



WELCOME!!

Welcome to the Children's Journey! We are grateful that you have entrusted your child to our care. We look forward to being a part of your child's growth, development and early education. Thank you for allowing us to be a part of this wonderful process! The Children's Journey is a ministry of the Journey Fellowship. We are a non-profit, non-discriminatory, service organization.

Mission Statement

It is our desire to love and care for the families and the children entrusted to us, as Jesus does, with all our passion, soul, mind and strength.

Objectives

1. To provide a safe, nurturing, home-like and developmentally appropriate environment that promotes spiritual, social, emotional, physical, language and cognitive development.
2. Our teachers, appreciate individual differences, will attempt to create an environment in which each child is free to play, learn, experiment, and grow at his or her own rate. It is not the intent of the Children's Journey to impose doctrinal beliefs, but rather to present a concept of God as a loving Creator at the child's level of understanding.
3. To support and encourage families as they endeavor to nurture and raise their children.

<u>Children's Journey Programs</u>	Staff :Child Ratio	Maximum Class Size
Infant Room	1:4	6
Young Toddler Room	1:5	10
Older Toddler Room	1:6	10
Preschool Room	1:10	14

Hours of Operation

7:00 AM – 6:00 PM, Sunday through Friday.

To ensure quality in our early educational programs, and to decrease interruptions during classroom routines, children must arrive no later than 9:00 AM.

Enrollment Policy and Procedures

Children are granted enrollment on a non-discriminatory basis without regard to sex, race, color, religion, creed, political belief or national origin. Enrollment is open to all children, provided the center can meet the needs of the child. We are not staffed to provide one-on-one care.

All new enrollees will be subject to a three-week probationary period. A child should be enrolled no less than 1 day prior to his or her first day of attendance. As part of the enrollment process, the following forms **must** be completed and submitted to the office prior to the first day of attendance (unless otherwise noted below):

1. Registration Form
2. Emergency Contact Form
3. Agreement Form
4. Parent Handbook (This handbook must be signed upon receipt.)
5. Child Health Assessment Form (this is required no later than 30 days after enrollment date.)
6. Sun block Permission Form (May-August)
7. Permission to Photograph Form
8. IEP/ISFP Form
9. Meal Benefit Application

As part of the enrollment process, the following payments must be submitted to the office prior to the first day of attendance:

1. Non-refundable Registration Fee
2. Tuition on Deposit (the deposit is *held* until the child is completely withdrawn from the Children's Journey—it will not be considered payment for the first or any other week of attendance but will be refunded after withdrawal paperwork is completed)

Children With Special Needs

Children with special needs will be accepted at the Children's Journey, provided we have acceptable accommodations. We require that the child's parents provide us with necessary information about his/her needs, physician, and specialists. The parent should complete an IEP/IFSP sign-off sheet stating that we have been given a copy of the report. It is important that we always have updated information.

The Children's Journey staff will work with the parents and specialists to facilitate the adjustment of the needs of the child.

Payment Policy

***The Children's Journey is a non-profit service organization. Therefore, your commitment to your financial agreement is vital to our daily operations. In order to maintain a stable and consistent program, we must offer our staff the security of knowing that their employment here is secure and stable. Your tuition is the only financial resource we have to compensate our staff. Therefore, if tuition is paid only when your child is in attendance, it wouldn't allow us to provide our staff with a financial guarantee.**

*Weekly rates have been calculated with consideration given to holidays, in-service days, and emergency closings.

*Billing is completed every Monday. Invoices (bills) **will not** be automatically given for every account. Only accounts with credits or balances from a previous week will receive an invoice when billing is completed.

*Invoices (bills) will be placed in your child's mailbox.

*Timely tuition payments are required and necessary. Payment is due each week on Monday for *that* week of care/education; however, no late fees will be assessed if payment is made by Wednesday noon of each week. In the event of an absence or holiday on a Wednesday, accounts should be pre-paid to avoid late fees.

