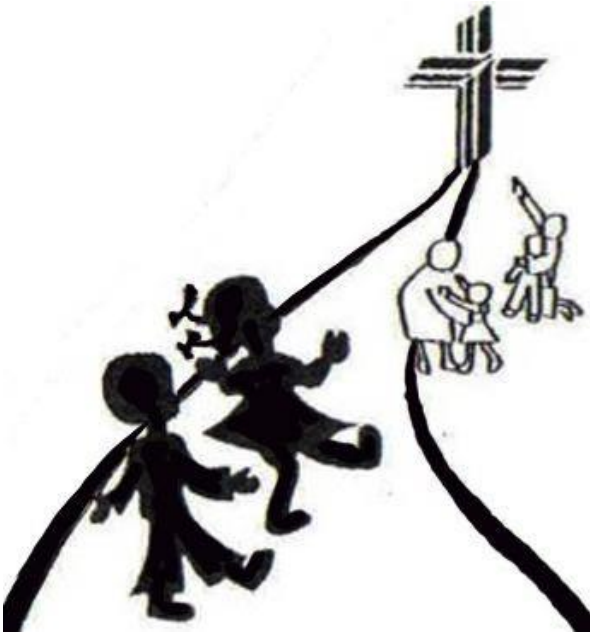


Wee Disciples School & Child Care Center



Wee Disciples Family Handbook 2025-2026

1226 First Avenue North, Great Falls, MT 59401
(406) 771-7882

The mission of this school shall be to give honor and glory to God, to assist in bringing the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all the world, to manifest the unity of our faith in Jesus Christ as God and Savior, to foster Christian fellowship and love, and to extend a helping hand in human need. This is to be achieved by our devotion to the Word of God.

WELCOME

Please take time to read through the following information. We want you to know and understand our policies and the state regulations we must follow.

PHILOSOPHY

It is our belief at Wee Disciples that children are a gift from God and that each individual child is God's unique creation. With this in mind our primary mission is, with the Spirit's help, to bring children into the presence of Christ. We do this by maintaining a warm, loving and stimulating environment that is centered around Christ with activities that are appropriate for the child's age and their developmental stage. Our staff provides unconditional love and solid Christian values through Jesus Christ. Each child is allowed to develop to his or her fullest potential spiritually, socially, physically, creatively, intellectually and emotionally.

At Wee Disciples, we support the families we serve. We do this by providing a place where young children can explore the world in a safe, secure environment filled with love and acceptance. Children are exposed to academics that include age-appropriate writing, reading and mathematical skills as well as science. Children are introduced to these elements as each child shows their interest and readiness for them. Each child's efforts are recognized and celebrated while encouraging them to do more but not forcing.

As a distinctly Christian childcare center and preschool, our day revolves around God's Word, Jesus' love and forgiveness and the Holy Spirit's power. Each child receives a strong Christian foundation to build on the rest of their life. They will be guided to love and be loved, forgive and be forgiven, to encourage those around them and to allow those around them to be encouraged.

The Pastor of the congregation would like to visit each family when a student is enrolled in Wee Disciples. This visit would be a social visit to introduce himself and get acquainted with each family.

HOW TO ENROLL

To enroll you must apply at Wee Disciples, fill out the registration packet completely, and pay all fees including the initial payment. Enrollment is on a first come, first serve basis. Wee Disciples does not discriminate against any child on the basis of sex, race, religion or ethnic background. . (“Sex” means the biological condition of being male or female as determined at birth. Wee Disciples’ sincerely-held religious belief is that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as either male or female, and that these two distinct, complementary sexes together reflect the image and nature of God (Gen. 1:26-27) Rejection of one’s sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.)

Please fill out **all** of the papers in your registration packet. These papers will need to be on file in our office to meet the state licensing regulations. This includes an individual registration sheet for each child you are registering. We need immunization records, emergency contact sheet, CACFP form (even if you are not eligible for the program, one per family), if you have an infant, we will need an infant feeding form and pediatric health form. Submit these papers along with your registration fee and initial payment.

