

Parent Handbook 2021



St. Paul's Child Care Center

A Full Day - Year Round
Infant-Preschool

Educational Child Care Program

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Dear Parents,

Welcome to our Child Care Center. This Center was begun **by** Christians but **for** and **with** whoever finds their way here. We welcome everyone regardless of their religion as well as those with no faith tradition. We invite you in partnership to help create the best place for our children. We are providing an environment informed by our faith and responding to the Christian principles of love for our neighbor.

Christianity may or may not be your faith. For me as Chaplain to the children and their families and Pastor of the church this means that we remember the images and stories of our Bible with its Jewish and Christian parts. But also, and more practically, we are committed to a workplace and educational setting that fosters understanding, kindness, compassion, forgiveness and caring. We see these as the way we live out our faith and not merely words to speak. We do not see ourselves as experts in how to be holy but as sinners glad for the forgiveness of God and asking for help and guidance to be more like the people God calls us to be. This means that we see everyone as equals, and welcome, listen to, accept, respect and love all the diverse people of whatever creed, race, gender, sexual orientation or physical ability. These differences are things to celebrate and learn from. We want to be examples of love in action for our children and for each other. Insofar as we live that out, we are fulfilling our mission and answering the call to be "ministers of reconciliation," sisters and brothers to all God's children.

We hope this will be more than a day care center and preschool for you. We know it to be part of a community of love, hope and compassion and by that I do not mean we are always solemn and serious. Indeed, this high minded theology is most clearly seen in active listening, smiles and hugs. For me, this love does not start with me but comes from the love of a God who sent his Son for the sake of the world. Welcome.

In peace,

Pastor Jim

Statement of Philosophy and Goals

School Philosophy

St. Paul's Child Care Center's mission is to provide for the physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual growth of its children consistent with Christian principles, in a safe and healthy environment.

We view each child as an individual, developing at his/her own pace. Our teachers support this theory and are extremely child centered, while maintaining a nurturing and caring atmosphere. St. Paul's Child Care Center admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin.

School Goals

The goals supporting the Center's mission are:

- A loving and caring environment for children.
- To foster mutual respect for self and others.
- To establish a stimulating and developmentally appropriate early childhood education.
- A consistent and stable environment fostering a sense of security in young children.
- A place where each child is regarded as a child of God.

Organization of the Center

History/Facilities

St. Paul's Child Care Center opened its doors in April 2000 and features safety technology with our newly updated surveillance and keycard entrance system. We have an open floor plan for the different age groups, an indoor play area, a rubber-surfaced fenced-in playground and a large fenced-in grass area for outdoor activities. The newly remodeled office overlooks the classrooms.



Structure

The center has four different age groups: Infants (ages 6 weeks to 18 months) Toddlers (ages 18 months to 3 years), Threes and Fours (Pre-K).

Transitioning procedures, where children are slowly and consistently introduced to the class they are moving to, are employed. The decision to move the child is made jointly by the Director/Assistant Director and the teachers. Four factors are taken into consideration: the age of the child, his/her "readiness" in relation to the composition of the group into which he/she will be moving, whether there is space in that group, and state requirements. In all cases, the best interest of the child is always at the forefront of all decisions.

The Center's maximum capacity for licensing is 48 children.

The group composition is as follows:

Infants: capacity for 8 full time children, **Toddlers:** capacity for 10 full time children, **Threes:** capacity for 14 full time children, **and Fours:** Capacity for 16 full time children.

Teachers

The Head Teacher of each room is required to have formal college level training in Early Childhood Education or a related field. We are very proud that in relation to industry standards we have a relatively high staff retention rate. We select our staff very carefully to make sure they "fit" with our nurturing and caring culture. In terms of staffing, whenever

possible, and as the need arises, we try to exceed the state mandated child/teacher ratios with teachers that float from one room to the next. We always adhere to the state mandated teacher/child ratio in each group.

The Daily Schedule/Curriculum

Infants: We follow each infant's individual schedule. The children enjoy songs, books, outside time, art experiences, gross motor exploration and one on one time with his/her teacher(s). The Infant Room provides weekly theme-based lesson plans and uses the NYS Early Learning Guidelines as a guide. These plans cover each child's specific language, social/emotional, physical and cognitive development. An assessment tool, based on the NYS Early Learning Guidelines, is used by the teachers for each child two times per year. Formal Parent-Teacher Conferences are offered two times per at the time of these assessments.