*If payment for the prior week was not made, a late fee will be applied to the account. If an account becomes delinquent by two weeks, a double late fee will be applied. Arrangements for full-payment or a payment plan must be made with the Financial Secretary if a family falls two weeks behind in their tuition or the family will be asked not to attend the Children's Journey until arrangements are made. Your spot will not be held and may be taken. If a family is facing a financial hardship, they need to speak to the Administrator to see what can be done *before* this happens.

Payment Procedures

**Payment by check or money order is preferred.
Payment procedures are as follows:**

If paying by check or money order:

1. Please make the check/money order payable to the Children's Journey.
2. Write your child's name on the "memo" line.
3. Place check/money order into payment box outside the center office.
4. Verify payment with a signature on the signature verification form (if a weekly and/or monthly receipt is required, you must notify the office Financial Secretary).

If paying by cash:

1. Submit the cash payment to office personnel, preferably the Financial Secretary or Administrator.
2. Money must be counted twice, once by parent and again by office staff.
3. A receipt will be written out verifying cash payment and a copy will be given to parent at the time of payment.

Attendance and Absence Policy

TUITION IS DUE EACH WEEK, REGARDLESS OF YOUR CHILD'S ATTENDANCE. THIS POLICY APPLIES TO ALL AGES.

To ensure quality in our early educational programs and to decrease interruptions during classroom routines, children must arrive no later than 9:00 AM for care.

If your child will be late or absent for the day, parents/guardians must call to inform the center. Our classroom teachers are required to keep an illness and injury log. They will need to include your child's symptoms in this log.

If your child will be arriving late, we must know as early as possible because our staffing is based directly on attendance and the staff to child ratios mandated by the DPW.

Withdrawal Policy

If withdrawal from the Children's Journey is necessary, a *Withdrawal* form and an *Exit Interview Survey* must be obtained from the office, completed, and returned at least two-weeks before your last day in attendance. This advanced submission of withdrawal forms **is required** for full refund of tuition deposit. If less than two-weeks notice is given to the office, the tuition deposit will not be refunded.

Arrival/Departure Policy

Arrival:

All children must be brought directly to the classroom and signed in by the parent/guardian or a designated adult. Contact must be made with the teacher and the parent/guardian to communicate that the child is now under the supervision of the Center.

Please relay any important information to the teacher relating to the child's physical/emotional state, change in pick up procedures or any other pertinent information that may assist the teacher in the daily care of your child.

Departure:

It is important to pick up your child by 6:00 PM.

A fee will be assessed for pick-ups after 6:00 PM. Please notify the office if you must pick up late due to an unexpected circumstance.

If parents would like their child to be picked up by ANYONE other than himself or herself, his/her classroom teacher must be notified in writing. Forms for this will be available in the office. The authorized person picking up the child must be listed on the child's emergency contact form. All persons other than the parents will be asked to sign-in at the office and show a photo ID at the time of pick-up. If an unexpected circumstance arises, permission may be granted over the phone by the office to release a child to an authorized person (already listed on emergency form).

Please inform anyone who is picking up your child that if they are not already known by the staff, they will need to show a picture ID in the office and/or the classroom.

The Children's Journey must receive written permission signed by the parent whose signature is on the emergency contact form to release a child to a person not listed on the contact form, NO exceptions. For this reason, it is a good idea to list names of anyone who may pick up your child on the emergency contact form.

If an unexpected circumstance arises and the parent or designated pick-up individuals are not available, a parent (whose signature is on the emergency form), may FAX a written and signed request for pick-up to us. This FAX must include the name of the person picking up, your child's name, the date and your signature. This note will only be valid for one day. You must come to the office to add more names directly to your child's emergency form.

Dismissal Policy

We reserve the right to terminate care at any time by giving 5 days notice to the parent/guardian and refunding any unused tuition that was paid in advance. Our agreement form does not constitute a contract but provides an **at will** agreement for child-care between the parent/guardian and the Children's Journey. However, if extreme, uncontrollable behavior occurs which poses an immediate safety concern, a parent may be called to pick up their child immediately.