Please feel free to contact any of the staff at any time with any questions, comments or concerns. Wee Disciples families are welcome to visit the center at any time. You may also drop us an e-mail (wee.disciples@gmail.com), call the office at (771-7882), or the cell phone (799-5881), or drop a note in the payment box. We want your input and appreciate your views. We encourage family participation at Wee Disciples. Please contact the director if you would like to be involved. Periodically we may ask for you to evaluate our program.

Wee Disciples is governed by the Board of Early Childhood Education of Trinity Lutheran Church, their contact number is 452-2121.

OUR GOALS

That each child

- + develops greater self confidence and self-esteem in response to Christ’s unconditional love.
- + looks forward to school with excitement and enthusiasm because of the positive experience and fun learning environment.

+ has a certain assurance of heaven because of Jesus' atoning death and resurrection.

CURRICULUM

Following State licensing mandates, we offer a structured curriculum and schedule. When you leave your child with us each morning, rest assured that we have planned activities and learning experiences to occupy their day. We want your child to have fun learning while experiencing a rewarding atmosphere that draws them back day after day. We work as a team to have a curriculum that is mutually supported throughout our facility. Each group will have age and developmentally specific plans with a variety of elements and opportunities for each child to learn at their own pace.

Wee Disciples will incorporate certain elements of learning on a regular basis. These items include but are not limited to:

Worship Time: Each week our activities will center on a Bible story. This story will be repeated daily in class and the lesson from the story reviewed. We have children participate in the blessing of the meals and snacks. Children's Chapel is held weekly during the school year with Pastor leading us in worship.

Reading Skills: Sorting and classifying, sequencing, storytelling, exposure to letters and the sounds they make, and book reading. Regular trips to the library and book mobile are planned.

Math Skills: Counting, measuring, sand and water play, calendar time, exposure to numerals and their value.

Music Exploration: Singing, movement, rhythms, playing of simple instruments and making instruments

Large Motor Skills: Indoor games, outdoor play, movement exploration, walks and stretching

Art: Colors, combining and blending colors, painting, dyeing, matching colored objects, and many other media experiences

Fine Motor Skills: Cutting, lacing, beads, finger painting, stencils, play dough, tracing and finger plays

Sensory Investigation: Nature walks, science experiences, cooking, sensory boxes and texture boards

Social Interaction: Family style dining, cooperative play, games and taking turns

Cognitive Development: Problem solving, exploration, and trial and error

Listening and Speaking Skills: Following directions, telling stories, forming sentences, asking for help, explaining pictures, learning and using phonics, bubble blowing, singing and repeating fingerplays and poems

Personal Health and Hygiene: Cleanliness, personal safety, household safety, and nutrition

ACTIVITIES

Age-appropriate curriculum and activities are provided for all children. This can include but is not limited to books, music, creative media, imaginative play and large and small muscle exercises. Problem solving is encouraged in a respectful and acceptable manner. Personal responsibility for the child's belongings, personal needs and actions are taught and encouraged with the child's age and development considered. We encourage family interaction and sharing; this includes special interests, activities and family customs. Please contact the staff if you would like to share something of interest to your family.

Outdoor play is an important part of each day. Weather is a definite consideration but whenever it is possible we go out to play, even if only for a short time. Please be sure to dress your child appropriately. If there is a medical reason for your child not participating in any activity, a physician's statement must be provided.

The staff uses their own training and judgment to determine the length of time each group spends outdoors.

DAILY SAMPLE SCHEDULE

<u>TIMES</u> (activity times estimated)	<u>ACTIVITY</u>
7:00 a.m.	Facility Opens
8:00 a.m.-8:30 a.m.	Breakfast
9:00 a.m.	Class Time: to include curriculum described
11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.	Lunch
12:00 p.m.- 2:30 p.m.	Quiet or Rest Time
2:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Snack Time
3:00-6:00 p.m.	Class Time: to include curriculum described

Each day includes curriculum previously described in this handbook. Morning class time includes circle time, center play and Bible or worship time. Large muscle, fine motor, music, art and imaginative play as well as cooperative play are included. Field Trips and guest speakers are used in our program whenever available or appropriate.

