**Sylvan Hills United Methodist Church**

**Early Learning Center**



**2018-2019**

**Parent Handbook**

**9921 Highway 107**

**Sherwood, Arkansas 72120**

**(501) 835-3850**

**Welcome!**

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We welcome you to the Sylvan Hills United Methodist Church Early Learning Center (ELC), also referred to as the Mother’s Day Out program, the partnership we will share during these early years.

The need for good quality early education is great and ELC strives to meet that need by providing nurturing educational experiences. Our goal is to help your child explore and begin to understand the world around them and to lay the foundation for future academic pursuits.

Communication between your family and the center is vital. We practice an “Open Door” policy and welcome your visits, comments and suggestions.

This handbook has been prepared as a resource and reference guide to the center’s policies and procedures. Please read it thoroughly and keep it handy as you may need to refer to it from time to time.

We look forward to working with your family.

Sincerely,

Wendy Spencer, Director

Tammy Bonds, Assistant Director

501-835-3850

shumcelcdirector@outlook.com

# MISSION STATEMENT

The Early Learning Center is a ministry of the Sylvan Hills United Methodist Church and aims to provide a high quality structured program in a Christian environment. This program is offered to families in Sherwood and surrounding communities as an affordable, developmentally appropriate, and quality alternative to full-time care.

# Sylvan Hills Early Learning Center: A Ministry of Sylvan Hills United Methodist Church

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# For forty years the Early Learning Center has been a thriving ministry of Sylvan Hills United Methodist Church. Through sharing space, employees, and resources we have established a ministry that gives families a safe, enriching, and affordable option in child care. Throughout its existence, the ELC has been considered a vital part of our church; however, now more than ever it is seen as an integrated ministry of Sylvan Hills United Methodist Church. We pride ourselves on being able to follow Christ’s call to, “bring the children to me” and we do just that through our ministry in the Early Learning Center.

# VISION STATEMENT

The Sylvan Hills United Methodist Church Early Learning Center exists to meet the physical, mental, emotional, social, and creative needs of each child in our program by offering dynamic quality programs in a Christian environment.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Pastor: Sara Bayles

ELC Director: Wendy Spencer

ELC Asst. Director/Secretary: Tammy Bonds

Board Chairman: Sarah Brashears

Admin. Board Chairman: Becky Hobby

Trustees: Bill Fraley

Staff Parish: Frances Oakes

Finance: Kevin Lilly

Community Rep. Carol Barnes

**INFORMATION ABOUT OUR PROGRAM**

We offer a mother’s day out program on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday for children ages six (6) weeks through preschool. We operate on a school year basis from August to May and also offer a program during the summer.

We are a fully licensed childcare facility and follow all state regulations as described in the Minimum Licensing Requirements for Child Care Centers issued by the Arkansas Department of Human Services, Division of Early Child Care and Early Childhood Education, Child Care Licensing Unit. Our facility has been inspected and approved by the Arkansas Department of Health and the local fire department. Fire and storm drills are practiced monthly. All staff members obtain continuing education hours annually and are trained in CPR and first-aid. Criminal background checks and child maltreatment checks have been completed on all employees as required by child care licensing requirements.

Our program is an inclusive program, accepting children with physically challenging conditions. We work with various agencies to provide for the needs of students who will benefit from speech/language therapy, occupational therapy, special education, or home health care.

# DAYS and HOURS OF OPERATION

Our normal program hours are 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday. We offer a morning and afternoon extended care. Morning extended care starts at 7:30 a.m. and afternoon extended care ends at 6:00 p.m.

# DAYS CLOSED

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Labor Day | Thanksgiving Day/Wednesday prior | Winter Break: Same days Pulaski County Special School District  |
| New Year’s Day | Spring Break: Same Days as Pulaski County Special School District | Martin Luther King Day |
| Memorial Day | Week Before School Starts in August | July 4th |

**TUITION AND FEES**

Your registration fee will be due at the time of registration. Payment can be made by check, credit/debit card, or cash. Tuition will be billed at the 5th of the month and is due ten (10) days later.

**Fall 2018-2019 Registration Fees are as follows for new students:**

$100.00 for the first child $95 for each additional child

**Fall 2018-2019 Registration Fees are as follows for students enrolled prior to 2017:**

$50.00 for the first child $45 for each additional child

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Classroom** | **Weekly Rate** |
| Nursery (6 weeks through 12 months) | $65.00 |
| Waddler/Toddler | $65.00 |
| 2’s | $60.00 |
| Young 3’s | $60.00 |
| 3’s | $60.00 |
| 4’s | $60.00 |
| **EXTENDED CARE RATES** |
| Morning Care | 1st child: $18.00 | 2nd child: $18.00 |
| Afternoon Care | 1st child: $30.00 | 2nd child: $30.00 |

**Supply Fee**

Each student is charged a $12.00 per month supply fee. The supply fee covers the cost of arts and craft materials, school supplies, and other materials used throughout the school year.