The following are reasons for dismissal:

1. Delinquent tuition after two weeks
2. Failure to update immunization or physicals in accordance with state regulations
3. Prolonged absence without notification (greater than 1 week)
4. Disruptive behavior that is a detriment to the social or educational well-being of the children
5. Physical danger to self or other children (including biting)
6. Failure to abide by established policies
7. Incompatibility between the program of the center and the needs of the child. We are not staffed to provide one-on-one care of children.

A child who has been dismissed may be reinstated to the Children's Journey if the reason for dismissal is corrected and an opening is available.

Discipline Policy

Our staff will treat all children equally, and will **never** use physically or verbally abusive behavior to correct a discipline problem.

At the Children's Journey, we all share a common goal: to train up our children in the way they should go (Proverbs 22:6). We continuously rely on the Lord to show us what it means to "train up" a child so he/she will ultimately be obedient to God.

What do we know about God? We know that God loves children (Matthew 19:13). Our teachers not only love the children in their care, but also love to teach. Because we love your children, we consider safety one of our top goals.

We know our God is a God of order. This is why each room follows a curriculum, a daily schedule, and we feel it is important to teach the children to clean up classroom centers and help to keep the room neat.

We know our God is very creative. Just take a look around! Nature alone speaks of God's unique creativity. At the Children's Journey we emphasize art, music, exploring nature, and the use of high quality resources to develop each child's creativity and imagination.

We know our God is a God of discipline. Without his loving discipline, we would be lost! Our children need his loving discipline too. He uses a child's parents first and foremost for this (often challenging) job. As teachers, we partner with parents and therefore also play a role in accomplishing this job. One of the main tools we use in our classrooms (3's and up) is redirecting.

Teachers use Bible stories, puppets, role-playing, and other creative methods to help children learn about behavior that is pleasing to God.

All teachers will deal with each child individually and will inform the parents regarding behavior in the classroom. In the case of extreme behavior challenges, a plan will be developed and implemented both in the classroom and at home.

Health Policy

Every child enrolled at the Children's Journey must have a current and age appropriate physical on record at all times, the *Child Health Assessment* form. The Pennsylvania Department of Welfare requires that we follow the American Academy of Pediatrics' recommendation for up to date physical examinations. Failure to submit and update records could result in dismissal.

Medication Policy

Whenever possible, all medication should be given to your child before or after school. If this is not possible, please follow these guidelines:

1. All medication must be received in the school office in the original labeled container along with written instructions from the physician prescribing it. Instructions contained on a prescription label are acceptable. To protect our students, the instructions on the medication must coincide with your written instructions or we will not be able to administer it. Prescription medication will be administered only to the child whose name appears on the container. Medication will be administered by a staff person in the office, where all medications will remain. The office staff will be responsible for making sure the child receives the medication at the correct time.

2. A label (see example below) will need to be completed by the parent each time a medication must be administered. At the time of drop off, a label will be obtained from the medication basket on the counter as you enter the office. Medication should be placed in a zip lock bag (available in the office) along with the completed label and set in the basket in the office. **Do not remove label from its protective backing. The adhesive backing must remain intact in order to place the label in your child's file.** In the event that medication needs refrigeration and office staff is not present when dropping off medication, please take it to your child's classroom and his or her teacher will refrigerate until office staff is available.

Office staff will administer the medication and complete the lower portion of the label. These completed labels will be kept in each student's file on a Medication Authorization Log.

Label Example:	
I give permission to administer medication to my child _____	
as stated below:	
Parent Signature _____	
Name of medication _____ P / N (Presc./Non-presc.)	
Amount/Dosage _____ Refrigerate Y / N	
Date _____ Time(s) to be given _____	
Staff Initials	Comments/Reactions
Time Given	
Amount/Dosage	

3. We **cannot** store prophylactic medications (Children’s Tylenol, Advil, etc.) on site to be given as needed per compliance with state regulations.

4. If your child is taking a new medication, please try to give 1 or 2 doses at home before sending the medication to be given at school.

