

Zion Christian Children's Center

A Ministry of Zion United Methodist Church

FAMILY HANDBOOK
2020 - 2021



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Dear Families – both present, past, & future:

Nelson Mandela once said, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” The importance of positive, hands-on learning experiences, especially in early childhood, plays such an integral role in building motivated children who are ready and eager to learn. Here at ZCCC, we strive to not only provide an exciting learning environment for your child, but we are committed to going above and beyond to ensure your peace of mind and partner with you to the best of our abilities.

With flexible and affordable enrollment options and staff members who take the extra time needed to connect with you to develop a true partnership, ZCCC is an extraordinary environment for children. Many of our staff members have children enrolled in the center and it allows us to have a unique perspective when developing relationships with each child.

This handbook is designed to give families insight into our programs here at Zion Christian Children’s Center, a ministry of Zion United Methodist Church. It includes detailed information about our center’s activities, procedures, and policies. Please read this handbook carefully and keep it in a safe place for accessible reference during the year. All families will be asked to sign an acknowledgment that they received and reviewed the handbook.

At ZCCC, we believe all children are gifts from God. We use evidence-based, developmentally appropriate practices to best meet the unique and changing needs of the children in our care. We want our families to be contributing members of our mission here and truly believe you all are our extended family. We always welcome your suggestions and ideas that will help us make your child’s time here at ZCCC beneficial and rewarding.

We give much thanks to Zion United Methodist Church for their ongoing commitment to Zion Christian Children’s Center. Thank you for allowing us to play an important role in your child’s journey, and many thanks for your continued support and encouragement! We could not do what we do without you.

If you have any questions when reviewing this handbook, please feel free to call/text us at 434-459-1913 or email zionchristiancc@gmail.com. I look forward to getting to know you and your children!

Blessings and best wishes,
ZCCC Administration & Staff

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Mission Statement

At Zion Christian Children's Center, a ministry of Zion United Methodist Church, we whole-heartedly believe in the value and uniqueness of each child we serve. Our mission is to provide an outstanding academic, and spiritual education for all students while working together to build a foundation of family, faith, and education for our future. We strive to challenge student's minds and hearts as we encourage them to seek a closer relationship with Christ. We faithfully work to promote each child's individual social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development. As educators, our mission is to provide a safe and enriching learning environment with developmentally appropriate practices that cultivate each child's natural desire to explore, discover, create, and develop a lifelong love of learning.

Philosophy & Curriculum

All our programs are structured around the idea that children are born ready to learn. We believe that we, as educators, are responsible for providing a stimulating and encouraging environment to ignite their spark. In our early learning program for our preschool-aged children, we utilize the Virginia Foundation Blocks for Early Learning and adhere to Virginia's Quality Indicators for Responsive Teaching to create a high-quality learning environment. The Foundation Blocks include literacy, mathematics, science, history & social science, health & physical development, personal & social development, visual arts, and music.

We base our curriculum on the idea that intentional and responsive teaching is imperative to early childhood development and beyond. We have incorporated the *Inspire Curriculum* which is based on the principles of the Reggio Emilia philosophy, recognizing that children learn best when they are motivated by the opportunity to explore the things that interest them. Our teachers use the project approach through hands-on exploration. This is an emergent curriculum meaning that much of the learning at ZCCC is led by the children and their interest in specific topics.

Spiritual Approach

Zion Christian Children's Center is a ministry of Zion United Methodist Church. We are non-denominational in our teaching, focusing on basic biblical truths and values that unite all Christians. We are a community that is continually seeking to share His love. We focus on the Fruits of the Spirit from Galatians 5:22-23 of love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control as monthly themes in our Chapel and our classroom bible lessons. We take pride in His blessings, praying before mealtimes and planting the seeds of God's words in the hearts of the children.

Our teachers and staff lead by example and strive to be role models in each interaction: "In everything set them an example by doing what is good" (Titus 2:7) All of our programs emphasize the importance of modeling positive behaviors and interactions for children, believing fully that children are always taking in their surroundings.

Licensing & Governance

ZCCC is exempt from licensure from the Virginia Department of Social Services and follows all Virginia State guidelines for religious exemption. This is renewed annually, and the standards set forth are strictly enforced to ensure that children are safe and well cared for during their experience with us. ZCCC has an enrollment capacity of 92 children, there are 7 classrooms, 2 parking lots, 2 playgrounds, and secured/locked front door to enter the facility. ZUMC has public liability insurance. All staff are CPR/First Aid certified and have been verified by a physician to confirm that they are physically able to care for children and work with children.

ZCCC is governed by the School Board, which is made up of leadership members from the center as well as selected staff representatives, church members, and members at-large. The School Board meets once a month and turns in quarterly reports to the Council of Ministries at Zion United Methodist Church.

