



PARENT HANDBOOK

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BENEFITS OF AN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

An Early Childhood Program provides an opportunity for children to play, work, and learn together. It provides the freedom to explore, develop, and express themselves.

Each child is able to:

- Participate in group activities involving socialization processes with their peers and with other adults.
- Develop a feeling of independence and separation from parents.
- Use materials and equipment not readily available at home (especially those designed for gross motor and muscular coordination skills).

A child needs to feel good about himself and his activities and to experience many “successes” as reinforcement of their self-worth. At an Early Childhood Program the child is encouraged to further develop physical skills and gain greater control of their environment. They experience emotional satisfaction by developing more self-discipline and good habits. A child feels secure when they know and trusts the limits. By observation and experimentation, the child soon learns what actions and behaviors are acceptable at the Center, even if they differ from those at home.

MULTICULTURAL PRINCIPLES

- Every individual is rooted in a culture.
- The cultural groups represented in the communities and families at Congregational Child Development Center are the primary source for culturally relevant programming.
- Culturally relevant and diverse programming requires learning accurate information about the culture of different groups and discarding stereotypes.
- Addressing cultural relevance in making curriculum choices is a necessary, developmentally appropriate practice.
- Every individual has the right to maintain his or her own identity while acquiring the skills required to function in our diverse society.
- Effective programs for children with limited English speaking abilities require continued development of the primary language while the acquisition of English is facilitated.
- Culturally relevant programming requires staff who reflect the community and families served.
- Multicultural programming for children enables children to develop an awareness of, respect for, and appreciation of individual cultural differences. It is beneficial to all children.
- Culturally relevant and diverse programming examines and challenges institutional and personal biases.
- Culturally relevant and diverse programming and practices are incorporated in all components and service.

OUR TEAM

Qualified teachers and staff, approved by the authorized sponsoring group and working in cooperation with the Director, are responsible for administering the program. Congregational Child Development Center is sponsored by the Education Team of the First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ.

All preschool and daycare staff meet or exceed the qualifications required by the State of Michigan Department of Human Services, Bureau of Family Services.

Appointments may be scheduled with your child's teacher to discuss your child's progress. If you have questions about your child, the program, or the Center at any time, please feel free to speak with the Director or your child's teachers. Open communication helps us best support your child.

BACKGROUND

The Center has operated at the First Congregational Church, 327 N. Washington Street, Owosso, MI, since 1950, and is licensed by the State of Michigan for health, safety, and staff qualifications. Congregational Child Development Center has a 4-Star Rating through the Great Start to Quality Program.

CONGREGATIONAL CHILD DEVELOPMENT'S MISSION, PURPOSE AND PHILOSOPHY

Our Mission:

Our mission is to support the growth and development of each child socially, emotionally, physically, and academically through a variety of developmentally appropriate learning experiences. We seek to support families by offering opportunities for parents to better understand children and their needs through planned parent programs and through meaningful relationships with teachers and other families who share a common concern for the well-being of young children. We are committed to providing quality early childhood education and to supporting the healthy development of children as future members of our community.

Our Purpose & Philosophy:

Congregational Child Development Center is an early childhood education program sponsored by the First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ. Within this Christian environment, we encourage each child's growth by supporting their abilities at each stage of development and nurturing their God-given interests and talents.

We believe every child is a Child of God and is deserving of loving care, respect, and genuine concern for their overall well-being.

Our program offers developmentally appropriate activities that allow children to explore, practice, and connect new skills and concepts. We view play as the child's work and recognize it as a vital part of learning and healthy development.

Classrooms are intentionally designed to provide a variety of materials, learning areas, and opportunities for all types of play. We believe children thrive in an environment that is safe, secure, supportive, and appropriately challenging.

We recognize the importance of positive encouragement and responsive interactions. Children learn best when they receive affirmation, patience, and consistent support as they attempt new tasks.

Because children grow rapidly during the early years, we also emphasize the importance of balanced nutrition, regular physical activity, gross motor development, and adequate rest as part of a well-rounded program.

FEEDBACK POLICY

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear and respectful process for obtaining feedback from children attending Congregational Child Development Center. This feedback helps improve the quality of care, activities, and the overall learning environment, while promoting a positive and supportive atmosphere for all children.

Age-Appropriate Feedback Collection:

Given the young age of our students, direct verbal or written feedback may not always be practical. As such, feedback will be gathered in age-appropriate ways that reflect the developmental abilities of the children.

- **Toddlers (2.5-3 years)**

- *Feedback is gathered primarily through observational techniques, noting changes in behavior, emotional responses, and engagement with caregivers and activities.*
- *Staff will use non-verbal communication cues such as facial expressions, body language, and crying or laughing to understand the needs and preferences of toddlers.*

- **Preschoolers (3-5 years)**

- *Feedback will be collected informally through conversations during free play, structured activities, or group discussions, where children are encouraged to express their likes and dislikes.*
- *Use of visual aids (e.g., smiley faces, happy/sad faces, or pictures) to help children express how they feel about certain activities or experiences.*
- *Structured play activities that prompt responses such as "What was your favorite part of today?" or "Can you tell me what you liked best?"*

- **School-Age Children (6+ years)**

- *School-age children will be encouraged to participate in short surveys or feedback forms using simple language and visuals.*
- *Group discussions during circle time or after activities to allow children to voice their thoughts on specific programs, events, or playtime experiences.*
- *Feedback will also be gathered through one-on-one conversations with teachers or staff.*

LANGUAGE & HOME LIFE STATEMENT

Upon enrollment, families complete an *All About My Child* form that shares important information about their child, including home language, family dynamics, interests, fears, and any additional details they wish to provide. This information supports ongoing, two way communication between families and teachers and helps create an inclusive classroom environment.