Food Program

All children, except infants, enrolled in our center receive their meals at no charge; however, we must determine family income to receive federal funds for the meals served to children. Therefore, all Households will be asked to complete the Meal Benefit Application and return it to the center office as soon as possible.

Meals include breakfast – served from 7:30-8:30. **There will be no breakfast served after 8:30.** Lunch – 11:30 and PM snack – 3:00.

All of our meals must meet nutrition standards established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). If a child has been determined by a recognized medical authority to be unable to consume certain foods because of medical or other special dietary needs, the center will make any substitution as prescribed by that medical authority. Substitutions will be made when supported by a statement from the recognized medical authority. If a substitution is required, there will be no extra charge for the meal.

Safety

Safety is a priority at the Children’s Journey. Conditions at our facility are regularly inspected using the Department of Health and Family Services’ Safety Checklist. We assume responsibility for all children until picked up by a parent or approved contact person. Once this person has made contact with the student’s teacher, our responsibility ceases.

1. Injuries: Parents will be responsible for all medical expenses for bodily injury of a student enrolled at the Children's Journey while the student is attending our programs.

If a child is injured while at school, staff will assess and treat the child accordingly. An incident form will be completed detailing the nature of the accident and injury as well as what treatment was given. Parents will be asked to come to the office to sign and receive a copy of this report.

In the event of a serious/life-threatening injury, an ambulance will be accessed and parents will be contacted immediately. If parents are not able to get to the Children's Journey, the director or a teacher will accompany the child to the hospital and stay with them until parents arrive.

2. Supervision: The Children's Journey requires that parents bring their child to his/her classroom each day, not just to the front entrance to the school. No child should be unsupervised. The daily sign-in sheet must be completed by parent entering at time of arrival, and contact with the teacher should be made before leaving.

3. Pick-Up: If family would like their child to be picked up by ANYONE other than himself/herself, his/her classroom teacher must be notified in writing. The authorized person picking up the child must be listed on the child's emergency contact form. All persons other than the parents will be asked to sign-in at the office and show a photo ID at the time of pick-up. If an unexpected circumstance arises, permission may be granted over the phone by the office to release a child to an authorized person (already listed on form.) Please see the arrival and departure policy for more information regarding this procedure.

4. Secured Entrance: All doors to this building are locked at all times. However, doors are not locked from the inside. So, if an emergency arises, evacuation will not be interrupted. In order for this system to be efficient, we ask that no one be allowed entrance without using their key card. We understand that this does not allow for common courtesy, but security must be first. If someone comes to the entrance without a key, direct them to the doorbell and assure them that someone from the office will assist them momentarily.

5. Parking Lot: Children should never be left alone/unsupervised in parked cars. And, cars that are running should never be left unattended in the parking lot. Teachers are required to supervise children at all times and we expect that parents will follow the same guidelines. Always use caution when backing in and out of parking spaces.

6. Dress: Children should be dressed appropriately for active, messy play. We want to ensure that your child is safe at all times while they are here with us. Therefore, we are asking for your compliance with the following policies.

*All children must have a change of clothing to be kept in the classroom at all times. Please make sure to update clothing according to size and season and, **label everything!!**

*Sturdy shoes and socks are necessary for climbing and jumping. Please refrain from putting flip flops on your child.

*Our teachers try to keep your child as neat as possible in regards to mealtime and art activities. However, young children are messy and that is appropriate for their age. Please do not dress your child in their best clothing for school.

*If the snow is falling, children will go outside to explore. Please send snow gear (boots, water proof snow-suit and mittens, hat) whenever the forecast calls for snow. If you prefer, you may leave a snow set here during winter season.

*When it's time for fun in the sun, you will need to provide sunscreen for your child as well as a signed permission form approving administration. No swimming or wading is allowed on the premises. We have water play which consists of sprinklers, spray bottles and water tables. You will need to send swimwear for these occasions. Each classroom will provide swimwear policies.

*Please provide sweaters in the Fall and Spring when transitional weather produces cold mornings and warm afternoons.

