

Parent Handbook



1444 Highway 165

Fort Mitchell, Al. 36856

334-855-4675

<https://stjosephcdc.org/>

MISSION STATEMENT

The St. Joseph Child Development Center is committed to providing quality pre-school education based on the individual needs of each child. The mission of St. Joseph Child Development Center is to assist parents in preparing their preschool age children for a life-time of learning, so that the children will develop a love for learning and will receive a solid foundation for the next stage in their development.

OBJECTIVES

- It is our goal to develop the whole child...spiritually, socially, emotionally, morally, and physically – according to the guidelines of the Department of human resources.
- School personnel are sensitive to the differences in children by age and their readiness academically, emotionally, and socially; therefore, the school experiences will be planned and implemented to help each child grow.
- The St. Joseph Child Development center is also committed to involve each family as integral partners in the Center and will stimulate and motivate parents to actively participate in school related activities including membership in the parent advisory committee.

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

We are required by the State of Alabama to report any possible evidence of child abuse and neglect to the Department of Human resources. They (not St. Joseph CDC staff) will assess whether the evidence warrants further investigation and/or action.

If there are any concerns or complaints in reference to a teacher, please notify the director.

All faculty members are required to attend training in recognition of all forms of abuse against children. We follow all the guidelines and policies of the Department of Human Resources regarding protection to provide the best possible and secure environment for your child's development.

1. HOURS OF OPERATION

St. Joseph CDC office hours are 7:00 am until 3:30pm, Monday-Friday and student hours are 8:00 am until 2:30 pm. We close to observe the following holidays: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and Good Friday. Full tuition is due for holiday weeks. NOTE: Parents will be updated on each year's holiday schedule when and if there are any changes.

2. RELEASE OF CHILDREN

Per Alabama state laws, parents have a right to access their child at any time. However, we strongly encourage parents to drop off their children by 8:00 am each day so the child can take part in our full educational program. All students must arrive on time. As a courtesy we give parents until 8:15am. If a student arrives after 8:15 am, a doctor's excuse is needed. In the event that a parent is unable to pick up their child, they may authorize another legal adult to pick up. Children will not be released to a minor. Authorized adults must be listed on the enrollment form to pick up and the authorized adult must bring a picture ID. Children will not be released to adults without a picture ID.

3. ILLNESS AND EXCLUSION POLICY

Children who are ill should not attend preschool. St. Joseph CDC observes the standards set by the Alabama Department of Human Resources for ill children. The most common standards for exclusion are: 1. Illness that prevents the child from participating in child care activities, including outdoor play. 2. The illness results in a greater need for care than teachers can provide without compromising the health, safety and supervision of the other children. 3. Oral temperature of 101 or armpit temperature of 100. 4. Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness such as lethargy, abnormal breathing, uncontrollable diarrhea, 2 or more vomiting episodes in 24-hours. If a child becomes ill while in our care, we will contact the parent immediately. We will care for the child apart from the other children with proper supervision and give extra attention to hand washing and sanitation practices. Parents need to pick up children within 1 hour of notification. In the event of severe illness or injury, or if a parent fails to pick up their child within a reasonable amount of time, St. Joseph CDC may call for an ambulance at the parent's expense. If a child is sent home sick from our program, they may not return for 48 hours. If the child's illness exceeds 48 hours, they may return when the child is symptom free for 24-hours.

4. MEDICATION

Parents must complete a medication form in its entirety. Please inform your physician that your child is in full-day preschool and that you prefer to give medications at home, morning and evening. Knowing this, many doctors will order longer acting medications. Limiting medications dispensed away from home prevents medication errors. Please remember, St. Joseph CDC is designed for well children.

If medications need to be administered at school, the following conditions must be met:

- Prescription medication will be accepted only if it is in the original container and hasn't reached its expiration date.
- Medication must be in the original container and accompanied with a copy of the information given to you by the pharmacy.
- Please fill out the medication forms.
- Please bring a copy of the information given to you by the pharmacy.
- Medication needs to go home after the last date that the medication is administered.

Health forms are required to be completed at the time of enrollment showing any allergies, physical handicaps, a statement of general health, and a current immunization history. These must be updated and kept current. Medication may be given to children with a signed medical information sheet. These are located in the front office.

5. PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING EMERGENCIES

In case of minor injury or accident, the staff will administer basic first aid. All injuries or illnesses not requiring immediate parental notification will be documented and reported to parents when the child is picked up at the end of the day. In case of medical injury or illness requiring immediate professional care (emergency), the staff will call 911, giving location and nature of emergency. As appropriate, the staff will administer CPR or first aid measures. Parents will be notified immediately. If parents are unavailable, those individuals designated as emergency phone contacts will be notified. All children must have an emergency medical release form on file in case of such an emergency. If a child ingests or comes in contact with a poisonous substance the staff will contact the Poison Control Center 1.800.222.1222.

6. PARENT NOTIFICATIONS

Open Communication with parents is very important to children's success. St. Joseph CDC has multiple ways of communicating with parents. In some situations, parents may be asked to sign documents acknowledging that communication has taken place. Listed below are ways the school may communicate with parents:

- Through email notifications
- Written memos placed in your child's weekly folders
- Social media site such as Facebook
- Smart phone notifications through Remind/zoom, etc.
- Verbal communication with the child's teacher or director of operations
- Parent/teacher conferences (twice per year)

7. DISCIPLINE & GUIDANCE POLICY

St. Joseph CDC staff members are trained to use a positive method of discipline and guidance that encourages self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction. Just a few examples used in this situation are: praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior; reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements and redirecting behaviors. St. Joseph CDC does not use "time out" as a form of managing behavior.

St. Joseph CDC staff will never use Corporal Punishment or negative discipline that may hurt or humiliate a child. Research has shown that positive guidance teaches children skills which help them get along in their physical and social environment. This aim is to develop personal standards in self-discipline, not to enforce a set of inflexible rules. Giving children understandable guidelines and redirecting their behavior helps them to develop internal control of their actions and encourages acceptable behavior. Positive cooperation is required from the family when dealing with disruptive behavior. We feel that consistency from all parties involved is the best way to handle these issues. St. Joseph CDC reserves the right to terminate care for the child for discipline problems at any time.

Care of School Property

School loyalty and pride are displayed by keeping the building neat and clean. Students who intentionally deface or damage school equipment or property in any way will be required to

clean the article, pay for the damage done, and depending on the severity, face out of school suspension.

8. FOOD SERVICE & PREPARATION

St. Joseph CDC is a participant of the USDA's Special Nutrition Program. We do not charge an extra fee for meals or snacks. In accordance with Federal Law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272. St. Joseph CDC provides breakfast for all children present at 7:45am. Lunch is served from 10:30am - 11:30am. Afternoon snack is served after the rest period from 1:30-2:15 pm. Menus are posted at each classroom bulletin board. Please advise the center of any allergies. St. Joseph CDC is a Nut-Free School. If a child requires an alternative meal, milk or substitution, a note from a doctor may be required. The doctor's note must include a recommended substitution.

9. IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

Alabama Immunization records must be current for all children enrolled in our programs. A copy must be in the child's file. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that your child's immunizations are current. Failure to keep children current on immunizations may lead to disenrollment. St. Joseph CDC may have children enrolled that have not received immunizations due to personal belief. A notarized affidavit must be on file for these children.

10. ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

Upon selecting St. Joseph CDC to meet your child's educational needs, all enrollment paperwork is required before the child can start our program. Incomplete paperwork will not be accepted.

Paperwork required for enrollment includes:

- Enrollment Form
- Authorization for Emergency Medical Attention
- Physician's Statement (Alabama Immunization)
- Tuition Agreement Contract
- CACFP Meal Benefit Income Eligibility Form

- Proof of residency
- Child's Birth Certificate
- Child's Social Security Card (Copy is okay)
- Proof of Income

11. WATER ACTIVITIES AND SWIMMING POOL

If your child's teacher plans a water activity, you will be notified in advance.

12. FIELD TRIPS

Parents must accompany and transport their child on every field trip that is scheduled. Each parent will be given a permission form for each field trip that is scheduled. Students are expected to wear their Friday t-shirts on all field trips.

13. ANIMALS

St. Joseph CDC may have classroom pets that meet the requirements by Alabama Child Care Licensing. A notice to parents will be posted outside any classroom door when a pet is present.

14. QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS

If parents have questions or concerns about our program, we encourage you to have open communication with your child's teacher and the Center Director. Through open communication, we can ensure that all parties are well informed and working as partners in the child's education. From time to time, the center director may complete a Parent Concern Form. Parents will receive a copy of this form with the appropriate outcome. It's very important that concerns are handled in the office. St. Joseph CDC will not tolerate parents whom are disrupting the school in any way.

15. OPEN DOOR POLICY

We welcome parents at any time, in any area of our school. St. Joseph CDC is a privately owned and operated facility. We have the right to refuse service at any time to anyone. Visitors must sign in at the front office.

16. PARENT PARTICIPATION

We encourage parent involvement, especially on field trips and helping with class celebrations. Also, if you have a concern, please schedule a time to meet with the classroom teacher and/or the director of the facility. You are encouraged to become involved in what your child is learning and experiencing in the St. Joseph Child Development Center because your participation contributes to your child's success in school. A Parent/Guardian is a child's first and most important teacher.

Parents/Guardians must agree to abide by the terms listed in the Parent Contract. Families must participate in a minimum of **12 hours** of family enrichment activities or workshops. Parents/Guardians will be notified of each enrichment opportunity at least one month in advance. In addition to the 6 enrichment hours, each family will be required to complete 6 volunteer hours. This can be accomplished by coming to school to read to the children, make a craft, or by taking small projects to complete at home to assist your teacher. Please discuss what you would be interested in doing with your child's teacher.

17. CAMPUS SURVEILLANCE

There are surveillance cameras on the campus to help maximize safety of students during the day.

18. WELLNESS CHECKS

St. Joseph CDC staff will do a visual check of the children upon arrival each morning. If a staff member notices anything unusual, they are required to point this out to the parent at that time. If your child has an accident overnight, please notify staff members when dropping off so that we can assist in watching the child for side effects.

19. TUITION AND FEES

Parents may make a payment by check, cash, debit or credit card. Checks returned NSF will be charged a \$40 fee. St. Joseph CDC does not accept American Express or discover credit cards. A \$25 weekly fee will be added for all non-payments. Tuition credit is not given nor is it refundable for the holidays, sick days, inclement weather days or any other absences that may occur. Tuition is due on Mondays, no later than Wednesday mornings of the current week.

Before and After School Care Fee

If your child will be participating in our Before and After Care program, you will be required to complete a Before and After care contract.

Before Care: \$15.00 (7am-8:00am)

Before and After Care: \$65.00 (7:00am-8:00am and 2:30pm-5:30pm)

After Care: \$50.00 (2:30pm-5:30pm)

If your child stays after school and you do not have a signed contract, you must complete a contract immediately and you will be billed the \$50.

Afterschool care ends at 5:30 PM; late pickup is 5:31 PM and it will result in an additional charge of \$1.00 per minute late. The additional charges are due when your child is picked up late. Your child will not be able to return to after school until the late charges have been paid in full.

Extra Fees

The yearly school fee is non-refundable. Our program is open Monday through Friday from 7:00 am to 5:30pm. St. Joseph CDC is only licensed by the Alabama Department of Human Resources to care for children during these specified times. If you are late picking up your child, a \$1 PER MINUTE late penalty will be charged to your account. Late fee penalties must be paid to St. Joseph CDC before the child can return to care.

20. PARENT REFERRALS

We greatly appreciate your business and know that you will be pleased with our service that you will tell all your friends and acquaintances about us! If one of those families decides to enroll their child or children, we will credit your account the amount of 1 week's tuition after that family has been with us for 90 days. The referred family must mention the referral at the time of the initial visit to our program. Our greatest advertising asset is you!

21. CONFIDENTIALITY

While your child is enrolled in our program, parents may come across confidential information about our program, our staff, and sometimes other children. All information received from St. Joseph CDC must remain confidential at all times. Breaching confidentiality may lead to disenrollment.

22. PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Please understand, young children are present in our building. Some adult language is not appropriate for young children. St. Joseph CDC prohibits swearing or cursing on our property. Threatening staff, children, or other parents will not be tolerated per Alabama Department of Human Resources. St. Joseph CDC has the right to terminate care in the event of disruptive behavior from a parent or guardian. St. Joseph CDC must follow particular rules on discipline and guidance as outlined in the Alabama Child Care Licensing and Performance Standards for Day Care Centers And Nighttime Centers. All adults, including parents, must follow these rules while on our property. The consumption or possession of alcohol and tobacco usage is prohibited on school premises.

23. PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Children must be signed in and out by the custodial parent or adult person approved by the parent(s). Please understand that due to liability issues, staff of St. Joseph CDC is not permitted to take children home from our center. In order not to confuse school toys with a child's personal property, we ask that children not bring play things from home. St. Joseph CDC staff cannot be responsible for lost or broken personal toys. The only exception, for toys or stuffed animals, is for Show & Share purposes. You will be notified by your child's teacher if and when the class will have Show & Share.

24. WITHDRAWAL FROM PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

Two weeks written notice must be given for withdrawing a child from St. Joseph CDC. If a family fails to give a two-week notice, St. Joseph CDC has a right to withhold tuition tax statement. All tuition and fees incurred while the student attended are due prior to their last day. St. Joseph CDC has a right to refuse service to any family for any reason.

25. INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICIES

St. Joseph CDC will open most days during inclement weather. Please check local TV stations and websites for announcement of closing. Generally, we follow Russell County School District closure days due to inclement weather. Full tuition is due during inclement weather times. In case of serious emergencies such as earthquakes, fire, storms, or loss of power/water, parents will be notified, if possible, and children will be cared for until parents or emergency contacts arrive.

26. CURRICULUM

St. Joseph CDC uses Kaplan Learning Every Day Curriculum, and Creative Curriculum. These curriculums believe that children learn best through actively engaging with people and things in their environment. Children are involved in hands-on experiences, real-life adventures, and assisted discovery as they explore concepts through play. St. Joseph CDC is a place where essential readiness skills are nurtured through play, investigation, and of course, fun! These programs provide developmentally and age-appropriate activities and materials for exciting and wonder filled environments.

27. NAP TIME

Supervised rest periods are provided for all children. Your child will be provided a mat to rest on for naptime. Please provide a clean child-sized blanket for naptime.

28. CLOTHING

Preschool children must wear the assigned uniform. The uniform consists of a navy polo shirt and khaki bottoms. Girls may wear khaki skirts or khaki jumpers with the navy-blue shirt. If your child arrives to school without his/her uniform on, parents are not allowed to sign them in. Please have a complete change of uniform clothing, clearly marked with the child's name, left at St. Joseph CDC. Preschool children need to be dressed for the weather. Caps, mittens, and warm clothing must be worn during the cooler seasons for the daily outdoor playtime. Accidents can happen, even for the older preschoolers, or if they get wet on the playground. Open toed shoes are not prohibited due to safety issues. If the parent chooses to send their student to school in open toed shoes, the school will not be liable for any incidents or accidents relating to the open toed shoes. Please refrain from sending your child to school in light up shoes. Light up shoes have been a great distraction in our classrooms.

29. SCHOOL SAFETY POLICIES

Parents need to personally escort their child inside the building to sign in and out when their children enter and leave the facility. Parents are welcome to visit the center any time during the day to observe their child without prior approval. However, if you would like to stay and spend time with your child during activities, please see the office so we can schedule a time with your child's teacher.

You will be notified of any incidents other than minor scrapes or bumps with a phone call. We will also give you a written report at pick up time. First aid will be applied to minor incidents. In

the event medical attention is required, we will notify you immediately. Parents are responsible for all medical fees.

30. BITING

Biting is a common issue in early child development. The best way to deal with biting is consistency between teachers and parents. Biting could occur for multiple reasons. Proper communication will help determine why a child is biting. St. Joseph CDC will work with parents when biting becomes a problem. We will make every effort to solve the issue as soon as possible.

We, at St. Joseph CDC thank you for trusting us with your most valuable treasures. We put our best foot forward to serve our families and do the absolute best that we can for your children. St. Joseph CDC believes that early childhood development is the foundation for a bright future for all of our children.

31. PTO

All parents are welcome to join our PTO. The purpose of our PTO is to establish a fun, enjoyable and educational PTO. There is a \$10 membership fee per household. In order to be successful, we need amazing, attentive, creative, and personable volunteers-like each of you so stop by the office to get more information!