On a child's first day, families are also invited to bring a family photo to display on the classroom family wall. This helps children feel connected, recognized, and at home in their learning space.

RESOURCES

Informational resources on child development, parenting, inclusion, and specific childhood concerns are available through the Center Director or Assistant Director. The Center can also provide referrals to local community organizations and early childhood specialists, including therapists and speech-language pathologists. Families needing resources or referrals should contact the Director or Assistant Director for assistance.

THINGS TO DO & KNOW BEFORE PRESCHOOL BEGINS OR BEFORE STARTING DAYCARE

- Complete all required forms and pay the annual registration fee.
- Have your child examined by a physician and submit the completed health form. Health forms are valid for one year and must be updated annually.
- Immunization records are required before enrollment.
- Ensure all forms are fully completed, including addresses and phone numbers. Michigan Child Care Licensing reviews these forms and requires no blanks. Some information is repeated for your child's safety and for emergency contact purposes.
- Label all personal items with your child's name (coats, mittens, boots, hats, water bottles, etc.).
- Dress your child in play clothes. Tennis shoes or other rubber-soled shoes are required for gym class.
- Outdoor play will take place when the "real feel" temperature is above 20°F. Please dress your child appropriately for outdoor weather.
- Children should not bring toys or trinkets from home, as they may be lost, broken, or cause conflict.
- Toy guns and toy weapons are never allowed.
- Cell phones and electronics are prohibited, except on designated days listed on the School-Age Summer calendar.
- Christmas and spring break schedules follow Owosso Public Schools (Young Preschool is off one week at Christmas; GSRP is off both weeks).
- All Congregational Child Development Center closings and cancellations will be announced via Brightwheel, email, and Facebook.
- Daycare will attempt to remain open during snow days and extended holiday breaks.
- Birthdays are celebrated simply. No guests or presents. Parents are welcome.
- A pre-approved birthday treat may be brought (see birthday treat policy).

- Parents will be notified in advance of walking field trips, including a permission slip and a notice posted on the door when children leave.
- Congregational Child Development Center has an Open Door Policy. Parents are always welcome to observe or participate in classrooms.
- Questions or concerns are encouraged. Please call the Congregational Child Development Center office at 989-725-9092 to schedule an appointment. Office hours are Monday–Friday, 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.
- Our website, www.ccdcrocks.com, contains answers to many frequently asked questions and is updated regularly.

OUR PROGRAMS

MSU Approach Curriculum:

The MSU Approach organizes learning around unifying themes such as bugs, dinosaurs, or castles. Each theme is explored in depth across subjects including reading, writing, math, science, and social studies. This thematic approach helps children understand concepts as a whole rather than as isolated facts, which supports stronger understanding and retention.

Thematic learning engages children by connecting lessons to real world experiences and prior knowledge while allowing teachers to support different learning styles. Research by Piaget, Vygotsky, and Bruner supports integrated, hands on learning as an effective way to engage the whole child.

Congregational Child Development Center uses the MSU Approach in its early childhood programs to support each child's social, emotional, and cognitive development.

The Child Care Program:

Congregational Child Development Center is licensed by the State of Michigan Department of Human Services, Bureau of Family Services. The program operates year round and serves children ages 30 months through 12 years.

Children participate in age appropriate play and learning experiences designed to support emotional, social, physical, aesthetic, and individual development. Daily programming includes a balance of active and quiet activities, along with both individual and group experiences.

Congregational Child Development Center provides breakfast, lunch, a mid morning snack, and a mid afternoon snack each day. The program also includes 30 minutes of motor development activities as part of the daily schedule.

- **Rest Time:** Napping accommodations are available for children who require rest. Families may provide one small blanket for nap time; all rest items must fit inside the child's locker. Children who do not nap will be offered quiet activities, such as small manipulative or reading.
- **Folders:** Each child has a folder used for sending home written communication. Folders are located in the Daycare, Toddler, and School-Age rooms, and outside the Preschool classrooms. Please check your child's folder daily. If you are unsure where your child's folder is located, ask their teacher.
- **Meals:** Breakfast is served from 7:30–8:30 a.m. Children arriving after this time should eat breakfast at home. Lunch and nutritious snacks are provided by Congregational Child Development Center; please refer to your classroom schedule for details. Lunch is served at 11:30 a.m. in the Toddler room and 12:00 p.m. in the Daycare/School-Age rooms. Milk is

available as needed. A physician-signed waiver is required for food allergies or disabilities. Forms are available in the office and on the Center website. Outside food and drinks, including fast food, are not permitted, with the exception of approved birthday treats. Candy and chewing gum are not allowed in the Center.