Emergency Operations

This policy is in place to assure you of our concern for the safety and welfare of children attending the Children's Journey. Our Emergency Plan provides for response to all types of emergencies. Depending on the circumstance of the emergency, we will use one of the following protective actions:

Immediate Evacuation - Students are evacuated to a safe area in the event of a fire, etc.

In-Place Sheltering - Sudden occurrences, weather or hazardous materials related, may dictate that taking cover inside the building is the best immediate response.

Relocation - Total evacuation of the facility and the premises may become necessary if there is a danger in the area. In this case, children will be taken to a relocation facility to be determined. This information will be posted on the front door of the Early Learning Center.

Modified Operation - May include cancellation, postponement or rescheduling of normal activities. These actions are normally taken in case of a winter storm or building problems (such as utility disruptions) that make it unsafe for children but may be necessary in a variety of situations. Please understand that these situations may occur anytime during the year, even in the Summer.

Lockdown - Intruder in the area or in the building. All classrooms are to close and lock all doors and windows, close blinds. All children and staff must stay in the classroom until the "All is Safe" sound is given.

Please check TV channel 69, or their website for announcements relating to any of the emergency actions listed above.

We ask that you not call during the emergency. This will keep the main telephone line free to make emergency calls and relay information.

The facility Administrator or Director may provide an alternate phone number (i.e. cell phone number, etc.) to call in an emergency event.

The information you have provided on the "Emergency Contact Form" (designating persons to pick up your child) will be used to contact you if needed. This form will be used every time your child is released. Please keep the information up to date on this form in the Center office.

Please do not attempt to make different arrangements during an emergency. This will only create additional confusion and divert staff from their assigned emergency duties. In order to assure the safety of your children and our staff, we ask your understanding and cooperation.

Inclement Weather

Delays and closings are rare, but both do happen occasionally.

Consideration must be made in regards to the safety of our families and their young children as well as our staff. If the need arises for a weather related delay, closing, or early dismissal, please turn on or listen to one of the following;

**TV CHANNEL 69-WFMZ
(OR WWW.WFMZ.COM 24 HRS. A DAY)**

This web site can be accessed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with closing information delivered directly to e-mail addresses, pagers, cell phones, and PDAs.

Please know that it is our desire to provide you with quality care and early education.

We understand the importance of dependability. However, if local police and transportation officials feel that conditions are extremely hazardous, we may decide to delay our opening until the road conditions improve.

We will try to make our decision by 5:45 am.

**SO, IF THE SNOWFLAKES KEEP FALLING OR THE ICE IS NOT
MELTING, PLEASE TURN ON THE
RADIO, TV, OR LOG ON,
TO STAY WELL INFORMED!!**

Parent – Staff Communication

We strongly encourage communication between parents and teachers. Our teachers are happy to answer any questions about your child's behavior, daily routines, etc. However, questions regarding the Children's Journey policy and procedures, as well as financial concerns MUST be directed to the office. Parents are asked not to discuss such issues with teachers.

The following are all methods used to encourage open and consistent communication between parents and staff regarding programs and events.

Parent Board: Every classroom has a parent board located in the hallway right outside the door. Teachers will post important reminders and sign-up sheets. Please remember to check this board frequently.

Mail Box/Cubby: Every child will have their own private space to store artistic treasures, as well as important teacher/administrative information papers. Again, please check this spot daily.

White Board: Every classroom has a white board outside their room. This will be used to communicate daily highlights as well as important reminders.

Lobby Parent Board and Parent Table: This area is located in the corner of the school entrance lobby. Many educational and community related pamphlets are located here. We also post important information on the easel by the front door. Please take time to occasionally browse through this area. The Redner's and Box Tops box is also on the parent table.

Parent Comment Box: This is located on the parent table in the lobby. If you have an idea, comment, or complaint, please feel free to place it in the box. Your name is optional. However, if you are conveying a concern, we would like to get back to you with a plan to correct the situation.

Administrative Newsletter: This bi-monthly newsletter will be delivered to every family six times a year beginning with the September/October issue.

