

# **The Children's Center at Mulberry Parent Handbook**

We are happy that you have chosen to place your child in our care. It is our desire to provide you with confidence in our program and pledge ourselves to making it a safe, happy time for you and your family. This is a ministry of Mulberry Street United Methodist Church and as such, is committed to the development of the whole child.

This handbook has been developed for the purpose of making parents aware of our policies and procedures. Please read it carefully, keeping in mind that it has been developed for the benefit of all of the children. We do not expect it to cover every situation that may occur; however, we feel it is as comprehensive as possible. If you have any questions or suggestions regarding any areas not covered, please feel free to share them with us.

The Children's Center at Mulberry will serve children age 6 weeks through four years, year round, Monday through Friday, from 7:00am to 6:00pm. Drop in space for school age children for school holidays and summers will be based on space availability.

The Children's Center at Mulberry will be closed on the following holidays: New Years Day, Martin Luther King, Jr.- Birthday, Memorial Day, July 4<sup>th</sup>, Labor Day, Thanksgiving (2) days, Christmas (2 ½) Days

This program is built around five areas of child development: social, emotional, physical, cognitive and spiritual.

It is our hope that through daily activities each child will:

- Grow socially in his or her ability to communicate and interact with teachers and other students;
- Learn about God and God's love through Bible stories and the example of the teachers;
- Have a variety of opportunities for self-expression and growth; and experience learning in a creative, stimulating environment.

We likewise hope to nurture parents of young children through:

- Involvement in their children's learning experiences;
- Parenting workshops;
- Spiritual growth opportunities; and
- Partnership in providing the best care for their children.

Our child care program will provide a learning environment built on discovery and exploration, including child-initiated and teacher-directed

activities. Children will be treated with love and respect and nurtured to reach their full potential.

We want to provide high quality child care at a reasonable price to ensure learning opportunities for all children. Our program will be inclusive so that special needs children can be a part of a Christian learning environment.

### Social Development

Children will be grouped according to age as of September 1. They will have the opportunity to develop necessary social skills, such as: following directions; sharing; respecting others; communicating with adults and other children; and cooperating.

Children will also be encouraged to develop self-help skills appropriate to their age. This program will help children grow in confidence and independence.

### Emotional Development

Children will be encouraged to identify and express their feelings in a constructive way. Self-confidence, curiosity, and self-discipline will be encouraged.

We recognize that God has created each child as a unique and special individual. We want children to experience many different opportunities to discover their own unique gifts and abilities.

### Physical Development

Indoor and outdoor activities will be provided for development of gross and fine motor skills. Development in this area will include activities, such as: outdoor play every day, weather permitting; indoor music and movement activities; manipulatives (games and toys which encourage development of eye-hand coordination as well as reasoning abilities); and pre-writing skills.

### Cognitive Development

Basic concepts and skills in the areas of math, science, art, music and language will be taught through varied experiences. Children will build a foundation of knowledge through hands-on, experiential activities. A literacy-rich environment will be provided.

### Spiritual Development

Children will learn about God and Jesus through Bible stories and music. Each child will become aware that God loves everyone. Blessings and prayers will be used with the children. Bible stories about people who loved and served God will be shared.

Learning in this area will be enhanced through: role-play; puppets; crafts; music; audiovisuals, and special visitors.

### Curriculum

The curriculum will be Christian-based providing for development of readiness skills as well as spiritual growth.

### **Admission Requirements:**

- Completed Enrollment Form
- Completed Parental Agreement Form
- Completed Authorization for Emergency Medical Care
- Immunization Form #3231
- Signed Policies and Procedures Agreement Form
- Registration Fee non-refundable (\$75.00)
- Supply fee of \$50.00 due August of each year
- Infant Feeding Plan for children under one year

### **Registration:**

Registration after June 15, 2007 is accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Admission forms along with payment of a non-refundable registration fee will hold your child's space in the center.

Please ensure that all requested forms are completed in their entirety prior to placing the child in the care of the center. When leaving information for emergencies, make sure that someone at your place of employment knows where you may be reached if you are not able to be reached there. If your job states that you may not receive calls during work hours, please ensure that an alternate number or person's information is left for emergencies. It is the responsibility of the parent to keep the office staff informed of any changes in your child's enrollment information, telephone numbers, parents' workplace and numbers, contact information and immunization updates.

### **First Day:**

Your child's first day will be easier if you set aside a time in advance of the first day to come together to meet the employees who will be responsible for your child and become acquainted with them and the classroom. You are welcome to spend time with your child in the classroom to ease the transition. We look forward to knowing you and sharing this very special place that will be a big part of your child's life.