DRESS:

Please dress your child for play and messy projects. Tennis shoes are preferred for running and jumping activities. Children should be dressed so they can dress and undress themselves, especially in the winter months. These items should be marked with your child's name. Shoes or slippers are required at all times, please provide proper indoor and outdoor footwear during the winter months.

DISCIPLINE:

A positive approach to discipline is followed. Re-direction of inappropriate behaviors is always used. Positive reinforcement, natural and logical consequences, choices and limits are essential parts of discipline. Children are encouraged to verbalize their anger and emotions. No punitive or corporal punishment are ever used. Anger and frustration are normal emotions; these emotions may not be expressed destructively. Any ongoing behaviors that pose a threat to other's mental, physical or emotional wellbeing will be placed on suspension and could leave the facility. Communication with the family to resolve any concerns will begin early and continue to retain the child whenever possible. We do use "re-group" and "thinking time" to allow a child to regain their composure so that they may join back in with their group. We ask that toys, especially those of a violent or destructive behavior be left at home. We also know that your child may have personal or family stresses that can cause behavioral changes. Please let us know if you have any family events that may be giving your child stress so we can help them through these times. We use this information only to help your child, and it is handled very discreetly. If a change of facility seems in the best interest of the child, we will refer the family to Family Connections and support the process as possible.

GOODNESS OF FIT POLICY:

Although we make every effort to meet the needs of each child, there are extremely rare situations where care at Wee Disciples may not be in the best interest of the child or other children at the center. At the same time, parents and guardians also have the God-given vocation (calling) and responsibility to choose childcare that will best fit their needs. While we attempt to care for our students to the best of our ability, we understand that we are not perfect, nor are our shared facilities. After all efforts have been exhausted, we reserve the right to terminate care due to lack of a "goodness of fit", and families also have the right to seek care for their children elsewhere if their needs will be better met at a different facility.

CUBBIES:

Each child will be assigned a cubby or hanger for their personal belongings. This is a central gathering place for all papers, projects and take-home items. Please take home any papers or projects in your child's cubby; these items are an opening to let your child tell you about what they have done and learned during the day.

We ask you to provide an extra set of clothing (either in a backpack that is always at school or in their cubby) for children of all ages. We would appreciate you taking soiled clothing home the day of the accident for laundering and returning a clean extra set of clothes, so we have them on hand. Blankets or stuffed animals should be taken home for regular washing.

For children still in diapers, parents must supply diapers and ointment if needed. We will inform you when your child's supply is low so you can replenish these items.

Please label all of your child's belongings so we can always find the proper place for them. A form must be completed to allow us to apply ointments.

MEALS:

This center provides meals (breakfast and lunch) and afternoon snack. Menus are posted for the current week and the week ahead. The meals are delicious and nutritious. Mendy Wilson is our Food Service Manager. This center participates in the Federal USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program. This center receives reimbursements for meals served which meet certain nutritional requirements. Meals

and snacks are included in your fees. Breakfast is served between 8:00 a.m. and 8:30 a.m., lunch is served between 11:00 a.m. and 12:30 p.m., afternoon snack is between 2:30 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. (times may vary due to activities or age group). If you wish your child to eat with us, please arrive prior to the meal serving time. Family members are invited to join us for meals for a special time with your child. Please inform us before so we can prepare a space for the family member. For infants, information about their formula and bottle choices should be provided for us so we can prepare for their needs.

This center participates in the Federal USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program and receives reimbursements for meals served which meet certain nutritional requirements.

Non-discrimination statement:

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the

nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. mail:

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or

2. fax:

(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or

3. email:program.intake@usda.gov.

NAP TIME:

After lunch we have a rest time. All children currently not enrolled in Pre-K are required to lay down and rest quietly. Parents must provide the child's blanket or stuffed animal that makes them more comfortable at rest time. These items need to be laundered by the family regularly. Infants sleep schedules vary from the rest of the center based on age and need for sleep.

HEALTH AND ILLNESS:

State law requires you to provide us with a record of your child's immunizations at the time of registration. A medical or religious exemption document may be provided. These must be kept in your child's file for state inspection. Please update those records according to immunizations received after registration.