Records

The most recent and up-to-date records must be kept on file for all children attending ZCCC. Records kept by the center include attendance, registration information, immunization records, birth certificate verification, contact information, and allergy information. Please notify the center immediately if there are changes to any of the above information. Birth certificate verification, immunization records, and all required registration information must be submitted before the first day of attendance. We will request a record update in the fall for our returning families. However, please always update us on any changes as they occur.

Programs & Age Requirements

For our full day preschool program, children must meet the following age requirements:

- Tadpoles: 16 months old by September 30th of that year
- Caterpillars: 2 years old by September 30th of that year
- Bumblebees: 3 years old by September 30th of that year
- Dragonflies: Pre-Kindergarten; 4 years old by September 30th of that year
- Owls: Kindergarten, 5 years old by September 30th of that year

For our Fireflies After School program and Elementary Virtual Learning, children must be between the ages of 5 and 12 years old. To attend our After-School program, they must attend Moss-Nuckols Elementary School, who provides transportation to our center each day.

Elementary Virtual Learning is open for Fireflies ages 5-12 from any school district/county.

Our Summer Camp is for children ages 16 months-12 years old.

Enrollment Process

Enrollment for the upcoming year for the preschool program begins at the end of February for returning families and March 1 for new families. Enrollment for the upcoming year for Summer Camp and After School will begin April 1 for new and returning families.

Initial enrollment is contingent upon receipt of the completed registration form and the \$75 registration fee. This fee is non-refundable and it is a yearly fee. The application for re-enrollment is not meant to serve as a contract guaranteeing service for any duration. A 30-day notice for withdrawal is required and families will be responsible for payment during this time. Enrollment will be granted without regard to a child's race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, or disability and without regard to a parent or guardian's race, color, creed, religion, age, national origin, gender, or disability.

Continued enrollment at ZCCC is contingent upon the parent/guardian enrolling in our auto-deducted payment system, Tuition Express, for tuition payments and the adherence to the policies and procedures of Zion Christian Children's Center as outlined in the handbook. ZCCC reserves the right to dismiss any parent or child at any time with or without cause.

Preschool Program Payment Schedule & Fees

The full day preschool program for ages 2 through 5 has three enrollment options: 3-days, 4-days, or 5-days. The 3-day option has an annual tuition rate of \$5,535, which is broken out into 41 equal payments of \$135. The 4-day option has an annual tuition rate of \$6,970, which is broken into 41 equal payments of \$170. The 5-day option has an annual tuition rate of \$8,200, which is broken into 41 weekly payments of \$200. Families may pick which 3 or 4 days their child attends, but these days must remain the same for the duration of the year. The 5-day option has an annual tuition rate of \$8200, which is broken out into 41 equal payments of \$200. The Dragonfly program also offers a 5-half day enrollment option with an annual tuition rate of \$4,715, which is broken out into 41 equal payments of \$115. The Tadpoles program has a 3-day, 4-day, or 5-day enrollment option. The 3-day annual rate is \$7,380 and it is broken out into 41 equal payments of \$180. The 4-day annual rate is \$8,610 and it is broken out into 41 equal payments of \$210. The 5-day option annual rate is \$9,225, which is broken out into 41 equal payments of \$225. Payment is auto deducted on Thursday of each week for the upcoming week. ZCCC does not accept checks or cash for tuition payments and all families must have an account or card on file for auto-deducted payments. **There is no prorating or payment adjustment for vacations, sick days, snow days, or holidays. We do not offer drop-in care or rates.**

Non-refundable registration Fee: \$75 for new and returning families.

The card processing fee for all tuition payments with a credit/debit card is 2.5% of the total transaction amount.

Tuition does not include fees for field trips or extracurricular activities such as dance, karate, etc. There will be a \$25 fee charged for payments returned to us by the bank. Receipts for tax purposes with our tax identification number will be issued via email in January, so please be sure your email address on file is accurate.

All tuition payments must be processed online. Cash and checks are accepted for Friday pizza payments. Pizza money should be put in the pizza pouch for your child's class on Friday morning. Money for field trips, fundraising, pictures, etc. should be returned in your child's take-home folder. As much as possible, please avoid giving any staff member a payment directly without following the above measures.

After School Program & Elementary Virtual Care Payment Schedule & Fees

Fireflies After School tuition payments are auto deducted through our payment system, Tuition Express, on Thursday of each week for the upcoming week. We offer after-school care Monday - Friday with a rate of \$17.50 an afternoon. Parents of children enrolled in after school must be sure to coordinate with Moss-Nuckols for their child to ride the bus to ZCCC. Unfortunately, we do not have any control over making sure that your child gets on the proper bus to ZCCC.