Early Education

It is our desire to provide a quality early learning program for all children attending the Children's Journey. We want to emphasize the basic skills of learning, complying with the directives from our regulating agencies. We also consider it a privilege to be able to provide a spiritual foundation for the children who attend the Children's Journey. As our teachers display Christ-like attitudes and behaviors, we hope that each child will develop a basic understanding of God's love, God's Word and the principles of Christian living.

Our Teaching Team is expected to bring a wealth of education, experience, knowledge and love to our center. These individuals are dedicated and committed to providing a quality early learning environment for the children. Our teachers, assistants and aides must comply with the PA Department of Welfare's Regulations regarding:

1. Educational Requirements
2. Annual Fire Safety Training
3. Bi-Annual Pediatric First-Aid and Blocked Airway Training
4. Criminal and Child Abuse Background Checks
5. FBI Clearance (Finger Print Check)
6. Thorough Interviewing Process
7. New Staff Orientation
(15 Hours of video training, workbook completion, and classroom observation.)
8. 12 Hours of Extra Training Annually
(Most of this training is provided by local colleges and professional organizations. Many of our teachers go beyond the required amount.)

Curriculum Statement

The Children's Journey developed the following statement to inform families about our philosophy regarding how children learn, materials and methods we will use to teach young children, what children need to learn, the teacher's role, assessment and the role of the family.

How Young Children Learn

Play is the primary vehicle that children use to explore their world. “Play facilitates the growth of children’s reasoning abilities.” (David Elkind, Ph.D.) This exploration needs to be offered in an intentionally planned environment that is developmentally and culturally appropriate. Children learn most when they are provided with hands-on learning activities and materials that stimulate exploration through the use of many senses.

Characteristics of learning readiness are developed rather than taught. Only through numerous, concrete interactions with the natural world that God created, can a young child prepare to benefit from formal instruction later on in the elementary years.

Learning will take place when a young child builds on prior knowledge. In other words, the young child must have the opportunity to combine new knowledge with earlier experiences. If these early experiences are not taught using authentic/concrete materials with which the child can relate, the child will not have the acquired knowledge and experience with which to build on. Children also need repetitive activities for many reasons, but especially, to begin to feel successful.

Children learn best in a setting where loving, experienced and educated adults model appropriate behavior and language. Children feel secure when there is a safe and predictable environment in which to play and grow. When children feel loved and accepted, they will begin to acquire knowledge, develop a love for learning and begin to become the individuals that God created them to be.

Materials and Methods

The Children's Journey utilizes a wide variety of materials to develop educational plans and appropriate learning environments for the children we serve. The following lists are divided into categories according to age.

While books, guides and learning standards are powerful resources to help teachers plan for children, curriculum decisions primarily come from the children, their families and the teachers/adults with whom they interact. Curriculum may change from program to program and year to year, (even within the same classroom). On the other hand, the curriculum statement, the framework for classroom practice, will remain the same.

Infant/Toddler

- ** The Bible,
- ** "Wee Learn Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers"
(Lifeway Christian Resources)
- ** "Creative Curriculum For Infants and Toddlers, A Comprehensive Approach" (Teaching Strategies)
- ** Pennsylvania Infant/Toddler Early Learning Standards
- ** Miscellaneous Teacher Resources

Preschool/Pre-K

- ** The Bible
- ** "Essentials Preschool Curriculum, A Comprehensive Approach"
(Gospel Publishing House)
- ** "Creative Curriculum For Preschool, A Comprehensive Approach"
(Teaching Strategies)
- ** Miscellaneous Teacher Resources
- ** Pennsylvania Preschool Early Learning Standards

Attention will be given to the specific needs of each child. At the same time, every child will be encouraged to become a part of the classroom community. If it becomes evident that a child has a special emotional, behavioral or physical need, we have the responsibility to recommend professional assistance to the family. We are willing to work with the child, the family and the community agency in order to provide the best help possible. However, if the needs of the child are beyond our ability or scope of practice, we will help you find an alternative agency to provide you and your child with a more comprehensive program.