Toddlers & Preschool: Toddler and Preschool Rooms both have daily schedules that are followed to give children a sense of routine and so they can predict each day's events, fostering a sense of security. Each also follows a detailed weekly lesson plan using the NYS Early Learning Guidelines/Common Core Standards as a framework and these inform the parents of what activities will take place each day. The activities are chosen to provide growth in different areas such as, fine and gross motor, preliteracy and math and counting skills. We provide outside time, circle time, art activities, science exploration and sensory experiences. An assessment tool, based on the NYS Early Learning Guidelines/Common Core Standards, is used by the teachers for each child two times per year and formal Parent Teacher Conferences are offered at that time. Our preschool rooms use Second Step Early Learning Program to reinforce social emotional skills. Our children in the Fours Classroom get ready for kindergarten by focusing on language and literacy, readiness and writing and numbers and math. The Fours Room uses the resources of *Get Set for School* from the creators of *Learning/Handwriting without Tears*. *Bright wheel App*

All classes use the Bright Wheel app to record general daily activities (naps, diapering, food eaten, etc.). Throughout the day your child's teachers will provide a complete report of the day. Feel free to discuss any specific details with your child's teacher throughout the day.

Weekly Special Activities

Pictured: Soccer class fun!

St. Paul's Child Care Center has weekly Music, Spanish, Chapel and Soccer. The Music Teacher, along with her guitar, has a weekly visit with each classroom. She brings different musical instruments and songs each time. The children learn rhythm, instrument names and best of all to enjoy music. Hello and goodbye songs are sung each time as a way of warming up and preparing for the end of the session. The Toddler and Preschool groups attend Soccer Classes weekly. The goal of soccer with Super Soccer Stars is to teach soccer skills in a fun, noncompetitive, educational environment. The philosophy is to use soccer to nurture, to build self-confidence, and to develop teamwork in every class. Each child improves at his or her own rate while having endless fun. In Spanish both the Toddler and Preschool groups enjoy songs, movement and rhyming games to promote Spanish language skills. They start out each class with a song to get their bodies and minds ready for some learning fun. During Chapel the children spend time with our Pastor singing songs, listening to and telling stories and getting acquainted with our Church.



Center Policies

Admission/Enrollment

St. Paul's Child Care Center is open to children between the ages of 6 weeks and 5 years. As openings occur, admission is offered to children on the waiting list for the age group. In order to be placed on a waiting list, you

must submit a completed **application** and a **non-refundable \$100.00** application fee. This fee does not guarantee future enrollment. After a spot has been offered and accepted, the enrollment agreement and necessary paperwork will be sent to be completed by the parent(s). The enrollment agreement and other paperwork must be completed and returned along with the first month's tuition payment (non-refundable) and then the child will be officially placed in his or her class.

Tuition

Annual Tuition

- ❖ The annual tuition for a student is billed monthly at 1/12th the annual fee.
- ❖ No adjustments are made for temporary schedule changes, snow days, holidays, illness, personal vacations or center closings. **There are no "makeup days" or "day trades" for days missed.**
- ❖ Unless prior special arrangements have been made "AM or PM only attendance" is billed for a full day. However, parents may use any part of the day that is appropriate for their needs.
- ❖ Yearly tuition changes go into effect on January 1, following the approval by the Child Care Center's Advisory Committee's annual budget review. This review takes place in the fall, and the changes will be communicated to all parents prior to January 1.

New or Repeat Contracts

- ❖ **New Contracts:** The tuition charge for all New Contracts is determined by the charge in place on the child's start date. Contracts must be signed on or before the start date.
- ❖ **Repeat Contracts:** We ask these to be signed on or before the start of the new enrollment agreement as the contracts are dated to reflect the child's first day attending for the new term.

Term of Contracts

- ❖ All contracts, regardless of starting date, continue through 12/31 of the current contract year.

Tuition Payment and Modifications

Tuition is paid by check, cash, money order, or online and is due by the 1st of each month. If not received by the 5th of the month, a 1.5% service charge will be added. In addition, parents whose checks default will be billed a \$20 service charge. If two children from the same family are enrolled full time, a 10% discount is applied to the lower tuition. If three or more children from the same family are enrolled full time, a 15% discount is applied to the lowest tuition.