Elementary Virtual Care is offered every day ZCCC is open. Any child enrolled at ZCCC for the Fireflies age group may attend EVC at a rate of \$45/day. EVC tuition is charged on Thursday for the upcoming week.

For both Elementary Virtual Care and after-school, there will be a \$25 fee charged for payments returned to us by the bank. Receipts for tax purposes with our tax identification number will be issued via email in January, so please be sure your email address on file is accurate.

Summer Camp Program Payment Schedule & Fees

Summer Camp is available for children ages 16 months to 12 years old and enrollment begins on April 1st for the upcoming summer. For our Tadpoles group, there is a 3-day option which is \$180/week, a 4-day option at \$210/week and a 5-day option with a rate of \$225/week. Children in the Caterpillars, Bumblebees, and Dragonflies age groups the enrollment options are 3, 4 or 5 days. The rate is \$135/week for 3 days, \$170/week for 4 days and \$200/week for 5 days. We do not have a "drop in" option for these age groups, so if a child attends 1 or 3 days then they will still be charged the 3-day rate. Tuition charges are processed based on the child's summer camp registration and the weeks indicated that they will attend—therefore, any changes must be communicated 7 days PRIOR to the Monday of the week your child is attending. Payments are processed for the upcoming week on the Thursday prior to the week beginning. Days will not be credited/refunded for non-attendance.

Our Fireflies are group (K - 5th grade) can attend 3, 4 or 5 days. Signup in advance is required. Tuition charges are processed based on the child's summer camp registration and the weeks indicated that

they will attend—therefore, any changes must be communicated PRIOR to that week, as charges are processed for the week first thing Thursday morning. Days will not be credited/refunded for non-attendance. All registration forms and documents must be on file for a child to attend. Even a child who only plans to attend one week of camp during the summer must have all proper enrollment materials on file per DSS requirements.

A \$25 fee will be charged for payments returned to us by the bank and receipts for tax purposes will be sent out via email in January.

Nonpayment of Tuition

Non-payment of tuition is grounds for immediate dismissal from any of ZCCC's programs. ZCCC switched to an auto-deduct payment system to minimize nonpayment and ensure that we are able to continue offering quality care for the children we serve. If you anticipate difficulty with paying tuition, please discuss the matter with the director immediately. ZCCC reserves the right to freeze any child's enrollment for nonpayment until payment is up to date.

Discounts

A 10% sibling discount is offered for children enrolled in the preschool program when at least one child is enrolled full time. The discount is applied to the lesser amount. For children enrolled in the Fireflies program, a 10% sibling discount is awarded to the second sibling and beyond if all children are enrolled full time. There is a 10% church member discount that is offered to families that are active members of Zion United Methodist Church. To qualify for this discount the family must have at least 6 months of active involvement in the church. Each child in the qualifying family will receive this discount.

Confidentiality

ZCCC's confidentiality agreement indicates that confidential and sensitive information will only be shared with staff members on a need-to-know basis in order to most appropriately and effectively provide care for your child. Confidential information about staff, other parents and/or children will not be shared. Confidential information includes but is not limited to: names, addresses, phone numbers, health related information, etc. ZCCC will not share your contact information with other families (for reasons such as parent requests for play dates, parties, etc.) without first obtaining written permission.

You may observe children at our center who are disabled or displaying behavior that appears inappropriate (like biting, hitting, spitting, etc.). Naturally, you may be curious or concerned about the other child. Our confidentiality policy protects every child's privacy and staff members at ZCCC are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you.

Mandated Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect

Under the Child Protective Services Act, mandated reports are required to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. The employees of ZCCC are all mandated reporters under this law. Our staff is not required to discuss their suspicions with parents or investigate the cause of any suspicious mark, behaviors, or conditions prior to making a report to Child Protective Services. Under this act, mandated reporters can be held criminally responsible if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect. At ZCCC, we take this responsibility very seriously and will make all warranted reports to the appropriate authorities in the best interest of the children in our care.

As mandated reporters, ZCCC staff cannot be held liable for reports made to Child Protective Services which are determined to be unfounded, provided that the report was made in good faith. Causes for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect include but are not limited to:

- Unusual bruising, marks, or cuts on the child's body
- Severe verbal reprimands
- Improper clothing related to size, cleanliness, or season
- Transporting a child without appropriate child restraints (i.e. car seats, seat belts, etc.)
- Dropping off or picking up a child while under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol
- Not providing appropriate meals including drinks for your child
- Leaving a child unattended for any amount of time
- Failure to attend to the special needs of a disabled child
- Sending a sick child to school over-medicated to hide symptoms, which would typically require the child to be kept home until symptoms subside
- Child who exhibit behavior consistent with an abusive situation

Parent's Right to Immediate Access

Parents of a child in our care are entitled to immediate access, without prior notice, to their child whenever they are in care at Zion Christian Children's Center, as provided by law. In cases where the child is the subject of a court order (such as a custody order, restraining order, or protection from abuse order), ZCCC must be provided with a certified copy of the most recent order and all amendments thereafter. The orders of the court will be strictly followed unless the custodial parent(s) requests a more liberal variation of the order in writing. In the case where both parents are afforded shared/joint custody by order of the court, both parents must sign the request for more liberal interpretation of the order.