- **Breastfeeding:** Congregational Child Development Center supports and encourages breastfeeding and respects each family's decision to continue breastfeeding after returning to work or school. The Center provides a welcoming environment for breastfeeding, including a designated on-site space for mothers to nurse. A refrigerator is available for the storage of expressed breast milk.

The Preschool Programs:

The preschool term typically begins in September and ends on the last Thursday in May. The preschool is in session for approximately 35 weeks, excluding one week closed for Christmas break and one week closed for spring break. Class descriptions and schedules are outlined below:

- **3-Day Preschool Classroom:** This class is designed for three and four year old children. Children are introduced to the alphabet, shapes, numbers, and colors through developmentally appropriate activities. The classroom offers many hands on learning experiences in the areas of language, science, and math. The 3 Day Preschool class meets Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 8:45 AM to 12:00 PM or 1:00 PM to 4:15 PM.
- **Pre-K Preschool Classroom:** This class is designed for four and a half and five year old children. Children are introduced to pre kindergarten activities that build excitement for learning and support school readiness. The classroom provides hands on learning experiences in Language Arts, Fine Arts, Music and Art, Science, Math, and Social Studies. Activities are designed to prepare children for their next educational experience in kindergarten. This class meets Monday through Friday from 8:45 AM to 12:00 PM or 1:00 PM to 4:15 PM.
- **Pre-K For All (GSRP):**
The Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) is Michigan's free Pre K For All program for eligible four year olds by September 1. Our GSRP classroom provides a safe and supportive environment where children learn to get along with others, share, take turns, and build friendships. Math, early literacy, and thinking skills are taught daily through fun, hands on activities. GSRP supports kindergarten readiness and future academic success. This class meets Monday through Thursday from 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM.

The Toddler Room:

Learning for children beginning at 30 months is thoughtfully and intentionally supported in the areas of language arts, mathematical thinking, science, social studies, the arts, motor development, and social-emotional learning. Children develop skills that help them care for themselves and interact positively with others. Teachers guide children through exploration and discovery while fostering lifelong learning skills.

Toddler schedules require a minimum enrollment of 25 hours per week. Parents are responsible for providing disposable diapers, wipes, formula (if applicable), and any special foods. A restricted diet form must be completed by the child's physician. Diapers are checked and changed as needed throughout the day, and diapering is documented through the Brightwheel app.

School Age - Before/After School Care/Summer Program:

Youth Voice reflects our belief that school-age children should have the agency and tools to identify their needs and take part in decisions that affect them. Programs are most effective when guided by children's input. At Congregational Child Development Center, Youth Voice is supported by creating an environment where children feel comfortable speaking up, encouraging questions, involving children in weekly activity planning, and providing opportunities for children to lead activities.

The school-age classroom follows the MSU Thematic Approach. During the summer, weekly lesson plans are posted to ensure children participate in intentional, developmentally appropriate experiences in the areas of social-emotional development, physical development, academics, creative expression, culture, character development, and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics).

During the school year, Congregational Child Development Center participates in the Owosso Public Schools After School Care Busing Program. School-age children are transported between their elementary school and the Center. During the summer months, Congregational Child Development Center offers a full-day school-age program.

To maintain enrollment during the summer, children must be scheduled for a minimum of 10 hours per week. If a child is absent for more than two consecutive weeks, a \$20 weekly holding fee is required. Families may choose to pay the weekly holding fee or prepay the full amount for the remaining non-contracted weeks. In the event of an emergency or health-related leave, families should contact the Director to discuss alternative arrangements.

Motor Development Program:

The Motor Development Program at Congregational Child Development Center provides guided instruction and developmentally appropriate exposure to a wide range of movement skills. Instruction focuses on three primary areas:

- Locomotor movements (walking, bending, running, jumping, galloping, hopping, leaping, dodging, skipping, and climbing),
- Manipulative movements (rolling, bouncing, throwing, catching, volleying, striking, kicking, trapping, and punting), and
- Stability movements (stretching, turning, swinging, inverted supports, body rolling, starting and stopping, and balancing).
- Organized games, relays, rhythmic movement, and dance are used to strengthen coordination, control, and confidence at each child's developmental level.

Motor development is offered weekly, with each class lasting approximately 10–30 minutes. Children are encouraged to wear or bring tennis shoes for safety, as leather or plastic-soled shoes may be slippery. Jeans or sweatpants are recommended to allow freedom of movement. This well-equipped and well-staffed program supports physical development, confidence, and positive self-esteem while providing an engaging and active learning experience.

Music Program:

Children have the opportunity to explore and enjoy a variety of musical experiences through the Music Program, taught by a trained and qualified instructor. Activities include singing, listening to music, playing rhythm instruments, movement and dance, and musical storytelling. A Christmas concert is held at the end of November, and a spring concert is offered in April.

Weekly Chapel Time:

Led by Pastor Debbie Grazier, with music, prayer, and age-appropriate Bible stories.

Program Transition:

Starting in a new childcare or school setting involves an adjustment period. Each child adapts at their own pace and needs time to become familiar with new adults, peers, and classroom routines. Congregational Child Development Center supports children and families throughout these transitions.

- **Toddler Room Transition:**

When a child is ready to move out of the Toddler Room, parents are notified one month in advance. During the two weeks prior to the transition, the child gradually becomes familiar with the new classroom by visiting for short periods each day.

