

Zion Christian Children's Center

A Ministry of Zion United Methodist Church

FAMILY HANDBOOK



**ZION CHRISTIAN
CHILDREN'S CENTER**

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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 its 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 us at 434-459-1913 or email zionchristiancc@gmail.com. We 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 wholeheartedly 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 students' 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

Our program is structured around the idea that children are born ready to learn. As early childhood educators, we are responsible for providing a stimulating and encouraging learning environment to ignite our children's spark. Our one-year-old through four-year-old classes use Experience Early Learning Mother Goose Time curriculum. The integrated curriculum system uniquely weaves 35 research-based skills into playful games and discovery projects. The cross-disciplinary model supports a child's ongoing social-emotional, physical, language, and cognitive development. Early Learning Mother Goose Time curriculum includes:

- Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development
- Language and Literacy Development
- Mathematics and Reasoning Development
- Social Studies Development
- Science Development
- Creative Development

Our curriculum is approved by the Department of Education and our classrooms are observed and graded by the Department of Education. We utilize teaching strategies that engage children through enriching learning experiences. We pride ourselves on high-quality classrooms that meet the diverse needs of children through flexible and individualized support to help children develop to their fullest potential. [2013 Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Education, Preschool Quality Indicators] 5

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 classrooms and 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 Education 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 a 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 a student-parent representative, church members, and members at large. The School Board meets once a month and turns in monthly reports to the Leadership Team 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 and Inchworms: 2 years old by September 30th of that year
- Bumblebees and Honeybees: 3 years old by September 30th of that year
- Frogs: Pre-Kindergarten; 4 years old by September 30th of that year

For our Fireflies After School program and Kids Day Off, 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, which provides transportation to our center each day.

Kids Day Off is open for Fireflies ages 5-12 from any school district/county.

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

Enrollment Process

Enrollment for summer camp and the upcoming academic year for the preschool and after-school programs begins at the end of March for returning families who are currently enrolled. New family enrollment for the upcoming year for summer care and the upcoming academic year for the preschool and after-school programs begins at the beginning of April.

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 regarding 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 \$6,237, which is broken out into 42 equal payments of \$148.50. The 4-day option has an annual tuition rate of \$7,854, which is broken into 42 equal payments of \$187. 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 \$9,240, which is broken out into 42 equal payments of \$220. Our Frogs (Pre-K) program also offers a 5-half-day enrollment option with an annual tuition rate of \$5,313, which is broken out into 42 equal payments of \$126.50. The Tadpoles program has a 3-day, 4-day, or 5-day enrollment option. The 3-day annual rate is \$8,316 and it is broken out into 42 equal payments of \$198. The 4-day annual rate is \$9,702 and it is broken out into 42 equal payments of \$231. The 5-day option annual rate is \$10,395, which is broken out into 42 equal payments of \$247. 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 5% of the total transaction amount.

Tuition does not include fees for field trips or extracurricular activities. A \$25 fee will be charged for payments returned to us by the bank. If a payment is declined or fails to run on the processing date, the payment will be run on the next billing date which would be the following Thursday.

Year-end tuition summaries for tax purposes can be found on your account at myprocare.com. Login to your account and select "Reports" in the top menu. Next, select "Customer Charge Credit Summary" from the dropdown menu and click "Run Report". Select "LAST YEAR" as the predefined timeframe for your report and click "Run Report". Then you may view, print, and save your yearly tuition payment summary.

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 to 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 before the week scheduled. We offer after-school care Monday - Friday at a rate of \$19.25 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 Kids Day off is offered on the calendar days highlighted in blue. Any child enrolled at ZCCC for the Fireflies age group may attend KDO at a rate of \$50/day. KDO tuition is charged on Thursday for the previous week.

A \$25 fee will be charged for payments returned to us by the bank. If a payment is declined or fails to run on the processing date, the payment will be run on the next billing date - the following Thursday for weekly and biweekly.

Summer Camp Program Payment Schedule & Fees

Summer Camp is available for children ages 16 months to 12 years old. Our Summer Camp is a 10-week program. For our Tadpoles group, there is a 3-day option which is \$190/week (\$1,900 Summer Program total cost), a 4-day option at \$220/week (\$2,200 Summer Program total cost), and a 5-day option with a rate of \$235/week (\$2,350 Summer Program total cost). For children in the Inchworms, Caterpillars, Bumblebees, Honeybees, and Frogs age groups, the enrollment options are 3, 4, or 5 days. The rate is \$145/week for 3 days (\$1,450 Summer Program total cost), \$180/week for 4 days

(\$1,800 Summer Program total cost), and \$210/week for 5 days (\$2,000 Summer Program total cost). 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. Payments are processed for the upcoming week on the Thursday before the week begins. Days will not be credited/refunded for non-attendance.

Summer camp is available for our Fireflies age group (K - 5th grade) from 1 - 5 days a week. Our elementary summer camp is a 10-week program. 1 day per week is \$50 (\$500 Summer Program total cost), 2 days/per week is \$95 (\$950 Summer Program total cost), 3 days/per week is \$135 (\$1,350 Summer Program total cost), 4 days/week is \$170 (\$1,700 Summer Program total cost), and 5 days/week is \$200 (\$2,000 Summer Program total cost). Sign-up in advance is required. Payments are processed for the upcoming week on the Thursday before the week's beginning. 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.