If your child has (a) fever of 100.4 F that is accompanied by behavior change or other symptoms; (b) diarrhea; (c) vomiting more than two times in the previous 24 hours; (d) mouth sores with drooling, if unable to contain drool, unless a health care provider states that it is a noninfectious condition; (e) a rash with fever or behavioral change or a rash that is quickly spreading, unless a health care provider states that it is a noninfectious condition; (f) active tuberculosis, until a health care provider states that the person is noninfectious and can return; (g) group A strep pharyngitis (strep throat) until the person appears well and at least 12 hours after beginning appropriate antimicrobial therapy; (h) impetigo, until treatment is initiated and if lesions on exposed skin are covered with a waterproof dressing; (i) head lice, scabies, or ringworm, until treatment is started. Children

and staff can remain in the childcare setting until the end of the day; (j) chickenpox (varicella), until sores have dried or crusted. Child care providers must not purposefully expose susceptible children to chickenpox, even with the permission of the susceptible child's parents/guardians; (k) rubella, until seven days after the rash appears; (l) pertussis, until five days after antibiotic treatment was initiated; (m) mumps, until five days after onset of parotid gland swelling; (n) measles, until four days after onset of rash (o) hepatitis A, until one week after onset of illness or as directed by the local health authority; (p) shigellosis, salmonella, or E. coli, until a local health authority clears the person for readmission; or (q) if the child is unable to participate in activities or needs care from staff that compromises the health or safety of other children.

Children and staff must be excluded from all child care facilities, and a health care provider must evaluate the conditions to ensure the person's return will not harm that person or the other people, when a child or staff: (a) has symptoms of severe illness, such as fever with behavior change, lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, breathing difficulty or wheezing, stiff neck, irritability, persistent crying, poor food or fluid intake, progressive rash with any other symptoms, or a seizure; or (b) has persistent abdominal pain for two or more hours, or intermittent abdominal pain associated with fever, dehydration, or other signs or symptoms of illness.

Your child may return to the center when a temperature has been absent for 24 hours without medication. Vomiting and diarrhea must have stopped for 24 hours. An exception is made if the fever is due to vaccinations.

Persons with highly contagious conditions that pose a health risk to others which include but are not limited to, strep throat, pink eye, impetigo, lice, scabies, shigellosis, scarlet fever, scarlatina, chicken pox, mumps, measles and giardiasis, are not permitted to attend Wee Disciples. For exact information on your child's return after a contagious disease is diagnosed, please contact a staff member.

If a child attends with a contagious condition, we will notify families through a notification in the computer system.

EMERGENCIES:

If your child becomes ill or has a serious injury while at Wee Disciples, you will be contacted immediately.

THE CHILD WILL NEED TO BE PICKED UP FROM THE CENTER WITHIN 30 MINUTES OF NOTIFICATION. Please be sure to keep your emergency contact sheet up to date and notify us of any changes that might affect our ability to contact you in an emergency.

Medical Emergencies/First Aid:

Minor bumps and scrapes are inevitable, but we make every effort to keep your children safe through supervision and childproofing. Minor injuries will receive appropriate first aid, and if an emergency injury or illness occurs, you will be contacted immediately. If we are unable to contact either parent, we will call the emergency contact numbers supplied to us to make the medical decisions for the child. If necessary, your child will be transported by ambulance to the nearest hospital. Parents are responsible for costs involved in emergency medical treatment, including transportation if required. If a child is suspected of having ingested any poisonous or toxic substance, we will immediately call the Emergency Montana Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222.

MEDICATIONS:

Prescription and non-prescription medications may be administered to your child by qualified staff when the proper paperwork is on file. The medication must be labeled with your child's name, and prescriptions must be in the original container with the proper label and must be a current prescription.

Please be sure that the proper instructions on the log match that of the instructions on the prescription and it is filled out daily for the length of the prescription.

We can NOT administer expired medications or medications prescribed to another person, even in the same family.

Wee Disciples reserves the right to refuse services to any child believed to be in ill health based on staff's observations or judgment.