In absence of a court order on file with ZCCC, both parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law. The center cannot, without a court order, limit the access of one parent by request of the other parent, regardless of the reason. If a situation presents itself where one parent does not want the other parent to have access to their child, ZCCC suggests that the parent keep the child with them until a court order is issued, since our rights to retain your child are secondary to the

parent's right to immediate access. Our staff will not hesitate to contact the local police should a conflict arise.

A child may only be picked up by a person on their authorized pick-up list. Parents/guardians must contact ZCCC administration to add people to their authorized pickup list at least 24-hours in advance and both parents/guardians must be in agreement with the additional authorized pick-up persons.

Visitors must schedule an appointment with the executive director or assistant director and are allowed in the center only at the discretion of ZCCC leadership. ZCCC will dismiss any child whose parent is prohibited from entering center property. Due to the parent's right to immediate access as well as state and federal regulations, ZCCC cannot have a child at the center when the child's parent is prohibited access. ZCCC will not agree to any request to maintain a child's enrollment even if the parent agrees to stay out of the center because such an agreement is a violation of the law and will not be entertained.

Dismissal

Zion Christian Children's Center reserves the right to dismiss any child at any time, with or without cause. Parents will be refunded any unused tuition if already paid within two weeks of the child's dismissal. A check will be mailed to the address on the child's file. An invoice detailing any past due balances will be forwarded to the address within one week of the dismissal and any remaining balances after the 30-day period will be referred to our legal counsel for collection.

Withdrawal

A child may be withdrawn from any ZCCC program with a 30-day notice, provided in writing to the executive director. Re-enrollment will be necessary should the family decide to enroll the child in the future. Parents who withdraw their child who fail to provide a 30-day notice will be responsible for payment for the duration of the 30 days following notice.

Preschool Program Arrival Procedures

Children enrolled in the full day program may begin arrival at 7am. A ZCCC staff member will greet you at your child's designated drop-off door (accessed from the outside of the building); ask you to answer a set of daily health questions, take your child's temperature on their forehead and write it down on their daily health assessment; take in your child's belongings; bring your child in to wash their hands, sign in your child.

ZCCC knows that some children have difficulty separating from their parent/guardian during drop off. We suggest that parents talk with their child upon arrival and explain the drop-off process to their child. This will prepare the child for the departure. The staff member present will comfort the child and assist them through this potentially anxious time. Parents are asked to leave after saying goodbye—the longer the parent drags out the departure, the more anxiety the child is likely to feel.

The professional staff at ZCCC are always available to discuss other ideas and options if the child does not settle into the arrival routine after a reasonable period of time.

Parents are required to notify the child's teacher or ZCCC leadership about any special instructions or needs for the child's day. We ask that the parent present the special instructions in writing and verbally discuss them with either the classroom teacher, the director, or the assistant director. These special instructions include but are not limited to early pick up, alternative pick up person (on the authorized pick-up list), health issues or behavioral issues over the previous night which should be observed, or general issues of concern which the teachers should be aware of to best meet the needs of your child throughout the day.

ZCCC does not provide breakfast in the morning, but children arriving between 7am and 8am may eat breakfast in their classroom upon drop off. We ask that these items are nutritious in nature as much as possible.

After-School Program Arrival Procedure

Children attending ZCCC for after school will be transported by bus to ZCCC from Moss-Nuckols Elementary School. A staff member will meet them outside and sign them in and have them wash their hands upon entering the building.

Notification of Absence

Parents are asked to inform their child's teacher by 9am if their child will not be at the center on a scheduled day. If your child is sick, we request that you notify the executive director and classroom teacher not only of the absence but also the nature of the illness. This enables us to keep track of illnesses which may occur at the center. This will be shared with staff on a "need to know" basis and health information about your child will not be shared. If your child has a communicable disease, it is imperative that you let us know so we can inform other parents that a communicable disease is present and what symptoms to look out for. After School families also need to notify ZCCC of absences.