- **Preschool Transition:**

At the beginning of each school year, families are invited to a Meet and Greet. This allows children and parents to explore the classroom, meet teachers, and learn about daily routines.

- **Kindergarten Transition:**

During the summer before kindergarten, staff begin preparing children for the transition to elementary school. In mid-February, school principals are invited to visit and speak with the children about what to expect. Teachers also help children become familiar with the routines, expectations, and exciting opportunities ahead.

TOOTHBRUSHING

Congregational Child Development Center provides children with the opportunity to brush their teeth after a snack or meal. Toothbrushes and toothpaste are provided by the Center. Daily tooth brushing supports good oral hygiene and helps prevent dental and other health-related concerns.

DAYS THE CENTER IS CLOSED

Congregational Child Development Center will be closed the following days:

- Good Friday
- The last Friday in August for teacher in service day (subject to change depending on 1st day of school)
- Memorial Day
- 4th of July
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving/Day After Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve/Christmas Day
- New Years Day

The Center may be closed depending on the number of children contracted for that week on the following days:

- Week of the Owosso schools' spring break
- Day before Christmas Eve through the day after New Year's Day
- Day before or after the 4th of July
- Unexpected severe weather days

The Preschool Program will also have one week off for Christmas vacation and one week off for spring break. These days are the same as Owosso Public Schools.

CLOTHING

Please do not dress your child in their best clothes for preschool or child care, as this can limit their ability to play freely. Play clothes such as jeans, sweats, leggings, or shorts are recommended, since children spend a lot of time on the floor and engage in messy activities. Footwear: Tennis shoes or other rubber-soled shoes are required for gym class and playground use.

- **Extra clothing:** Required for children who are not fully potty trained and strongly recommended for all children.
- **Labeling:** All clothing and personal items (coats, sweaters, mittens, boots, hats, etc.) should be clearly labeled with your child's name.
- **Dressing independence:** Coats, mittens, boots, shoes, and hats should be easy for the child to put on and take off. Children are encouraged to dress themselves.
- **Safety restrictions:**
 - *Clothing with drawstrings at the hood or waist is not allowed.*
 - *Scarves are prohibited.*

FIELD TRIPS & BACKGROUND CHECKS

All adults, including parents, who accompany children on Congregational Child Development Center field trips must complete a background check. Please allow two weeks for clearance forms to be processed. Parents will be notified in advance of walking field trips through a note from the teacher, a notice posted on the classroom door, and a message on the Brightwheel app.

PRESCHOOL & CHILD CARE ENROLLMENT

Any child between the ages of 3 years and 5 years old may attend the preschool program and any child between the ages of 30 months through 12 years old may attend the structured child care program, regardless of race, color, or creed. Congregational Child Development Center serves Owosso and surrounding communities.

Children may enroll in preschool at any time during the year if there is an opening. 3-Day Preschool is limited to 18 children, Pre-K Preschool is limited to 12 children, GSRP is limited to 18 children with one teacher and one assistant teacher. This ratio, or better, will be maintained at all times. If all the preschool classes are full, we encourage you to enroll your child in our structured child care program or place your child's name on our waiting list. For information on enrolling in either program, contact the Director at 989-725-9092.

Children may also be enrolled at any time during the year in our structured daycare program if there is an opening. Our structured daycare program is developmental in nature. We have organized circle time between 8:45 AM - 9:00 AM each morning where children are greeted, conversation encouraged, the lesson for the day is presented, perhaps a story is read, a finger play or felt board story may be included, and the learning centers introduced.

WAIT LIST

If a class is full when an application is received, the child may be placed on the waiting list with a paid registration fee. The Director maintains the waiting list based on date of application and enrollment priorities. Placement on the waiting list does not guarantee enrollment. Enrollment eligibility is determined by class availability, application date, and priority criteria.

TUITION AND PAYMENTS

- **Daycare:** Tuition is based on an hourly rate. Detailed policies and procedures are available on the childcare contract.
- **Preschool:** Monthly tuition is due on the first school day of each month, in advance. Families may also:
 - *Pay half the tuition on the 1st and the remaining half on the 15th, or*
 - *Pay for the entire school year in September, or*
 - *Pay half the year in September and the remaining half in January.*

Tuition is non-refundable, as the preschool operates on the lowest possible rates to maintain high-quality education. Tuition funds are used solely for operations, staff salaries, supplies, equipment, utilities, and insurance.

Monthly preschool tuition is the same each month (September–May), even though two weeks are off for Christmas and spring breaks. These weeks are accounted for in the yearly tuition calculation. Tuition is still due in full regardless of unforeseen closures.

- On snow days, preschool students are not charged for daycare during scheduled preschool hours.
- GSRP students will be charged for daycare if they attend during snow days.

Payment Methods: Congregational Child Development Center does not use Brightwheel billing. Payments may be made via cash, check, money order, or credit card. Credit card payments can be made online at www.ccdcrocks.com/payments

Daycare Program Schedule Contract:

Parents must contract in advance for daily hours of care, in 15-minute increments, to ensure adequate staffing and compliance with licensing regulations.