The Children's Journey will be focusing on the "Creative Curriculum For Preschool" as well as "Preschool Essentials" for our preschool wing. And for the infant/toddler wing, we will focus on the "Creative Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers" as well as "Wee Learn", For Infants and Toddlers. At the end of this statement, you will find an explanation of the "Creative Curriculum for Preschool" which is very similar to the "Creative Curriculum For Infants and Toddlers". Handouts are also available for families describing all the interest areas for infants, toddlers and preschool/pre-k. You can obtain copies in the Director's Office. These informative letters will offer a more detailed and descriptive look at the every day activities and classroom structure.

What Young Children Need to Learn (According to the PA Early Learning Standards)

Infant/Toddler

Approaches to Learning and Cognitive Development
Communication and Emerging Literacy
Creative Expression
Physical/Motor Development
Social, Emotional and Personal Development

Preschool/Pre-K

Approaches to Learning
Creative Arts
Language and Literacy
Logical and Mathematical
Personal/Social
Physical/Health
Program Partnerships/Family Involvement
Science/Social Studies

The above list of standards is an abbreviated version of what children need to learn in the early years. If you would like to view a copy of the PA Early Learning Standards, please stop by the Director's Office.

The Creative Curriculum offers support for teachers to help them teach content in ways that respect the developmental stages of children. The goal is to offer appropriate activities in content areas that are connected to the standards. This will hopefully allow children to meet criteria for school readiness, get excited about learning, academically succeed for years to come and become a person of character and integrity, the person God created them to be.

The Teacher's Role

At the Children's Journey, teachers are committed to providing care and early education in a loving and nurturing way. Many of our teachers have been here for many years. The following list contains only a few of the many responsibilities that our teachers and assistants have regarding the educational portion of our program.

Teachers observe, guide children's learning and assess children's learning in order to plan for the individual needs of the children and promote the acquisition of knowledge.

In order to guide learning, teachers, (with the help of assistants and aides)...

- Design, set up, and maintain a safe, developmentally, culturally, and spiritually appropriate environment.
- Plan challenging learning activities that include the rotation of manipulatives, learning materials, equipment, and natural materials.
- Set up five to six interest areas (T1 and up).
- Develop written plans on a weekly basis. The plans must reflect the PA Early Learning Standards.
- Use a wide range of teaching approaches.
- Develop an appropriate schedule that meets the needs of the age group they are assigned.
- Plan for large and small group instruction as well as teacher and child directed learning times.
- Develop an age appropriate list of guidelines, offer frequent reminders and consistently enforce these rules.
- Have a variety of transitional activities ready to use throughout the day. In the course of a day, young children change from one activity to another rather frequently. Some young children experience difficulty in this area. So, Teachers need to know how to provide prompts, cues, warnings and other activities to assist with these transitions.
- Understand the importance of modeling a Christ-like life style because it is right and the children are always watching. Children learn by the adult role models in their life. Teacher/Child interaction is also an important component to the learning program. Literacy skills are developed throughout the entire day, not just at story time.

- Teachers must be ready to ask open ended questions and provide conversation starters whenever they see an open window.
- Create ways to interact and communicate with families.
 - Manage the learning environment. They will need to have a system in place to record and maintain files and portfolios for every child.
 - Arrange for environmental accommodations for children with special needs.

In conclusion, our teachers and support staff provide ongoing observation and assessment. With the information they receive from you and your child, they develop a plan to provide learning opportunities to meet the needs of every child.

Family Connection

We believe that the parents are the child's first and most important teacher. In order for our program to benefit the children, it is imperative that we connect with every family. We offer a family survey at enrollment and we encourage our families to complete the survey and return it immediately. We also offer a 45 day conference and evaluation so you can be informed about your child's transition to the center. This is also a time for you and your child's teacher to discuss any concerns or parenting struggles that you might have.