Each family enrolled in our summer programs will be given a one-week vacation credit that can be used only between the start and end dates of the summer program. If a vacation is not taken you will not receive the vacation credit. The credit will be for a Monday through Friday vacation and cannot be broken up over weeks.

A \$25 fee will be charged for payments returned to us by the bank. If a payment is declined or fails to run on the processing date, the payment will be run on the next billing date - the following Thursday.

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 can 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 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 marks, behaviors, or conditions before 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 the 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 exhibits 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 agree 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 the 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 days 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 the notice.

Preschool Program Arrival Procedures

Children enrolled in the full-day program may begin arriving at 7 am. A ZCCC staff member will greet you at your child's designated drop-off door (accessed from the outside of the building); take in your child's belongings and sign in your child.

ZCCC knows that some children have difficulty separating from their parents/guardians 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 pickup, 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 that 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 7 am and 8 am 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 9 am 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 of the nature of the illness. This enables us to keep track of illnesses that 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 12:30 pm. Full-day children can be picked up beginning at 3 pm 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 wander.

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 6 pm. Parents or other authorized adults of the half-day students are required to be picked up at 12:30 pm. Late charges will be imposed for parents who pick their children up after 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 6:10 pm and 12:40 pm for half-day pick-up. 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 parents 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 ProCare. We will also collect this information at our Open House/Meet and Greet event and before 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 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. We are required to have at least 3 different emergency contacts on file for your child.

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 a photo ID before the center releases the child. There will be no exceptions.

All changes and/or additions to this list must be made in ProCare by the 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 7 am-6 pm, Monday through Friday. Our half-day Pre-K program operates 8:30 am – 12:30 pm Monday through Friday.

Kids Day Off is open from 7 am-6 pm on all indicated days in blue on our school year calendar. After school children arrive at the end of the school day and must be picked up by 6 pm.

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

Inclement Weather Closing Information

In an event of a closing due to weather, parents will be notified via the ProCare parent engagement app. ZCCC follows the lead of Louisa County Public Schools on when to delay, close, or dismiss early due to inclement weather. The safety of our children and staff is the most important factor in determining whether to delay or close. We do not take closing lightly and have many factors to consider when making the call.

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 snacks in the morning around 9:30 am and again in the afternoon around 3 pm. 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. It is a requirement 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 healthy 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 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 their child that we will keep track of should they decide to keep money on file for your child's pizza orders. Pizza money can be paid in cash or a 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 in the middle of the year for our 3- and 4-year-old programs. 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 will be set up.

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 before 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 are available throughout the day on our ProCare parent engagement app. 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. Participation in any fundraiser 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 children. 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.

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, 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-Frogs) 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 all programs. 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, firemen, policemen, those who can play an instrument, read a story, share a cultural lesson, etc.

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!

Sick Policy

Our priority at ZCCC is to provide 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 48 hours symptom-free WITHOUT fever-reducing medication
- Signs/symptoms of COVID-19 or other severe illnesses including lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, inexplicable irritability or persistent crying, difficulty breathing, and/or wheezing.

Children testing positive for COVID-19, may not return until they have quarantined for a minimum of 5 days, are symptom-free for at least 48 hours, 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 childcare
- 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 that requires exclusion.
- Herpes simplex, with uncontrollable drooling
- Lice, until the 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 that may occur at our center as the year progresses. Communicable diseases will be posted outside of classrooms if it is pertinent in the classroom. Confidentiality will be kept, and no names will be given to affected children.

Concerning head lice, we have a strict nit-free policy, requiring full disclosure and a 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 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.

Medication Policy

Currently, ZCCC will not administer Tylenol or other fever-reducing medications to students as a temperature of 100.4 or higher is one of the symptoms of Covid-19. Please ask us for a medication form if your child takes daily medication that needs to be administered during school hours.

Biting Policy

ZCCC recognizes that biting is a developmentally appropriate behavior for children in the Tadpoles, Caterpillars, and Inchworms 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 that 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, Honeybees, and Frogs 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 the 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 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. If accidents become habitual, we will ask that you pick your child up for the remainder of the day.

Children in our 3 years old are encouraged to be potty trained when classes begin in the fall. Parents need to be actively working on potty training before 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 it's 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. Storytime is after lunch."

- Avoid 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 at 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. If behavior becomes an issue the parent will be contacted for a conference, with the director and the teacher, to discuss a solution to the offense. If a solution cannot be reached within an agreed-upon time frame, the child will be asked to be unenrolled in ZCCC.

Audio/Visual Surveillance System

In early September 2020, ZCCC installed an audio/visual surveillance system for administration to easily monitor all preschool entrances/exits, playgrounds, and the gym, at one time. This has been an excellent extra added safety measure during operating hours as well as when the school is closed.

Contact Information

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* You will be able to communicate with your child’s teacher once you enroll and are invited to the ProCare parent engagement app