**Late Payments**

Full payment of tuition is a condition of enrollment. We truly wish to help our families in any way possible; however, we are a self-funded organization. We depend on timely payments from our families for our continual operation. Please communicate with us if you are not able to pay your tuition in a timely manner. We bill on a monthly basis, typically by the 5th of each month and tuition is due by the 15th day of each month. **All accounts will incur a $5 per day or $20.00 (whichever is greater) late fee if not paid or payment arrangements made by the due date listed on the invoice.**

**NSF Policy**

* First check/electronic draft - $40.00 fee plus returned check paid in cash
* Second check/electronic draft - $40.00 fee plus returned check paid in cash
* After second returned check, all tuition and fees must be paid in cash.

**Non Payment Policy**

If your account becomes thirty (30) days past due and you have failed to make payment arrangements or you fail to keep your agreed upon payment arrangements, your child will be dismissed from our program and your account will be turned over to collections.

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# REGISTRATION

Registration for our program is accepted year-round and is offered on a first come, first serve basis. We re-enroll students each year for the new school year and each summer. Rooms fill quickly so watch for posted notices regarding registration.

# Each family will be charged a non-refundable registration fee.

**WEATHER CLOSINGS**

We will make determinations for weather closings by 6:00 a.m. We will follow the PCSSD inclement weather decisions. We will announce via Facebook, Bright Wheel, or email. In the event we must close early due to weather, we will also call parents to let them know. **In either case, no refunds or make up days will be given.**

# VISITING THE CENTER

We encourage you to visit the center anytime and observe your child throughout the day. Although young infants benefit greatly from drop-in visits during the day, older children often have difficulty understanding that when parents come to visit, they must go back to school or work. Please use good judgment when visiting your child. Children do outgrow this separation difficulty. Our staff is here to assist you with these transitions.

# ITEMS TO BRING WITH YOUR CHILD ON THE FIRST DAY

ALL children need:

* Enrollment Packet
* Signed discipline policy
* Signed photo policy
* 2” Rest Mat (except those in infant room) can be purchased for $25 here
* Signed Parent Statement of Understanding form

# Age Specific Items

**Infants** (6 weeks to 12 months)

* Formula or breast milk
* Bottles (either pre-mixed or filled with water) with names on bottles and lids
* Solid Foods
* Diapers
* Full change of seasonally appropriate clothing (labeled with name)
* Family Photograph (for display in classroom)
* **All children that are walking must wear shoes.**

**Toddlers** (12 to 24 months)

* 2 Sippy cups (labeled with name)
* Lunch (no peanut products)
* Full change of seasonally appropriate clothing (labeled with name)
* Diapers
* Family Photograph (for display in classroom)
* All children that are able to walk must wear shoes daily

**2 Year Olds and Young Three’s**

* 2 Sippy cups (labeled with name)
* Lunch (no peanut products)
* Diapers if not potty trained
* Full change of seasonally appropriate clothing (labeled with name)
* If your child is potty training, please be sure to pack several changes of clothes each day

# 3 Year Olds

# Full change of seasonally appropriate clothing (labeled with name)

# Full size backpack

# Blanket or stuffed animal for rest time, if needed

* 2 Thermos or straw cups (labeled with name) that are sealed (non-leaking)
* Lunch, NO peanut products

# 4 Year Olds

# Lunch (NO peanut products)

# Full size backpack

# Blanket or stuffed animal for rest time, if needed

* 2 Thermos or straw cups (labeled with name) that are sealed (non-leaking)
* Full change of seasonally appropriate clothing (labeled with name)

# DIAPERS AND TOILET TRAINING

If a child is not toilet trained, diapers must be supplied by the parent and/or guardian. The teachers will inform you when your child’s diapers are running low.

Learning to go to the toilet is one of the most complex and developmental tasks of early childhood. Toilet learning requires specific neurological and physical maturations in the child. When the child is ready, parents and staff discuss the child’s individual toilet learning program and work through the process together.

It is more advantageous for your child to be toilet trained wearing underwear, rather than diapers or Pull-Ups. Remember to bring extra sets of clothing so that we can change your child in case of an accident. It has been our experience that Pull-Ups delay success in toilet training.

If you feel like your child is ready to be toilet trained, please talk with your child’s teacher(s) or the center director.

# SIDS POLICY

Providing infants with a safe place to grow and learn is very important. For this reason, we have created a policy on safe sleep practices for infants up to 1-year-old. We follow the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Consumer Product Safety Commission to provide a safe sleep environment and reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). SIDS is “the sudden death of an infant under 1 year of age, which remains unexplained after a thorough investigation.” The staff, substitute staff, and volunteers at ELC follow the AAP safe sleep policy.