In closing, we look forward to partnering with the families of the children entrusted to us. The administration and staff of the Children's Journey take our work very seriously. Although we can not guarantee a perfect environment, we can assure you that we will do our very best and continue to pursue excellence. If you ever have a need or concern, we ask that you talk with your child's teacher, (for classroom concerns, and the office, (for program concerns). We value and welcome your comments, concerns and ideas.

Methods Used to Relay Children's Progress to Families

Daily Progress Sheets: These forms are provided to parents in the infant/toddler rooms and relay information about your child's day. Items covered include, but are not limited to; meals, toileting, behavior, and activity level.

Weekly Progress Sheets: These forms are provided to parents in the preschool/pre-k room and relay information about your child's week. Items covered include: participation, behavior, accomplishments, meals and other pertinent information.

Weekly Lesson Plans: Each teacher is required to complete weekly plans for their classroom. These plans are posted on the parent board. They reflect the PA Early Learning Standards. Please see the curriculum section for more information.

Weekly Classroom Newsletter/Highlight Sheet: Every teacher will have their own form of weekly communication with families to help you stay well informed.

Conferences: Parents will receive an *It's Time For A Chat* Form, twice a year, (within 45 days of enrollment or placement into a new room and mid year). You will then have the option to meet with your child's teacher or decline the meeting. Please fill out the form and return it to your child's teacher. We must keep this on file at all times. If you feel that a conference is needed at any other time, just ask your child's teacher and arrangements will be made.

Base Line Assessment: An initial screening will be completed for every child within the first month of entrance into a new classroom. The results of this as well as teacher observations will be shared with the family at the 45-Day Conference. You will also receive a progress sheet at that time. If you choose to not meet with your child's teacher, you will still receive the progress sheet.

Observations: All teachers are required to do written observations for every child in attendance at the Children's Journey. These observations are used to help teachers focus on individual needs of children, develop lesson plans and complete end of the year assessments.

Mid-Year Progress Sheet and End of the Year Assessment: These tools will help you to see your child's developmental progress and accomplishments as well as any areas that need strengthening.

Take Home Folder: Every child will be given a take home folder to be used to provide written information from teacher to family. This folder should be returned to the classroom daily.

Mandated Reporting

*We are a mandated reporting center. The State of PA defines this as follows: A person who, in the course of employment, occupation or practice of a profession, has reasonable cause to suspect, on the basis of medical professional or other training and experience, that a child under the care, supervision, guidance or training of that person or of an agency, institution, organization or other entity with which that person is affiliated is a victim of child abuse, including child abuse by an individual who is not a perpetrator.

*Child abuse is defined as serious recent physical injury which is non-accidental, mental injury, sexual abuse or serious physical neglect of children under the age of 18, caused by the acts or omissions of a perpetrator.

*For this reason, staff must report any suspicions to the Director and Administrator of the CHILDREN'S JOURNEY. These individuals will then observe the child and may discuss the situation with the family. Administration may also discuss their findings with the Pastor of Journey Fellowship. If a final consensus determines that child abuse is suspected, the Administrator or Director of the Children's Journey will contact Childline or Children and Youth Services.

Miscellaneous Information

*Because we are a non-profit center, we will occasionally provide our families with the opportunity to participate in a variety of fundraisers. Please understand that your participation is very much appreciated, however, optional.

*Once a year, usually during the fall, the Children's Journey invites a school photographer to capture the smiling faces of our children. Again, no one is under any obligation to purchase school photographs.

*We encourage families to get to know each other and we try to provide opportunities to promote social interaction among our families.

*Birthdays are special events in the life of a young child. Teachers are very willing to work with you if you choose to celebrate your child's birthday here at school. Please speak with your child's teacher in advance to confirm your plans.

*The Children's Journey maintains a central file for each child in our center. Important documents are kept in this file including registration forms, agreements, medical information, observations and assessments. The Children's Journey can transfer these documents to another center at the written request of the parent/guardian. Forms are available in the office.

*The Children's Journey provides every family with a Children's Journey calendar which is available in July. This calendar contains all special events and closures for the entire year. If we ever need to deviate from established dates, you will be notified.

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