is difficult for a family member to leave or miss work, but to protect other children; you may not bring a sick child to the center. The center has the right to refuse a child who appears ill. You will be called and asked to retrieve your child if your child exhibits any of the following symptoms. This is not an all-inclusive list. We will try to keep your child comfortable, but he/she will be excluded from all activities until you arrive.

- Illness that prevents your child from participating in activities.
- Illness that results in greater need for care than we can provide.
- Illness that poses a risk of spread of harmful diseases to others.
- Fever (100°F or higher under the arm, 101°F or higher in the mouth, 102°F or higher in the ear) accompanied by other symptoms.
- Diarrhea – stools with blood or mucus, and/or uncontrolled, unformed stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet.
- Vomiting – more than 1 time during the previous 24 hours.
- Mouth sores caused by drooling.
- Rash with fever, unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease.
- Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge, until on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Head lice, until treatment and all nits are removed.
- Scabies, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Chickenpox, until all lesions have dried and crusted.
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough), until 5 days of antibiotics.
- Hepatitis A virus, until one week after immune globulin has been administered.
- Tuberculosis, until a health professional indicates the child is not infectious.
- Rubella, until 6 days after the rash appears.
- Mumps, until 5 days after onset of parotid gland swelling.
- Measles, until 4 days after onset of rash.
- Has a physician or other health professionals written order that child be separated from other children.

Children who have been ill may return when: *

- They are free of fever, vomiting, and diarrhea for 24 hours.*
- They have been treated with an antibiotic for 24 hours.
- They can participate comfortably in all usual activities.
- They are free of open, oozing skin conditions and drooling (not related to teething) unless:
 - The child's physician signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious, and;
 - The involved areas can be covered by a bandage without seepage or drainage through the bandage.

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- If a child had a reportable communicable disease, a physician's note stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return to our care is required.

*See additional Covid protocols that may apply

Allergy Prevention

Families are expected to notify us regarding children's food and environmental allergies. Families of children with diagnosed allergies are required to provide us a letter detailing the child's symptoms, reactions, treatments and care. A list of the children's allergies will be posted in each classroom and in the preschool office. We are trained to familiarize ourselves and consult the list to avoid the potential of exposing children to substances to which they have known allergies.

Medications

All medications should be handed to a staff member with specific written instructions for administration. Medications should never be left in the child's cubby or with the child to administer on their own. Our staff will ensure that the medication is recorded along with the directions and proceed to dispense the medication as directed.

- **Prescription medications** require a note signed by the family and a written order from the child's physician. The label on the medication meets this requirement. The medication must include your child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and the name and phone number of the physician. All medications must be in the original container (you may request pharmacies to fill your prescription in two labeled bottles). Please specify the dosage and time(s) to be administered for each medication. Families should check with the child's physician to see if a dose schedule can be arranged that does not involve the hours the child is in the childcare facility. The first dose of any new medication should always be given at home to observe for possible adverse effects. Nebulized medications and emergency injections such as (Epi-Pen®), glucagon, and insulin require a written health care plan or instructions completed by the child's health care provider.
- **Non-prescription medications** require written permission and instructions signed by the child's primary care physician. The written permission must include your child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and all medications must be in the original container. Non-prescription medication should not be administered for more than a 3-day period unless a written order by the physician is received.
- (C) **Non-prescription topical ointments** (e.g., diaper cream or teething gel), sunscreen and insect repellant require a note signed by the family, specifying frequency and dosage to be administered as well as the length of time the authorization is valid which cannot exceed 12 months.

Sun Safety Research shows a multitude of negative health conditions from overexposure to the sun. It is important to protect young children from over exposure to sun to prevent these negative effects.

Children of Hope Child Development Center agrees to follow the precautions below for all outdoor activities:

- Ask the child's family to apply sunscreen (SPF 15 or higher) prior to arriving at childcare facility.
- Ask the child's family to provide a hat, sunglasses, and/or long sleeved, light colored clothing for their child that staff will put on the child when outdoors. Closed shoes, worn with socks, will protect the ankles and tops of feet.

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- Provide shade during outdoor activities.
 - Limit outdoor activities between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., when the UV rays are at the highest level.
 - Regularly check the UV Index for the intensity of the sun's rays and plan for outdoor activities accordingly: (<http://www.epa.gov/sunwise/uvindex.html>).
 - Be a role model for sun-safe practices.