Preschool Program Pick Up Procedure

Half day children will be dismissed from the classroom as parents/guardians pick them up from their designated pick-up door at 12:30pm. Full day children can be picked up beginning at 3pm from their designated pick up door. Once a parent checks their child out, the parent is then solely responsible for supervising their child while on center premises. Please do not allow your child to wonder.

Please write a note or call/text/email the director if your child's departure plans differ from his or her normal routine. We will not release your child to anyone who is not authorized to pick up your child. Appropriate legal paperwork must be on file at the center when the custodial parent requests the center not to release the child to the other parent.

After School Program Pick Up Procedure

Parents or other authorized adults of children attending the after-school program must pick-up their child at the designated door for their child's age group. Once a parent signs their child out and the child is released to them, the parent is then solely responsible for supervising their child while on center premises. Please do not allow your child to wander.

Late Pick-Up

Parents or other authorized adults of full day students or after school students are required to pick up by 6pm. Parents or other authorized adults of the half day students are required to pick up at 12:30pm. Late charges will be imposed for parent who pick their children up after the dismissal time or after the center closes at the end of the day. Late fees will be assessed at a rate of \$5 for 5-minute intervals, beginning at 6:10pm. The amount due will be billed to you within 24 hours and must be paid to the office within 24 hours. Habitual late pick up could result in termination or adjustment of services for your child.

Persons Appearing to be Impaired by Drugs/Alcohol

The staff at ZCCC will contact local police and/or other custodial parent should a parent appear to the staff of ZCCC to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. The parent's right to immediate access does not permit the center from denying a custodial parent access to their child even if the parent is or appears to be impaired. However, ZCCC staff will delay the impaired person as long as possible, while contacting the other parent, the local police, and Child Protective Services as appropriate.

Any other authorized person who attempts to pick up a child and appears to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol will be denied access to the child. The staff of ZCCC will contact the child's parents, local police, and Child Protective Services as appropriate to notify them of the situation.

Emergency/Alternate Pick-Up

At enrollment, parents will be able to designate emergency/alternate pick up persons on the application through Procure. We will also collect this information at our Open House/Meet and Greet event and prior to your child's first day to ensure we have all approved individuals listed to pick up your child in case of an emergency. Parents are encouraged to include any and all individuals who may at one time be asked to pick up their child from ZCCC. In an emergency, the child's parents will be called first and if they cannot be reached then staff will call the individuals listed on the Emergency Contact list until someone can be reached.

Should the staff contact a parent and the parent is unable to pick up the child, it is then the responsibility of the parent to arrange for their child to be picked up by someone on the emergency list.

Parents do not need to be listed on the Emergency Contact list. The nature of the parental relationship affords the parents, in the absence of a court order indicating otherwise, the right to pick up their child. Individuals on the Emergency Contact list and anyone else picking up the child other than the recognized parent/guardian will be required to provide photo ID prior to the center releasing the child. There will be no exceptions.

All changes and/or additions to this list must be made in Procure by administration. Only custodial parents/guardians have the right to make changes or additions to this information.

Hours of Operation

Zion Christian Children's Center is open year-round from 7am-6pm, Monday through Friday. Our half day Pre-K program operates 8:30am - 12:30pm Monday through Friday.

Elementary Virtual Care is open from 7am-6pm on all indicated days. After school children arrive at the end of the school day and must be picked up by 6pm.

Summer Camp is open from 7am - 6pm Monday - Friday.

Inclement Weather Closing Information

In an event of a closing due to weather, parents will be notified via the Family Forum on Facebook, email, and text message through the email/phone number on file. ZCCC will strive to remain open during most inclement weather days. In case of Louisa County school closures, we will generally provide Virtual Elementary Care for our school-aged children during our normal operating hours of 7am-6pm.

Meals & Snack Time

ZCCC does not provide food for children, unless otherwise indicated by the classroom teacher for special snack day, etc. For full day children, parents must pack their child two snacks and a lunch. Children have snack in the morning around 9:30am and again in the afternoon around 3pm. We are not able to refrigerate or microwave any part of your child's lunch/snack due to licensing guidelines, so we recommend that if your child's food needs to be kept cold that you put an ice pack in their lunchbox. Please be sure that your child's name is on his or her lunch box.

We ask that each child bring a water bottle labeled clearly with his or her name each day. They will have access to these all day and the teachers will re-fill water bottles as needed. We strongly encourage children to pack health snacks whenever possible and part of the morning snack routine is to select a healthy choice from their lunchbox.

ZCCC is not a nut-free center, nor are any of our classes. If your child has a nut allergy or any other food allergy, please communicate this clearly to your child's classroom teacher as well as the executive director. We must have proper allergy action plans on file for any food allergies as well as necessary medication and forms should an emergency occur.