- Contracts must be signed by Wednesday for the following week. This contract serves as your weekly bill, and payment is due the week before care.
- Children may attend beyond contracted hours if space is available. Parents must check availability before bringing their child.
- Congregational Child Development Center cannot guarantee care for contracts submitted after Wednesday.
- On snow days, parents must contact Congregational Child Development Center to verify attendance. Contracted hours will still be charged regardless of weather closures.

Daycare Payment:

Payment is required for the hours contracted, whether or not the child attends the full time. Your weekly payment is based on your contracted hours.

- **Vacations:** One week's notice is required. Payment is due before the vacation.
- **Illness:** Payment is due the day your child returns to daycare.

- **Extended Absence:** A \$20 weekly payment is required for children absent for more than two consecutive weeks. To hold your spot, families may pay \$20 per week or one payment for all non-contracted weeks.
- **Emergency or Health-Related Leave:** Please contact the Director to discuss alternative arrangements.
- **Due Date:** Child care fees are due in advance, by Friday, for the following week. Payments are based on the contracted hours of care. If a child attends beyond the contracted hours, payment for the additional time is due with the following week's fees.

Daycare Credit Coupons:

You will receive five **(5)** daycare-only credit coupons. Coupons will not be reissued if lost. Coupons may be used for absences including illness, snow days, or choosing not to attend. To use a coupon, you must notify the center before your child's normal arrival time by call or Brightwheel and submit the coupon within one week of the missed date. If notice is not given or the coupon is not submitted, your account will be charged for that day. Coupons may not be used during scheduled holiday breaks (for example, Christmas break, Memorial, July 4th, etc) if your child is scheduled to attend and you choose not to bring them.

Daycare Late Pick-Up Charge:

A charge will be assessed to you if your child is picked up after the Center closes. This rate of \$10.00 will be billed in 15 minute increments (5:30-5:45, 6:15-6:30, 6:30-6:45, etc). This policy will be applied in all late pick-up cases.

Preschool Late Pick-Up Charge:

A daycare charge will be assessed to you if your child is picked up more than 10 minutes late. Your child will be taken upstairs to our child care program until a parent or a designated person arrives. This policy will be applied in all late pick-up cases. Payment for late pick-up will be expected at that time or your next payment.

Late Fees and Actions:

- **Late Payments:**
 - \$20 per week if payment is not made on time.
 - If payment is not received by the Friday after it is due, your child cannot attend until the account is paid in full.
- **Late Contracts:**
 - \$10 if contracts are turned in after Thursday at 12:00 PM before the week of care.
 - \$15 if contracts are turned in on Friday.
 - \$20 if contracts are turned in on Monday, the week of care.
- **Schedule Changes:**
 - \$10 fee for any changes requested after Thursday.

Returned Check Fee:

In the event a check payment is returned by the bank, an invoice will be issued for the original check amount plus a \$25 returned check fee per check. Payment of the invoiced amount is due within 10 days of the invoice date. The original check will not be re-submitted.

Staff as After Hours Child Care Providers:

Congregational Child Development Center does not encourage staff to provide child care outside of Center business hours. If a family arranges care with a staff member outside of Center hours, that care is not affiliated with or the responsibility of Congregational Child Development Center.

Outstanding Balance Collection Policy:

If a payment becomes overdue, Congregational Child Development Center will send payment reminders by phone, email, Brightwheel, and or letter. These reminders will include the amount due and the payment deadline.

All families are required to maintain a valid credit card on file through our payment system, Vanco. By providing a credit card, you authorize Congregational Child Development Center to charge the card on file for any unpaid balance for services already provided after three unsuccessful attempts to collect payment through other methods. Reasonable efforts will be made to contact you during this time.

If payment remains unpaid, Congregational Child Development Center may charge the card on file for the outstanding balance. You will receive notice prior to any charge. This notice serves as a final opportunity to resolve the balance.

If you believe a charge is incorrect, you must notify Congregational Child Development Center within three business days of the charge. We will review the concern and issue a refund if an error is confirmed.

You are responsible for keeping your credit card information in Vanco accurate and up to date. Congregational Child Development Center reserves the right to update this policy as needed. Any changes will be communicated in writing.

By enrolling your child at Congregational Child Development Center, you agree to this payment policy.

Questions may be directed to Lisa Mowl at 989.725.9092.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

Enrollment in preschool is for the full school year. If it becomes necessary to withdraw your child, two (2) weeks' written notice is required. Failure to provide written notice will result in billing for two weeks of tuition.

For withdrawal from the daycare program, two (2) weeks' written notice is also required. If notice is not provided, you will be billed for two weeks of childcare tuition. This notice period is required to allow the Center time to adjust staffing and financial arrangements.

YEARLY REGISTRATION FEE

An annual registration fee per child is required upon enrollment in the child care or preschool program (no registration fee for GSRP). The fee must be paid before attendance and is required each year your child continues at Congregational Child Development Center. Registration fees cover September through September and are non-refundable for any reason.

A school-age summer registration fee, due in May, includes field trip costs and a t-shirt. A preschool summer registration fee is also required.