**Sleep Position**

Infants will be placed flat on their backs to sleep every time unless there is a physician, practitioner or clinician signed sleep position medical waiver up to date on file. In the case of a waiver, a waiver notice will be posted at the infant’s crib without identifying medical information. The full waiver will be kept in the infant’s file.

* Infants will not be placed on their side for sleep.
* Devices such as wedges or infant petitioners will not be used since such devices are not proven to reduce the risk of SIDS.
* Infants who use pacifiers will be offered their pacifier when they are placed to sleep, and it will not be put back in should the pacifier fall out once they fall asleep.
* Pacifiers will be cleaned between each use, checked for tears, and will not be coated in any sweet or other solution.
* Parents are asked to provide replacement pacifiers on a regular basis.
* While infants will always be placed on their backs to sleep, when an infant can easily turn over from back to front and front to back, they can remain in whatever position they prefer to sleep.

**Sleep Environment**

Our program will use Consumer Product Safety Commission guidelines for safety-approved cribs and firm mattresses.

* Only one infant will be placed to sleep in each crib. Siblings, including twins and triplets, will be placed in separate cribs.
* The crib will have a firm tight fitting mattress covered by a fitted sheet and will be free from blankets, loose bedding, toys, and other soft objects (i.e., pillows, quilts, comforters, sheepskins, stuffed toys, etc.)
* To avoid overheating, the temperature of the rooms where infants sleep will be checked and will be kept at a level that is comfortable for a lightly clothed adult.
* Sleep clothing, such as sleepers, sleep sacks, and wearable blankets, may be used as alternatives to blankets.
* Bibs and pacifiers will not be tied around an infant’s neck or clipped on to an infant’s clothing during sleep.

**Supervision**

* When infants are in their cribs, they will be within sight and hearing of staff at all times.
* A staff member will visibly check on the sleeping infants at least every 30 minutes.
* When an infant is awake, they will have supervised “tummy time.” This will help babies strengthen their muscles and develop normally.

 **NUTRITION**

You are responsible for providing your child’s lunch each day. When packing your child’s meal, please ensure that it meets current U.S. Department of Agriculture guidelines, including portion sizes. Additional information about balanced meals can be found on page 29. We are also a peanut free environment, so please be sure not to pack anything that contains peanuts. Our program serves a morning snack each day. Additionally, children in the aftercare program will receive an afternoon snack.

If your child has any food allergies, please notify your child’s teacher and the center director. For some food allergies, snack items with equivalent nutritional value will be substituted for allergy causing foods.

# CHANGING CHILDREN’S CLASSROOMS

Administration and teachers take into consideration the following before transferring children to the next age appropriate classroom:

* Space availability
* Age
* Maturity
* Social skills
* Communication skills

Your child has the opportunity to move up in their classrooms twice per year or as needed. Once before summer starts and again before the school year starts in August or as space becomes available. In order for a child to be placed in the four (4) year old preschool classroom, they must have turned four (4) before August 1st.

# ABSENCE OR LATE ARRIVAL

If your child will be absent or will be arriving late please call the director as soon as possible so we can let your child’s teacher know. If you know in advance that you child will be absent, please notify the director. **There is no refund for absences.**

# IMMUNIZATIONS

# Either a photocopy of the child’s current immunization record or a signed consent form from the Department of Human Services is required at the time of enrollment. Please remember to provide a new copy if your child receives additional immunizations during the school year. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in termination of your child’s enrollment. If you have an immunization waiver we will need to have a copy on file.

# CHILD SIGN-IN/OUT

The center uses Procare to record attendance of the children we care for. Your child must be signed in and out each day in Procare. Procare is also used as an added security measure to lock down our area if necessary. Anyone who will be picking up or dropping off your child will need to be registered through our system. This is important for several reasons:

* We must be able to verify with licensing what children were present at a given time.
* These are used to verify attendance during times of emergencies (i.e. fire drills and evacuations for any reason)
* Keeps an accurate count of children during the day as well as recording who drops of and picks up the children

If your child is on the playground or in the fellowship hall during drop off or pick up time, remember to sign your child out of the Procare system.

# AUTHORIZATION FOR PICKUP

Your child will only be released to authorized individuals 18 years or older. Initial authorization must be made on the enrollment form. In order to authorize any additional person, you must inform the office. Notify the office if you want a person removed from the form. If an unauthorized person should arrive at the center to pick up a child the parent and/or guardian will be notified immediately. The child will not be released except to an authorized individual.

If an authorized person arrives to pick up a child and appears in the judgment of staff, in any way, to be intoxicated or under the influence of drugs the parent, guardian, or 1st emergency contact will be notified.

It is the responsibility of the **parent** to keep the authorized list of individuals allowed to pick up a child current and accurate.

**EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

Evacuation procedures for fire and severe weather are practiced monthly. When severe weather is in the area, the director monitors weather reports and alerts staff to be prepared to quickly move children to safety. Emergency procedures are posted in each classroom. The staff knows and periodically reviews procedures for other emergencies, such as an intruder or a shelter-in-place alert.

**ABUSE REPORTING**

Our teachers are required by state law to report suspected child abuse/maltreatment. This includes non-accidental injuries, such as welts, bruises, cuts, burns, scratches, and broken bones. Suspected sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect are also reported. Child neglect is defined as abandonment, lack of food, utilities, shelter, or lack of supervision.

Teachers are trained to recognize indicators of possible abuse. If they fail to report suspected abuse/maltreatment, teachers can be charged with a misdemeanor. Reports are confidential and are considered allegations until an investigation is completed. The phone number for the Child Abuse hotline is posted on the parent information bulletin board.

**INTERVIEWS BY DHS OR OTHER AGENCIES**

Any staff member or children in attendance may be interviewed by Child Care Licensing, by the Division of Child and Family Services, and/or by law enforcement officers for the purpose of investigations or to determine compliance with licensing requirements. Child interviews do not require parental notice or consent.

# KEEPING EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION CURRENT

It is important that parents keep the office appraised of changes in contact numbers-home, work, and cell, as well as, changes of address or email addresses. We will also need updated emergency contact numbers, changes in authorized pick-up persons, or pertinent medical information. Please give these changes to the office in writing or by email.

Because of our need to contact you immediately concerning the well-being of your child it is essential all information be kept current.

# EARLY DROP OFF

The normal school day begins at 9:00 a.m. Parents who drop off their child earlier than 9:00 a.m. will be charged $25.00 for the early care drop in fee per day per child.

If you need care prior to 9:00 a.m. on a continual basis, please contact the director to enroll in early extended care.

You can use the early extended care on a drop-in basis; however, you will need to notify the director at least 24 hours in advance to ensure there is enough space for your child. You will be charged the $25.00 drop in rate each time and it will be added to your current month’s bill.

# LATE PICK UP POLICY

Unless your child is signed up for afternoon extended care, we expect children to be picked up promptly at 3:00 p.m. If children are not picked up from their classroom by 3:05 p.m., they will be transitioned to the extended care program and a $25.00 per day per child fee will be added to your current month’s bill. If you need care after 3:00 p.m. on a continual basis, please contact the director to enroll in afternoon extended care.

You can use the afternoon extended care on a drop-in basis; however, you will need to notify the director at least 24 hours in advance to ensure there is enough space for your child. You will be charged the $25.00 drop in rate each time.

# CONFIDENTIALITY

All information regarding children and families of Sylvan Hills United Methodist Church Early Learning Center is regarded as confidential and the property of the center and family involved. Our policy is to share information about the child with both parents unless there is a legal document limiting contact with one individual. A legal document showing the restriction must be provided. All staff and volunteers sign a confidentiality agreement before working in the classrooms.

**PHOTOGRAPHS AND VIDEOS**

Teachers may use digital cameras and digital video to record children’s activities. Documentation of children’s activities is used for families to see what their children are doing in the center, and also to help children recall what they have been doing. You will see photographs of the children in action throughout the center. Videos may be used occasionally during meetings or special events. Photographs and videos may also be taken of your child and shared with you through the BrightWheels app.

During the enrollment process, parents will sign a release for their children to be included in the photographs and video.

# PARENTAL WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURE

Two week’s written notice is required for enrollment withdrawal. Not bringing your child to the center does not constitute a written notice. Parents who do not provide at least a two week written notice will still be financially responsible for the two weeks.

# SUNSCREEN POLICY

With signed parental authorization, teachers can apply sunscreen on your child when needed. You must provide the sunscreen and it can stay in their classroom as long as it is out of the reach of children.

# 2018-2019 Calendar

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| August 13September 3rdNovember 20th-21st | Start of Fall SemesterClosed~Labor DayClosed~Thanksgiving Holiday |
| December24th-January 4th | Closed~Christmas Break |
| February | Dental Health Month |
| February 14th | Valentine’s Day Classroom Parties |
| March 14th | St. Patrick’s Day Celebration |
| March 18th – 22nd | ELC Closed- Spring Break |
|  April 18th April 18th | Easter Egg HuntEaster Classroom Parties |
| May 5th-11th | Teacher Appreciation Week |
| May 23rdMay 20th | Spring Term EndsYear End/Graduation Program |
| May 27th-31st | ELC Closed ~ Memorial Day/Summer Prep |
| June 3rd | Summer Term Begins |
| July 3rd-4thAugust 5th-9th  | ELC Closed~4th of JulyELC Closed~Fall Prep |