**Fees:**

The Children's Center at Mulberry is open from 7:00am until 6:00pm. No children may be dropped off prior to 7:00am or left after 6:00pm. Children must be escorted both to and from the center by an adult.

Weekly payments are due on Friday of the week and are delinquent after 10:00am. A \$10.00 late fee will be added to any account that has not paid Friday, the week of care by 10:00am. Late payments past due two weeks or more may result in dismissal. Students may be reinstated to the waiting list upon payment of past due fees.

Full weekly payment is required even if your child is absent. This continues to hold your child's space during any absence.

Registration fee:	\$ 75.00
Supply Fee and Insurance (due each August)	\$ 50.00 per child
Tuition Fee:	\$ 125.00 per week

At this time, there are no multi-child discounts for registration, supply fees, or siblings attending The Children's Center at Mulberry.

\*A late fee of \$10.00 will be charged for any child left after 6:00pm.

\*There will be a \$30.00 charge for all returned checks.

**Transportation:**

The Children's Center at Mulberry does not provide any routine transportation. Transportation will be provided for any center sponsored field trip. You will be required to sign a permission slip each time your child goes on a field trip. There may be a small cost involved for field trips but you will be notified of the exact cost well before any trip is scheduled. You have the option of not allowing your child to participate and provisions will be made for this at the center. We encourage you to spend quality time with your child and invite you to participate in our field trips when your schedule permits. If we provide transportation for your child for a field trip, you must fill out a vehicle emergency transportation form and any field trip permission slips required.

We keep detailed accounts of the loading and unloading of children as well as regular and detailed maintenance forms regarding vehicle checks. Written authorization will be required for water related activities in water that is more than two feet deep.

## **Guidance/Discipline Techniques:**

Young children are just beginning to learn how to cooperate and work along side each other. Our staff will use positive reinforcement in all instances as a first response. If it becomes necessary to correct the child it will be done in the form of a verbal request and redirection. Lastly, the teacher will briefly separate the child from the group restoring them to the group as quickly as possible. Teacher/staff meetings may be requested for children who attempt to or bring harm to themselves or another child.

Staff will not inflict corporal or physical punishment upon a child; physically or sexually abuse a child or engage or permit others to engage in sexually overt conduct in the presence of any child; shake, jerk, pinch or handle a child roughly; verbally abuse or humiliate a child (this includes, but is not limited to the use of threats, profanity or belittling remarks about a child or his family). Children will not be isolated in a dark room, closet or unsupervised area nor will mechanical or physical restraints or devices be used to discipline a child. Restriction from going to the restroom, withholding or forcing of food or naps and punishing toileting accidents will not be tolerated. Children will not be allowed to discipline or humiliate other children.

The Children's Center at Mulberry is required by law to report any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the Georgia Department of Human Resources, DFCS Division.

Parents needing to speak with a teacher should schedule a conference with that teacher before or after school hours. During the day, each teacher is to focus on the children, their most important duty.

## **Disciplinary Action Plan:**

**This progressive action plan will be implemented when a child's behavior does not conform to the regular classroom procedures.**

- 1. Remove the child from the classroom.** Child will sit with the Director and/or Assistant Director and discuss why he/she is in the office and what the child should do should the situation happen again.
- 2. Call Parent(s).** Director or Assistant Director will call parent(s) to discuss child's behavior. They will develop a plan of action to address the behavior. Child could possibly be sent home for the remainder of the day.
- 3. With parent's permission, contact Quality Care for Children.** Quality Care for Children personnel will observe the child in the classroom. After the observation, they will have a conference with the Director, teacher, and parent(s) to develop a plan of action to address the behavior.
- 4. Removal from the Children's Center at Mulberry.** If deemed necessary, the Center's Advisory Board, Director, teacher, and

parent(s) will meet to decide if The Children's Center at Mulberry is the best place for the child.

**The Children's Center at Mulberry reserves the right to by-pass any of these steps on a case-by-case basis depending upon the severity of circumstances.**

**\*\* Referral to outside Agency\*\*** At any time during this process, parent(s) may elect to have their child referred to an outside agency for evaluation and/or testing, including but not limited to the following:

- Child's Physician
- Babies Cant Wait (If under 3 years of age)
- Public School System (If 3 years or older)

The Children's Center at Mulberry will cooperate with any outside caregiver or agency's evaluation of the child by providing a written statement, if requested, reviewing the child's behavior and temperament.

### **Health Policies:**

For the protection of each child's health, we ask that you adhere to the following policies.

Your child's general health status will be informally monitored each day upon arrival and throughout the day. If your child is running a fever of 101 degrees or appears to show signs of illness, you will be notified to make arrangements for your child to be picked up within one hour of our initial call.