Enrollment spots for the following year will not be held without a paid registration fee. All spots are filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

KEY CARDS

Key cards are required for anyone who regularly drops off or picks up a child. This policy is in place for the safety and security of children and staff. Key cards are available for purchase in the office for a \$10.00 cash-only deposit. The deposit will be refunded if the key card is returned undamaged within two weeks of leaving Congregational Child Development Center. Lost or damaged key cards must be replaced at the family's expense. Many families choose to use a badge protector or keep the card in a wallet or purse to prevent loss or damage. A non-refundable \$10.00 fee will be automatically added to your account if a key card is not purchased within two weeks of enrollment.

SICK POLICY

Please do not bring your child to the Center when they are sick. If your child will be absent on a scheduled day, notify the Center by calling 989-725-9092 or messaging through Brightwheel. All illnesses must be reported to the Health Department.

A child is considered sick if they have any of the following:

- Fever over 100.4°F
- New or uncontrolled cough (for children with asthma or allergies, a noticeable change from their normal cough) or green nasal discharge
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Unidentified rash

A child may return to group care only when all applicable criteria below are met:

- Temperature has been below 100.4°F for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication
- Has been on antibiotics for at least 24 hours, if prescribed
- At least 24 hours have passed since the last episode of vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Symptoms such as thick nasal discharge, coughing, or eye discharge have improved or are being treated with medication
- Any rash has resolved or is confirmed non-contagious with a physician's written statement

If a child becomes ill while at the Center, a parent will be contacted for pickup. The Director or a designated representative will determine whether the child may remain at the Center. Children who appear contagious may be isolated until pickup. Generally, a child will be sent home if they appear contagious or require continuous one-on-one care due to discomfort.

Families are expected to have alternative care arrangements for sick days. Children must be picked up as soon as possible, and no later than one hour after notification.

If your child is diagnosed with an infectious illness, please notify the Center so other families can be alerted to monitor for symptoms. Adherence to this policy is necessary to limit the spread of illness within the Center.

Administration of Medication:

Any medication administered to a child requires a written medication authorization form completed by the parent or guardian. This includes all topical products such as ointments, creams, and lip balm.

All medications must be provided in their original containers. Non-prescription medications must remain in the original bottle or packaging. Prescription medications must be in the original container with the pharmacy label attached. All medication containers must clearly list the child's name, dosage, and administration directions.

Any medication that travels between home and the Center and is kept in a child's bag must be stored in a locked container provided by the parent.

Congregational Child Development Center policy requires that if a child is healthy enough to attend school, they are also healthy enough to participate in outdoor play. Due to required adult-to-child ratios, the Center cannot accommodate requests for individual children to remain indoors. This policy applies to staff as well.

HEAD LICE POLICY

Head lice can occur any time during the year. Congregational Child Development Center conducts regular head checks throughout the school year to help prevent the spread. Parents can assist by periodically checking their child's hair and notifying the Center immediately if lice are found. When a case is reported, all children in the affected classroom will be checked.

Children found with head lice will be sent home with treatment instructions. They may not return to school until properly treated and checked for nits. Children with nits will not be allowed to return until fully cleared.

Head lice are common and not harmful, and anyone can get them. They are not a sign of poor hygiene. Millions of children and adults in the U.S. get lice each year.

Congregational Child Development Center will keep families informed about lice and encourage preventive practices throughout the school year. Open communication and accurate information help control the spread. Please contact the Center with any questions or for assistance.

Center Policy Concerning Readmission:

Children may return to the Center after initial treatment only when:

- A staff member, with a parent or guardian present, confirms the child's hair and scalp are free of lice and nits.
- A signed statement from the parent confirms that an approved treatment was applied correctly.
- Children will be re-examined by Congregational Child Development Center staff 8–10 days after initial treatment, with a parent or guardian present, to ensure lice and nits are gone.

- All treatments must be used exactly according to the instructions. Directions may vary by product, including application method and duration. Questions about treatment should be referred to a doctor or nurse, as overuse can be harmful.

SERIOUS INCIDENT, ACCIDENT, OR INJURY

Parents will be notified the same day if an incident occurs involving their child. In the case of a serious accident or injury, the following procedures will be followed:

- Parents will be contacted as soon as possible regarding the nature of the accident or injury.
- If parents cannot be reached, the emergency contact listed on the child's Emergency Card will be called.
- If the emergency contact cannot be reached, the designated physician will be contacted.

Depending on the seriousness of the situation:

- The child will be taken to the office and supervised until a parent or authorized person can assume responsibility.
- If the child cannot be moved safely, an ambulance will be called to transport the child to the designated hospital.
- If transported to the hospital, the child's physical form and Emergency Card will accompany them.
- Transportation costs are the responsibility of the parents.

CHILD ABUSE POLICY

Under Michigan law, caregivers are mandated reporters of suspected child abuse or neglect. Staff at Congregational Child Development Center observe children's well-being daily. If abuse or neglect is suspected, the Director will report the suspicion to the Department of Human Services. Families will not be notified prior to this report, as required by law.

TOILETING

Staff will generally assist with the toileting routine you choose for your child; please discuss the plan with your child's teacher to ensure comfort and consistency. All children enrolled in the preschool program are required to be potty trained (GSRP is excluded).