Information on sun safety (in English and Spanish) will be available to the families at least once per year.

Communicable Diseases

When an enrolled child or an employee of the center has a (suspected) reportable disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify the local Board of Health or Department of Public Health. We will take care to notify families about exposure so children can receive preventive treatments. Included among the reportable illnesses are the following:

- Bacterial Meningitis
- Botulism
- Chicken Pox
- COVID-19
- Diphtheria
- Hemophilus Influenza (invasive)
- Measles (including suspect)
- Meningococcal Infection (invasive)
- Poliomyelitis (including suspect)
- Rabies (human only)
- Rubella Congenital and Non-congenital (including suspect)
- Tetanus (including suspect)
- H1N1 Virus
- Any cluster/outbreak of illness
- Tuberculosis

SAFETY

Clothing

Please dress your child in practical clothing that allows for freedom of movement and is appropriate for the weather. Your child will be involved in a variety of activities including painting, outdoor play, sand, weather, and other sensory activities. Our playground is used as an extension of the center, and daily programs are conducted outside whenever weather permits.

One aspect of concern is the risk associated with children's clothing that may become entangled with climbing or sliding equipment that could lead to choking or other serious harm. All drawstrings from children's clothes should be removed as a precaution.

Sandals and flip-flops are not appropriate for center play and make it difficult for your child to participate in some activities. Closed-toed shoes are highly recommended.

Extreme Weather and Outdoor Play

Outdoor play will not occur if the outside temperature is greater than 105 °F or less than 40 °F degrees. Additionally, outdoor play will be cancelled if the air quality rating is 150 or above.

Communal Water-Play

Communal, unsupervised water play is prohibited. Supervised children are permitted to engage in water-play. Precautions such as handwashing are taken to ensure that communal water-play does not spread communicable infectious disease.

Injuries

Safety is a major concern in childcare and so daily safety inspections are completed inside and outside the center area in order to prevent injuries. First aid will be administered by a trained caregiver in the event that your child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee). You will receive an incident report outlining the incident and course of action taken. If the injury produces any type of swelling or needs medical attention, you will be contacted immediately. Each classroom is equipped with a first aid kit meeting the state regulations.

In the event of a serious medical emergency, the child will be taken to the hospital immediately by ambulance, while we will try to contact you or an emergency contact.

Biting

Biting is a normal stage of development that is common among infants and toddlers – and sometimes even among preschoolers. It is something that most young children will try at least once.

When biting happens, our response will be to care for and help the child who was bitten and to help the biter learn a more appropriate behavior. Our focus will not be on punishment for biting, but on effective behaviors that address the specific reason for biting.

Notes will be written to the family of the child who was bitten and the biter's family. We will work together with the families of each to keep them informed and to develop strategies for change.

Respectful Behavior

All children and families will be treated with respect and dignity. In return, we expect the same from all of our families. We will not tolerate hostile or aggressive behavior. If this occurs, we reserve the right to ask you to control your behavior or to remove your children from our care.

Smoking

The poisons in secondhand smoke are especially harmful to infants and young children's developing bodies, therefore the indoor and outdoor center environment and vehicles used by the center are always non-smoking areas. The use of tobacco in any form is prohibited on the center's premises.

Prohibited Substances

The use of alcohol or illegal drugs is prohibited on the center's premises. Possession of illegal substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances is prohibited.

Any adult who appears to be inebriated, intoxicated, or otherwise under the influence of mind-altering or polluting substances is required to leave the premises immediately.

Dangerous Weapons

A dangerous weapon is a gun, knife, razor, or any other object, which by the manner it is used or intended to be used, is capable of inflicting bodily harm. Families, children, staff or guests (other than law enforcement officers) possessing a dangerous weapon will not be permitted onto the premises.

In cases that clearly involve a gun, or any other weapon on our premises, the police will be called, and the individual(s) involved will be immediately removed from the premises. This policy applies to visible or concealed weapons.

Child Custody

Without a court document, both parents/guardians have equal rights to custody. We are legally bound to respect the wishes of the parent/guardian with legal custody based on a certified copy of the most recent court order, active restraining order, or court-ordered visitation schedule. We will not accept the responsibility of deciding which parent/guardian has legal custody where there is no court documentation.