IF YOUR CHILD WILL NOT BE ATTENDING:

Please inform us when your child will not be attending Wee Disciples; we deeply appreciate it if you let us know. If your child is ill, or if you have advance notice for appointments or vacations, we

would like to know so we can adjust our staff and meal count accordingly. We consider your child an important part of our day and we like to know that they are being cared for and are safe. No refunds or credits are given for days your child does not attend.

FAMILY COMMUNICATION:

Occasionally daily communication is lacking a full picture. If you feel you need a conference regarding your child's care, please feel free to contact the director and set up a conference. We really have the welfare of your child as our priority. We may use electronic communication applications. These would be available for staff to view, input data with a computer or if you prefer not to use this method, you have the option for your child's information to be communicated by other methods.

SIGNING IN AND OUT:

Each person on your child's registration form that is authorized to pick up the child may have a unique digit code, used as a digital signature. These numbers indicate to us who dropped off or picked up the child and that they received the notes or information on the sign-in screen. An adult should always accompany each child and be sure they are successfully checked in/checked out. If your child is being picked up by a family member or friend that does not usually pick them up, we will ask for a picture ID and might even call the primary family member for verification before releasing the child. Please notify staff of any changes in pick up or delivery of child. Important information is on the note page, and each parent might be notified on the sign in/sign out screen of information.

CHILD CARE HOURS AND CLOSURES:

Wee Disciples opens at 7:00 a.m. and closes promptly at 6:00 p.m. daily Monday thru Friday. Failure to pick up your child before 6:00 p.m. may result in late fees of \$5.00 per child for every 15 minutes after 6:00 p.m. If this becomes a chronic problem, it can lead to termination of services. Should you have an emergency situation we will try to accommodate your needs, please call us with any changes at 771-7882.

We are not in operation on the following holidays: New Year's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and the day after. Should there be a need to close for any other reason we will notify each family.

EMERGENCY RELOCATION:

If it becomes necessary for Wee Disciples to evacuate the building, the children and staff will walk to Peace Place at 1315 Central Avenue.

In the event of an emergency requiring Wee Disciples to relocate the children out of the neighborhood immediately we would execute the evacuation plan and van children to Peace Lutheran at 3340 11th Ave. S. 761-7343.

If you have questions concerning Wee Disciples emergency preparedness and relocation plans, please ask the director of Wee Disciples.

Preschool Classes for children who attend preschool only, we follow the Great Falls Public Schools and we will not have preschool learning during GFPS school vacation days.

TUITION AND FEES:

Initial Payment is due on or before the first day your child will attend Wee Disciples

Wee Disciples fee policy is as follows: Daily rate for infants is \$58, children 3-5 years is \$55, and 6-12 years is \$50 per day. Discounts are given for full-time status and advance payments. Registration Fee - \$50.00 per child

Children 3 years of age and older-\$1100.00 per month (\$550 before the 1st and the 15th of the month)

Children 6 weeks to 3 years of age-\$1160.00 per month (\$580.00 before the 1st and the 15th of the month).

Preschool is offered from 8:30-11:00 for ages 4 and 5. You can choose any number of days/week with the following fees: 2 days \$240, 3 days \$275, 5 days \$325.

Tuition remains the same regardless of attendance with the following exception.

If a child is hospitalized four nights or more, payment will not be required for that child for the days they are hospitalized. If there are siblings enrolled at Wee Disciples who cannot attend due to that hospitalization, they will not be charged; however, if siblings attend Wee Disciples, they will be charged. If the hospitalization is longer than the four nights or five days, board approval is required. Proof of hospitalization will be required.

Annual supply/curriculum fee of \$100 for full-time child-care/Preschool children and \$50 for Preschool only and part-time childcare children—must be paid in full by the first day of school. Multiple child discounts are offered; you must talk to the director. Bills are due on or before the 1st and the 15th of each month. There is a 5-day grace period. On the 6th day, a \$10.00 per day late fee will be accessed to your account. If payment is not received on the 8th day after payment is due, your child will be refused attendance in the program until account is paid in full.

Checks returned due to insufficient funds will be charged a \$30.00 returned check fee.

A two-week notice of withdrawal is required. If your child misses more than 5 days without notice, their spot will be forfeited.