Certain types of illness may necessitate the temporary removal and/or exclusion of your child from the center for a period of time.

Fever- No child will be allowed to remain at the center with a temperature of 101 degrees or higher. You will be notified to pick up your child and may not return until your child has been fever free for 24 hours. If you are asked to pick up your child due to illness, staff will let you know what day and time your child may return.

Diarrhea- If your child has diarrhea or three diarrhea like stools; you will be notified to pick up your child immediately and may not return until your child has been diarrhea free for 24 hours.

Communicable Diseases- When any suspected case of contagious disease is determined, you will be contacted to pick up your child immediately. If the physician determines that your child has a contagious disease, you are requested to contact the center as soon as possible. This allows the center to notify other families in a timely manner. The Center reserves the right to request a physician's written release for your child's re-admission following diagnosis. A copy of the current communicable disease chart is posted for parent viewing and will be followed as to the recommendation for re-admission. Reports of suspected cases of notifiable communicable diseases will be reported to the local county Health Department.

Other Illnesses- Congestion, nasal discharge, sore throat, lice, rashes, skin infections, lesions, thrush and vomiting, though not all inclusive, indicate that your child is unwell. Please be mindful of your child's health and the health of those around you and keep your child at home when he/she is feeling unwell.

Accidents- In the event of an accident that causes minor cuts and scrapes, the center will provide first aid. The circumstances of the accident will be written on an accident report and you will be asked to sign the report upon your arrival at the center to pick up your child. In the event of a serious illness or injury, you will be notified immediately. If it is determined that your child's injury is life threatening, an ambulance will be called and you will be instructed to meet us at the Medical Center of Central Georgia at 777 Hemlock Street, Macon, GA 31201, phone 478-633-1146 or 478-633-1000.

Medication- Medication Forms showing what medication is to be administered and how to record noticeable adverse reactions are available in the office, or in your child's classroom. Medications will be left in with your child's teacher. Please ensure that medication is picked up from the classroom at the end of the day. **It will not be placed in the child's bag in the classroom.** In order for our staff to administer medications to your child, this form must be filled out in its entirety prior to leaving the medication at the center. You must state specific times and amounts to be given, dates to be given, prescription number, if any and the name of the medication. Please do not put **"as needed"** or **"if needed"**. According to Georgia law, our staff are not to be responsible for determining if your child needs to be medicated. This form must be signed by the parent and reviewed by the staff prior to leaving. The Children's Center at Mulberry will abide by all directions and warning labels, unless we are presented with a doctor's note. Your child's teacher or a designee will administer medication at the requested time as long as the requested time does not conflict with warning labels and directions. Any noticeable adverse reactions will be recorded and parents will be notified immediately. The form will be initialed once the medication is administered.

Immunizations- State law requires that evidence of age appropriate immunization "Georgia Form 3231" or a signed affidavit against such immunization be provided to the center at the time of enrollment. A new certificate is required prior to the expiration of the current certification.

**Safety:**

By law, all children are to be escorted to and from their designated areas by an adult. Written notification is required prior to someone other than a parent being allowed to pick up a child. If someone other than an adult who normally picks up a child is to do so, proper picture ID is required and a copy will be left at the center.

Fire and Severe Weather drills are conducted on a monthly basis using an evacuation plan. A fire exit plan is posted in each room of the center. Staff members attend all children as they are moved very carefully to a designated area away from the building. Emergency plans have been developed and are posted for parental viewing. If it is determined that we will have to evacuate the buildings and grounds, we will go next door to 777 Walnut Street. The church owns the adjacent property and we would be able to utilize that in the event of an emergency.

Inspections of the buildings and grounds are conducted on a routine basis to ensure the health and safety of our children.

In the case of a family emergency, you may contact the center or the church office at 478-745-8601.

**Food and Nutrition:**

A nutritional breakfast, lunch and snack will be provided each day with milk being served for lunch and breakfast. A monthly menu is posted at the front entrance describing each day's meals and snacks. Breakfast will be served from 8:00-8:30 each day with lunch being served between the hours of 11:00 and 12:30 depending upon the class. A snack will be offered each afternoon.

If your child arrives after 9:00am, it will be necessary for you to feed your child prior to arrival. We ask that you not bring in any outside food as this poses a problem for other children in the class.

**Custody Issues:**

If a parent's name other than your own is listed on the enrollment application, we cannot prohibit that parent from picking up your child. If we have legal documentation on file, which either denies custody or specifically prohibits that parent from taking your child from the center, we will refuse pick up. If the prohibited parent demands release of your child, our employees are instructed to talk to the parent, telling him or her that the child cannot be released; however, if the parent forcibly takes the child, our employees are not legally bound to physically withhold the child. We will notify you and the authorities immediately. This policy also applies to legal guardianship situations.