Every Friday, ZCCC orders Domino's Pizza for lunch. Pizza is available to children at for \$1.50 per slice, with the option of cheese or pepperoni. Please be sure to indicate how many (if any) pieces of pizza your child would like and include your payment in your child's classroom pizza pouch each Friday. Parents can create a "pizza tab" for your child that we will keep track of should you decide to keep money on file for your child's pizza orders. Pizza money can be paid in cash or check to ZCCC. *Pizza money can no longer be paid online through Tuition Express.*

Birthday Celebrations

Your child is welcome to celebrate their birthday in the classroom. Parents are welcome to bring a special birthday treat on their child's birthday. Check with your child's teacher regarding any food allergies and be mindful by discussing your plans with your child's teacher. If you make a homemade item or treat, please have an ingredient list available if needed. We recommend that parents of children with food allergies of any sort bring some type of "safe treat" that the teachers can give the child during a special birthday celebration where the treat may potentially include or be contaminated with peanuts/allergens.

Parent/Teacher Conferences & Communication

Progress reports will be done twice a year (in the fall and in the spring) for Bumblebees, and Dragonflies. This tool will help assess your child's developmental progress through several different growth areas and experiences at school.

Conferences are available at this time as well and a sign-up sheet will be posted outside of your child's classroom. These are not mandatory, but they are a great way to chat about your child's progress and any concerns you may have. It can be difficult to engage with the teacher at drop off and pick up in a meaningful way. Our teachers will be in touch with you if there is a struggle that they need your help with prior to conferences.

Most children go through a normal adjustment period when they enter our preschool program or any of our programs. After the initial adjustment period, a teacher may partner with the parent to recommend additional services if development progress indicates. ZCCC also engages in journaling and documentation to ensure parents get a full picture look at their child's day should any recurrent struggles arise.

Our teachers and staff members will provide you with their personal contact information at the beginning of the year for you to reach out with any concerns at any time. Please be mindful that they will not be able to respond during the day as they are teaching the children and interacting in the

classroom. If you have an emergency that needs to be relayed to the teacher, please contact the Director or the Assistant Director. Otherwise, teachers will respond to you as they are able.

Fundraising

ZCCC engages in multiple fundraisers throughout the year, including but not limited to, Pizza Truck Night, Usborne Online Book Fair, Back-to-School Carnival, Fall Festival, Santa's Workshop, Sweetheart Dance, and our Spring Carnival. Participation in any and all fundraisers is optional. All ideas and suggestions for fundraising and events are welcome.

Items from Home

Due to the risk of damage, sharing issues, and loss, children are not permitted to bring in toys from home unless specifically requested by the classroom teacher for use as part of the curriculum or show and tell. Parents are responsible for enforcing this policy with their child. We suggest not leaving high value toys in the child's backpack that they may be tempted with throughout the day. If this becomes a problem, parents will be asked to come to the center and remove the toy.

Children are permitted to have a "lovey" for nap/rest time included with their blankets. This must be a plush/non-musical toy and will only be allowed at nap/rest time.

Children (grades K-5) enrolled, in our Virtual Care program, should bring the devices needed for virtual learning - laptop/Chromebook, charger, iPad, etc. Both the after-school program and the elementary virtual care students may bring electronics for designated electronics times, but these are the child's responsibility entirely and there will be a limit on electronic time. ZCCC will not be responsible for any damaged or lost items. These are brought in at your own risk.

Clothing

Children are engaged in various activities during the course of the day. Many of these activities will be messy! Additionally, our children are involved in outdoor play daily even in rainy conditions most times. Due to these activities, children are required to be dressed in seasonably appropriate and comfortable clothing.

Remember, play is children's work! Your child should wear safe, comfortable clothing that allows them to fully engage in the day's activities. Clothing should also be easy for the child to handle when using the bathroom. Girls wearing dresses or skirts need to wear shorts underneath. Hats are permitted outside but not in the classroom.

Much of your child's day is spent on the playground and/or in the gym. Tennis shoes and supportive shoes are mandatory for active play. Open-toed shoes are not appropriate for the playground. Flip flops, sandals, and clogs or other backless shoes can be hazardous during play. Flip flops and croc-style shoes are appropriate only if snugly strapped.

We ask that each child keep 2 complete changes of clothes, appropriate for the season, at school—one in their backpack and one in their classroom, labeled in a Ziploc baggie. This should include socks, underpants, and outwear appropriate for the weather. Children in our Caterpillars class who are working on potty training should bring extra underwear and clothes in case of more frequent accidents.