- Children must wash hands with liquid soap and running water after using the toilet.
- Staff will wash hands with liquid soap and running water after assisting children with toileting.
- Individual paper towels are used for hand drying.
- Clothing soiled with feces, urine, vomit, or blood will be handled with gloves, placed in a sealed plastic bag, and stored separately from other items.

BITING POLICY

Biting is a common and challenging behavior in group child care. It can occur suddenly, is difficult to prevent, and often triggers strong emotional reactions in the child who bites, the victim, parents, and caregivers. Children may bite for many reasons, including teething, frustration, boredom, limited language skills, stress, changes in the environment, feeling threatened, or seeking a sense of power.

While biting can be persistent, awareness and a consistent plan of action can help manage it. Congregational Child Development Center staff, in consultation with child care experts and reference materials, have developed a structured plan to follow whenever biting occurs in any classroom.

When a Child is Bitten:

- **For the Biter**

- Immediately remove the child without showing strong emotion. Use simple statements like: "Biting is not okay; it hurts." Avoid attention that reinforces the behavior.
- Focus caring attention on the victim, not the biter.
- Speak at the child's level: "I see you want that truck, but you cannot hurt him. We don't put our teeth on people." or "That hurts Johnny when you bite; he is sad."
- Redirect the child to another activity or play.
- Document the incident in an accident report and notify the biter's parents.

- **For the Victim:**

- Separate the child from the biter.
- Comfort the child and administer first aid as needed.
- Document the incident in an accident report and notify the victim's parents in writing.

- **If Biting Continues:**

- Room staff meet with the Director for advice, support, and strategy planning.
- Chart every occurrence, including attempted bites, with details on location, time, participants, behavior, staff present, and circumstances.
- Notify all parents that a biting problem exists and explain the procedures in place.

- **"Shadowing" Children Who Bite:**

- Supervise closely to prevent biting situations.
- Teach and reinforce non-biting responses.
- Adjust activities to meet the child's individual needs.

- **"Shadowing" Children Who Are Frequently Bitten:**

- Supervise to prevent biting situations.
- Teach responses to protect themselves, e.g., "No" or "Don't hurt me."

- **Parent Collaboration:**

- Work closely with parents of both the biter and the victim to keep them informed and develop strategies for behavior change.
- Hold a conference with the biter's parents to create a written action plan with scheduled follow-ups.

- **Further Steps if Biting Persists:**

- Consider early transition to a different environment if developmentally appropriate.
- Prepare parents for the possibility of temporary removal if biting persists, with contingency planning.
- If a child bites more than three times in one day, parents will be called to pick up the child. The child may return the following class day.
- In extreme cases, termination of enrollment may occur during the biting stage. Parents will receive a written warning before this action is taken.

EMERGENCY & SEVERE WEATHER POLICY

- **Tornado Policy:**

- *Congregational Child Development Center follows the Owosso Public Schools' tornado procedures.*
- *Tornado Watch: Teachers take precautionary measures; children remain at the Center until parents arrive or an all-clear is issued.*
- *Tornado Warning: Children are sheltered at the Center until an all-clear is issued. Parents should not pick up children during a warning.*
- *Tornado Drills: Conducted in spring so children know where to go and what to do.*

- **Fire Drills (Preschool & Daycare):**

- *Fire drills are conducted quarterly.*
- *Children will go outside without coats; drills are scheduled when weather permits.*
- *During winter, children will exit through outside exits only.*

- **Snow Days & Delays (e.g., snow, ice, cold weather, etc):**

- *Congregational Child Development Center follows the Owosso Public Schools calendar for snow days.*
- *Congregational Child Development Center remains open on school snow days unless there is no power, water, or heat.*
- *If Owosso declares a snow day, there is no preschool, but daycare may be available—parents must message Brightwheel to confirm spots.*
- *If Owosso has a delay, preschool starts at the normal time.*

- **State of Emergency:**

- *Congregational Child Development Center will be closed during any weather-related state of emergency declared by federal, state, county, or city officials.*
- *Parents are still responsible for payment for contracted days during such closures, as staff are paid for these days.*

CENTER DISCIPLINE

Congregational Child Development Center staff use positive discipline methods that encourage self-control, self-direction, self-esteem, and cooperation.

The following are strictly prohibited as forms of punishment:

- Hitting, shaking, biting, pinching, or any corporal punishment
- Restricting movement by binding or tying
- Inflicting mental or emotional punishment
- Depriving a child of snacks, necessary toilet use, outdoor time, or rest
- Confining a child in an enclosed area (e.g., closet, locked room, box, or similar cubicle)

Non-severe discipline or restraint may be used only when necessary to prevent a child from harming themselves or others, excluding the prohibited methods listed above.

EXCLUSION POLICY

Congregational Child Development Center aims to limit or avoid suspension, expulsion, and other exclusionary measures.

- For children with persistent or serious challenging behaviors, individualized plans are created in collaboration with families and teachers to support inclusion and success.
- The Center strives to ensure the program is the best fit for each child, allowing full and comfortable participation.
- Exclusionary measures may be considered only if a child's safety requires additional staffing beyond standard ratios and all other interventions have been exhausted.
- If exclusion is necessary, Congregational Child Development Center will assist families in accessing services and finding an alternative placement, ensuring the child's needs continue to be supported.

BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION & DIS-ENROLLMENT POLICY

Congregational Child Development Center works closely with parents to ensure a cooperative approach when children experience behavior difficulties. Our goal is to protect the well-being of all children. Parents may be contacted immediately if a child exhibits uncontrollable behavior that staff cannot manage. The parent may be asked to take the child home.

Steps for Addressing Chronic Disruptive Behavior:

- **Initial Consultation**
 - *The Director may request a conference with the parent/guardian.*
 - *The behavior will be documented, and intervention strategies will be discussed.*
 - *A plan will be developed collaboratively between the Director, teacher, and parent to address the behavior.*
- **Second Consultation**
 - *If the initial plan does not resolve the behavior, a follow-up meeting will be held with the Director and teaching staff.*
 - *The problem will be reviewed, and a revised approach will be implemented.*
- **Dis-Enrollment**
 - *If all interventions fail and no progress is made, the child may be dis-enrolled at the Director's discretion.*
- **Prohibited Discipline Methods**
 - *Corporal punishment (spanking, slapping, pinching, etc.) is not allowed.*
 - *Humiliation, ridicule, threats, or coercion are also prohibited.*

ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL POLICY

Preschool:

- Morning drop-off: Young preschool children should be dropped off outside at 8:45 AM.
- Afternoon drop-off: Children should be dropped off outside at 1:00 PM.
- Children will have 30 minutes of outdoor time before class begins. Teachers arrive at least 15 minutes early to prepare and cannot supervise children before class.
- If you arrive early, please wait in your car. Children may not enter the playground unsupervised.

- Dismissal: Preschool ends promptly at 12:00 PM or 4:15 PM. Please sign in/out on Brightwheel and check your child's folder.
- When the weather is cold, preschool will meet inside the classroom.
- GSRP children should be dropped off directly at their classroom.

Daycare:

- Opens at 6:15 AM. Staff arrive at 6:00 AM to prepare and cannot supervise children before 6:15 AM.
- Parents should walk their child into the classroom and check in via Brightwheel.
- Closes promptly at 6:15 PM, or when the last child leaves.

VAPING AND SMOKING POLICY

In accordance with the State of Michigan Department of Human Services, smoking and vaping are prohibited at all times on the premises of Congregational Child Development Center, including the building and parking lot.

This policy applies to all staff, families, visitors, and volunteers. Failure to comply may result in being asked to leave the premises and may impact continued participation in center activities.

PARENT CONFERENCES & CHILD ASSESSMENTS

Parent/Teacher Conferences: Offered twice a year; additional conferences may be scheduled by appointment.

Child Assessments: Each child will be screened using COR Advantage and Ages & Stages Questionnaires.

Parent Participation: Parents are encouraged to visit classrooms and participate in activities with teacher and Director approval.

Communication with Schools: Congregational Child Development Center has permission to communicate with Shiawassee County public schools regarding your child's development and assessments during their time at Congregational Child Development Center programs.

Screeners - Child Assessments and Progress Reports:

- **Ages & Stages Questionnaires (ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE)**
 - All children are screened within 45 days of enrollment and annually thereafter.
 - Screenings provide information on children's abilities and strengths and guide classroom planning and individualization.
 - Children aged 3-5 may be referred to their local school district if needed.
- **COR Advantage Assessments:**
 - Completed twice per school year: November and February.
 - Used to plan appropriately challenging curriculum and respond to each child's strengths and needs.
- **Progress Reports (Glows and Grows):**
 - Parents/Guardians receive two written reports per year, in November and February.
 - Reports are discussed during parent-teacher conferences and highlight areas of achievement and areas needing additional support.

PARENT ADVISORY MEETINGS

Involving families in our program is a top priority. This helps children, parents, and our staff make the strong connection between home and Center. We are an extension of the family, developing a partnership where sharing support, ideas, and genuine love for children is of the utmost importance. We encourage parents to visit and participate in school activities. Parent Advisory Committee meets bi-monthly.

NON DISCRIMINATION POLICY

In providing services to children and their families, Congregational Child Development Center does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, gender, disability, cultural heritage, political beliefs, marital status, national origin or sexual orientation.

VIDEO SURVEILLANCE POLICY

By enrolling your child at Congregational Child Development Center, you understand and agree that the center uses a 24 hour video surveillance system to support the safety and security of children, staff, parents, visitors, and the facility. Cameras are located in classrooms, the gym, and outdoor play areas.

Video monitoring is used to promote safety, support appropriate behavior, and assist the Director in supervising staff and facility operations. Video footage is for internal use only and may be accessed by the Director and Assistant Director, either on site or remotely.

Video recordings are not continuously monitored and are not intended to replace direct supervision of children.

NUT FREE POLICY

Congregational Child Development Center is a nut free facility due to children with life threatening allergies. No peanuts, tree nuts, or nut containing foods or products may be brought into the building.

While the child care program follows a strict nut free policy during operating hours, other groups may use the building for meetings or events outside of program hours. Items brought in by these groups may not be nut free and are outside of the center's control.

Families are asked to support this policy by carefully checking food labels and avoiding items that may contain nuts or nut traces. If you have questions about acceptable foods, please contact the center before bringing items in.

By enrolling your child at Congregational Child Development Center, you agree to follow this policy and help maintain a safe environment for all children.