## **Rest and Nap Times:**

Active children need a time of rest from busy activities. Cots and cribs are provided, as are sheets and blankets. If a child wishes to bring a special blanket or small stuffed animal for nap time, please ensure that the child's teacher is aware of it and that it is labeled and sent in a large zippered bag for safe keeping and return. Any child that is not napping after one hour will be allowed to engage in quiet activities until the other children awaken.

## **Infant Care:**

The Children's Center at Mulberry makes a concerted effort to protect the safety and wellbeing of all the children in our care. The following policies will assist in the care of your infant.

\*In order to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), staff shall put an infant to sleep on the infant's back unless the center has been provided a physician's written statement authorizing another sleep position for that particular infant. When an infant can easily turn over onto his or her stomach, staff shall continue to put the infant to sleep initially on the infant's back but allow the infant to roll over onto his or her stomach as the infant prefers.

Parents will need to bring to the center:

- Several changes of clothing for each infant, labeled with the child's name.
- A large pack of diapers/pull ups labeled with the child's name. You will be notified when a new pack is needed.
- A box of baby wipes, labeled with the child's name. Due to some infant's sensitivity to certain brands, we request that all parents provide wipes.
- Any type of cream or ointment that the child requires. These must be accompanied by a medication authorization form.
- Prepared bottles of formula, breast milk or baby food. The staff will not be allowed to mix the formula. All bottles and caps must be marked with the child's name and the date it is sent. Any remaining formula or breast milk will be returned home each day.
- Any baby food must be labeled and not be out of date.

An Infant Feeding Plan is required for infants up to 12 months of age. Any changes in amount or type of food, formula or breast milk must be notated on this form. This form must be updated regularly but at least every three months or any time changes are made in the child's diet.

The Children's Center at Mulberry will provide sheets and blankets for children's sleep and nap needs.

Pacifiers must be marked with your child's full name and cannot be hung around the neck.

Bibs will be provided by the center for feeding. No bibs will be allowed in the center that tie around the child's neck or that pull over the head due to the lack of a release mechanism.

### **Personal Belongings:**

Toys, money and jewelry are not to be brought into the center. They are often lost and may cause safety hazards. Exceptions are blankets or small stuffed animals for nap time and items for scheduled show and tell times. The Children's Center at Mulberry is not responsible for lost or damaged items.

### **Clothing:**

Children should wear comfortable clothing and shoes suitable for seasonal weather and activities. We request that rubber-soled canvas and tennis shoes be worn to prevent injury to another child during playtime. Rubber-soled sandals and Crocs are allowed but must have a heel strap. Boots and shoes with hard soles are discouraged due to the surface used on our playgrounds. Cleats and flip-flops are not allowed.

Your child must always have a seasonal change of clothes on hand for accidents. All clothing is to be marked with the child's name; this includes all outerwear. Girls in dresses must wear shorts or tights underneath and tight, see-through, crop top or bare midriff shirts or blouses are not allowed. Drawstrings on clothing are not allowed.

### **Birthdays:**

We enjoy celebrating each child's birthday. If you wish to provide a small party with snacks, please make arrangements with your child's teacher prior to the date of the party. Please let the staff know what you will bring so that any allergies can be noted and provided for.

### **Withdrawing a child from the program:**

If it is determined that your child does not benefit from their experience at The Children's Center at Mulberry and you wish to withdraw your child, please provide two week's written notice and a full payment of any balances owed to the center.

**Posted Notices:**

A bulletin board is located just inside the front entrance to the center. On this board you will find the following items:

- A copy of the center’s current license
- A copy of the Rules and Regulations for Child Care Learning Centers
- A copy of our most recent evaluation report
- The current Communicable Disease Chart
- A statement of parental Access
- Names of persons in charge
- A copy of the current weekly menu
- Emergency plans for severe weather and fire
- Visitors statement

If you need any further information regarding the policies and procedures for the center, please feel free to contact me by phone or in person to clarify anything. We want your stay here at The Children's Center at Mulberry to be a special, happy time for you and your family.

Thank you for choosing The Children's Center at Mulberry as a place for your child to learn and grow in Christ.

**Center Closing Due to Inclement Weather:**

If the center were to close because of inclement weather, it will be posted on 13WMAZ.com. Please listen for the closing of Bibb County schools; if they are closed we will be closed as well. If you have any question please contact Erin Roberson at 478-973-5713.

**Parent Acknowledgement and Agreement**

**I have read, understand, and agree to abide by the policies and procedures of The Children's Center at Mulberry contained herein:**

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**Parent Signature**

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**Parent Signature**

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**Date**