Nap Time

Every day, our full day preschool program children will rest for 1.5-2 hours depending on their age group. Full day children are required to bring a padded vinyl nap mat. This cannot be a yoga mat or exercise mat and must provide more padding than a padded sleeping bag per DSS standards. Children should also bring a blanket or sleeping bag to go on top of their mats. Blankets and sleeping bags will be sent home at the end of each week. We encourage children to bring a familiar item from home to use during rest time, like a lovey or a stuffed animal. Children will not be forced to sleep but will be required to lie quietly for a period of time.

Field Trips

Our preschool program children (Tadpoles-Dragonflies) have the opportunity to attend off-site field trips. Parents must fill out a permission form and provide payment. Additionally, parents are required to attend field trips with their children and transport their children. We cannot provide transportation to a child. The parent may reach out to other parents in the class to coordinate—but this will not be done by the center and is solely the responsibility of the parent. On scheduled field trip days ZCCC will be closed for the preschool program. ZCCC will open for the after-school program only. We plan our field trips as early in advance as possible to give ample notice to our families.

Siblings and other family members are welcome to attend field trips for an additional fee.

Parent Participation & Volunteers

Parents are encouraged and invited to be involved in their child's school activities! There are many ways families may participate. Attending trips, reading books to the class, sharing your talents, and assisting teachers by coordinating special events and celebrations are all great ways to be involved with the center. We love to expose our children to various professions and love visits from parents/family members who are nurses, fireman, policeman, those who can play an instrument, read a story, share a cultural lesson, etc.

ZCCC has a Parent Committee that is made up of volunteers from each class who meet for the purpose of planning and carrying out teacher appreciation week, activities during the year, and other family events. As well as providing meals to ZCCC families with new babies and/or other health issues/needs. Information about this committee will be given out at the beginning of the year.

Any parent who volunteers extensively in the classroom on a regular basis will be required to undergo a criminal background check as required by licensing. Any person, including parents, with felony convictions, sex offender convictions, and/or open investigations into any criminal activities will not be permitted to volunteer in the classroom or on field trips.

Throughout the year, we will notify you of any programs, activities, classes, etc. concerning parents and parenting issues. Class newsletters will come home monthly, so you know what is happening at the center. It is important that you take the time to read these! We will also provide regular updates on our Facebook page and on our website.

Sick Policy

Our priority at ZCCC is providing a healthy and safe learning environment for all children. A daily health check, including a temperature check, will be performed on each child entering the building. Parents must have alternative arrangements for the care of their children when the child shows symptoms of any deviation from normal health. If a child becomes ill at the center, the classroom teacher will reach out to the parent by phone call and text message. Children will not be permitted to be at school when ill, which includes but is not limited to:

- Fever of 100.4 or greater until 24 hours symptom-free WITHOUT fever reducing medication
- Signs/symptoms of COVID -19 or other severe illness including lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, inexplicable irritability or persistent crying, difficulty breathing, and/or wheezing

Children diagnosed with COVID 19, may not return until they are symptom free, have tested negative for COVID 19, and have been cleared by a physician.

- Signs/symptoms of severe illness including lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, inexplicable irritability or persistent crying, difficulty breathing, and/or wheezing
- Diarrhea (2 instances) not associated with diet changes or medications
- Vomiting (1 instance) child can return after vomiting has been resolved for 24 hours
- Persistent abdominal pain
- Mouth sores
- Rash, until a physician determines that these symptoms are not contagious
- Pink eye until after treatment has been initiated for 24 hours
- Scabies, until treatment has been completed
- Tuberculosis until a healthcare provider states that the child is on appropriate therapy and can attend child care
- Impetigo until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated
- Chicken Pox until all sores have dried and crusted and no fever is present
- Hand, Foot, & Mouth Disease until sores have dried and crusted, and no fever is present
- Pertussis until 5 days of appropriate antibiotic treatment has been completed
- Mumps, until 9 days after onset of symptoms

- Hepatitis A virus, until 7 days after onset of illness
- Measles, until 4 days after onset of rash
- Rubella, until 6 days after onset of rash
- Unspecified respiratory tract illness, accompanied by another illness which requires exclusion
- Herpes simplex, with uncontrollable drooling
- Lice, until child has been treated and is nit-free

If your child has a communicable disease, we ask that you notify ZCCC leadership. This enables us to keep track of illnesses which may occur at our center as the year progresses. Communicable diseases will be posted outside of classrooms if it is pertinent in the particular classroom. Confidentiality will be kept and no names will be given of affected children.

Concerning head lice, we have a strict nit-free policy, requiring full disclosure and head check before returning to class.

These guidelines protect our children from continuous exposure, as little hands spread little germs! If a young child feels bad, he or she should be receiving more comfort than a teacher can provide. If any of the preceding symptoms are observed in your child at the beginning of the day, you will be asked to take them home. If any of the symptoms develop in your child during the day, you will be called to come and pick up your child immediately. In the best interest of all the children in our care, we also reserve the right to call you if we feel your child is not feeling well (tired, excessively irritable, exhibiting unusual behavior, etc.) and ask that you have them checked by your pediatrician.