Suspected Child Abuse

We are required by law to report all observations of child abuse or neglect cases to the appropriate state authorities if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Our center will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect.

1-888-SOS-CHILD (1-888-767-2445) Abuse Hotline

Environmental Health Policy

Children are easily susceptible to many hazards in the environment. Examples of hazards are lead, smoke, pesticides, air pollution, and water. They need to be protected as their brains and bodies are still developing.

Policy:

- All rooms are ventilated with fresh air as much as possible.
- Facilities built before 1978 are to be tested for lead.
- Toys are screened for lead using www.cpsc.gov
- The childcare facility is kept clean.
- Children wash hands before and after eating, after playing outdoors, before and after playing with play dough, paint, or water, after using the bathroom, and any other times deemed necessary.
- Leaded crystal glassware and imported pottery are not used.

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- Only non-toxic art supplies approved by the Art and Creative Materials Institute (ACMI) are used.
 - A tobacco and smoke free environment is maintained.
 - Pesticides are only used when children are off site and will not be back for at least 24 hours.
 - Fruits and vegetables are washed before eating.
 - Sanitation is not done while children are close.
 - Smoking is prohibited within sight of children.
 - Only safe drinking water is given to children.

On September 1, 2017, the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) launched a program to screen drinking water for lead in childcare facilities across Arizona. The purpose of the program is to increase awareness of lead poisoning prevention among parents and caregivers of young children, who are most vulnerable to lead poisoning, and to identify drinking water sources that contain lead above the ADHS screening level. Our drinking water was tested for lead during a recent inspection by ADHS' Bureau of Child Care Licensing. We are pleased to report that the lead screening results were below the screening level. No additional actions are needed at this time. See azhealth.gov/waterscreening for more information.

EMERGENCIES

Lost or Missing Child

In the unlikely event that a child becomes lost or separated from a group, all available staff will search for the child. If the child is not located within 5 minutes, the family and the police will be notified.

Fire Safety

Our center is fully equipped with all fire safety features such as alarms, extinguishers and sprinklers. Our fire evacuation plan is reviewed with the children and staff on a monthly basis.

Emergency Transportation

In the event your child needs to be transported due to a medical emergency, if no other authorized person can be contacted and the need for transportation is essential, an ambulance will be called for transportation. A proper escort will accompany and remain with the child until a family member or emergency contact arrives.

CENTER POLICIES

Our center policies not included in this handbook are reviewed annually and updated as needed. They are available for review upon request to the center director.

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

We offer a variety of ways for families to participate in the growth and improvement of our program. We encourage families to take an active role.

Advisors:

- Preschool Board – meets approx. 6 times a year to review progress toward annual goals.
- Parent Posse – meets several times a year to plan family events and fundraisers

Family Events: We have several events throughout the year that bring our entire community together (subject to change). Watch for the announcements!

- Show & Tell Night
- Family Fun Nights
- Holiday Gatherings
- Trivia Night
- Book Fair
- Fall Festival
- Annual Christmas Program

Classroom Activities: Enjoy and help your child's class with these special activities.

- Share a meal with your child
- Chaperone field trips
- Read to children at arrival or pickup
- Volunteer in the classroom
- Donate requested items
- Serve as a parent representative on the preschool board
- Welcome new families
- Contribute to Teacher Appreciation Days

Family/Parent Workshops: Below is a list of workshops we can and have offered. We welcome requests for workshop topics.

- Positive Guidance and Loving Discipline
- Toilet Training
- Safety in the Home
- Child Proofing Your Home
- Brain Development
- Nutrition and Exercise for Small Bodies
- Supporting Your Child in Times of Stress
- Food Allergies
- How to Prepare for a Conference
- Warning Signs for Developmental Delays
- Value of Reading to Your Child

Family Handbook Acknowledgement

Please sign this acknowledgement, detach it from the handbook, and return it to the center prior to the end of the first week of school.

This handbook may be updated from time-to-time, and notice will be provided as updates are implemented.

Thank you for your acknowledging the policies and procedures we have established for the safety and welfare of all children in our care. We look forward to getting to know you and your family.

I have received the **Children of Hope Child Development Center Family Handbook**. It is my responsibility to understand and familiarize myself the Family Handbook and to ask center management for clarification of any policy, procedure or information contained in the **Children of Hope Child Development Center Family Handbook** that I do not understand.

Recipient Signature

Date

Center Staff Signature

Date