Children excluded due to a fever may not return to the program until they are fever free without fever reducing medication for 24 hours. **If your child is sent home due to a fever, they are NOT permitted to return to the program the following day at a minimum.** A fever is defined as a temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or more.

Biting Policy

ZCCC recognizes that biting is a developmentally appropriate behavior for children in the Tadpoles and Caterpillars classrooms. Parents with children in these classes should expect that their children may be bit or will bite another child at one point or another. We understand that parents are concerned and can become upset when their child is involved in a biting incident; we ask that you remember this is developmentally appropriate behavior, and that we are working to identify situations which provoke or elicit this behavior so it can be prevented in the future. The staff will not punish or harshly discipline children in the younger classrooms for biting behavior but will simply redirect the children to different activities in separate areas. Parents are expected to work with staff to identify methods and strategies to curb this behavior. If the biting issue cannot be resolved, the child is subject to disenrollment.

Children in the Bumblebees class and Pre-K class may occasionally be involved in a biting incident. For children in this age group, the staff will use the discipline procedures outlined in the behavior management section of this handbook, as well as observe the child to determine what provokes or elicits this behavior. Parents are expected to cooperate with staff to help their child control this behavior. If the biting issue cannot be resolved, the child is subject to disenrollment.

Parents will be notified by incident/accident report that a biting incident occurred during the course of the day. The staff will not discuss with either parent the identity of the other child involved. This information is confidential and cannot be disclosed.

Potty Training/Toileting Policy

Children in our Dragonfly program (4 years old) and up must be potty trained when classes begin in the fall. They must be able to use the bathroom independently, including wiping themselves with minimal assistance. If an accident occurs at school, staff will change the child and send the soiled/wet clothes home in a plastic bag.

Children in our Bumblebee Program (3 years old) are encouraged to be potty trained when classes begin in the fall. Parents need to be actively working on potty training prior to the beginning of the school year. Extra sets of clothes should be kept in your child's backpack and ideally pull-ups are reserved for naptime. We understand that all children develop at different rates and to ensure success Parents must partner with Teachers to accomplish set goals.

Behavior Management

At ZCCC we firmly believe that each child is loved by God and made in His image. No child is labeled as "bad" and we view discipline as a process of developing appropriate behaviors. We do this by providing an interesting, exciting learning environment for our students with plenty of opportunities for children to make productive, meaningful choices. A challenging environment that allows experimenting, learning, physical activity, and quiet times prevents boredom and promotes positive behavior.

ZCCC uses indirect guidance techniques such as:

- Giving warning in advance: "You have 5 more minutes to play before its time to clean up!"
- Giving choices: "You may paint with your friends or you may read a book at the table."
- Regular routines: "We always wash our hands before lunch. Story time is after lunch."
- Avoiding nagging: "We tell the child what to expect one time, follow up by asking the child if they remember what we discussed, then offer to assist the child to do what we asked.
- Consistency, we do things the same way, so the child always knows what to expect and learns to trust and feel safe in their environment.

We also use direct guidance techniques such as:

- Positive wording rather than negative working: "Walking feet" vs. "Don't run."
- Meeting the child on their level by crouching down to make eye contact, speaking quietly, and asking the child to repeat the directions for understanding.
- Fairness. We examine our expectations to make sure they are age-appropriate, and we don't make rules just because an activity is too noisy or too messy.
- Avoiding arguments by following through with solutions that address the problem but also offer the child a way to exit gracefully from the problem: "You can choose a quiet place to calm down or I can help you choose a place."

When appropriate and other times as possible, we use a "time in" approach versus "time out" to give children one-on-one time to work on social skills and behaviors to prevent problematic behaviors in the future.

Audio/Visual Surveillance System

In early September, ZCCC is installing an audio/visual surveillance system for administration to easily monitor all preschool entrances/exits, playgrounds and the gym, at one time. We are looking forward to utilizing this extra added safety measure during operating hours as well as when the school is closed.

Contact Information

Zion Christian Children's Center
Amy Hall, Executive Director
zionchristiancc@gmail.com
434-459-1913 (call or text)

Zion United Methodist Church Front Office
info@zionumcva.org
434-589-1665

Cindy Crummette, Assistant Director
mscindyzccc@gmail.com
434-459-1913 (call or text)

Michelle Cooper, Business Administrator
michellezccc@gmail.com
434-459-1913 (call or text)

* Your child's teacher will provide their individual contact information at the beginning of the year for you to use to reach out to them! Keep this info in a safe spot so you are able to reach anyone as needed. *