Withdrawal

To withdraw a child from the program, a written, dated notice must be received 30 days before the actual date of withdrawal. Tuition will be charged for one month following the date of the notice. If parents opt to stop tuition payments, the child will come off of the roster and can only reenroll if the space has not yet been filled. St. Paul's Child Care Center reserves the right to withdraw a child from the program if there is failure to comply with the terms of the Center policies, or because of disruptive behavior. In the later instance, for a reasonable time, the staff will do all they can to help with the child's adjustment. If all corrective options are exhausted, a request to withdraw the child may be the only option.

Pandemic Tuition Policy

Should the center need to close for Pandemic reasons or lack of staff due to quarantine, full tuition will be due for the first two weeks of closure. If the center is closed longer than two weeks, 50% of tuition will be due. Parents may give a one month notice to withdraw from the program if they feel it is in the best interest of their family. 50% of the tuition will be due during the notice period. A full registration fee will be required to re-enroll in the program after the pandemic.

Covid procedures

Every family signs a waiver. There is also a daily survey that is completed by every family and staff member. We complete temperature checks at the door before entry. We are following the New York state travel guidelines. We require every

new family to complete a covid test before the start date. If a child shows any symptoms of covid, they are excluded. They must complete a covid test and symptoms must be gone before returning. We also have separate art boxes with art materials for every child. Each child also has a basket in their classroom fridge to hold their cups, snacks or lunch. Pre-k 3 & 4 classrooms are wearing masks. All staff are also wearing masks, protective gear and a change of shoes strictly for the center. When it is not too cold or hot we try to go outside for as much as possible. If we close due to covid exposure tuition remains the same unless we are closed for an entire month. All staff are covid tested monthly unless they have been vaccinated.

Mask Policy

Our Preschool 3's and 4's classrooms are required to wear a mask daily. Parents will provide extra masks in case they become wet from saliva or dirty from falling on the floor. Teachers will provide help to any child who needs to change their mask. All dirty masks are sent home daily. There will be mask breaks for morning snack, lunch time, afternoon snacks and at any small group activity that has a lot of space outdoors. The masks are required to be worn on the playground because the children are within 6 feet of each other at times. All masks must fit your child properly. All staff are required to wear a mask daily. They may wear a face shield if desired. All Parents must wear a mask at drop off and pick up.

Security (Key Cards/Fobs)

On the first day a child attends St. Paul's Child Care Center, parents will be given access cards or fobs. The program used is Keri Security Systems. **The access card will allow entrance into the center from 7:30 AM until 5:30 PM, Monday through Friday.** There is a \$10.00 deposit requested for each card/fob issued. This will be returned as soon the cards/fobs are turned in. Upon withdrawing your child(ren), please return the cards/fobs. It is important to notify the office immediately of lost cards/fobs so they can be deactivated. There is a \$10.00 fee to replace all lost or damaged cards. We ask parents to make every effort to remember to bring their card/fob each day as it is very distracting for the staff to have to answer the door.

Late Pickup & Fees

St. Paul's Child Care Center is open from 7:30 AM until 5:30 PM. We discourage parents from coming late to pick up their child. The staff often has commitments and when a parent comes late to pick up it often disrupts the staff's schedule. We realize that situations can occur beyond your control that can result in late pickup. Please call to notify staff immediately when you cannot make it on time, so arrangements can be made.

A late fee of \$15 will be charged, per child, for every 15 minutes or portion thereof that your child is at school past the 5:30 closing. At 6:00PM this fee goes up to \$20 per 15 minutes or portion thereof. This late fee is needed to cover the overtime pay of the staff members who must remain past 5:30 PM, since their normal pay stops. Be advised that two staff members are required to be present in the Center at all times, by NYS child care center regulations, even if there is one child present. Parents will be sent a bill to cover this cost and we ask that payment be made as soon as it is received.

If a child has not been picked up on time and we have not been contacted by the parent/pick up person to notify us of a late pickup we will first call the parents. If we cannot reach the parents we will contact the other authorized pick up people listed in the child's file. If we cannot contact any of the listed emergency contacts and have not heard back from any of them by 6:30PM we will contact the local police.

Initial Adjustment

Children who are new to the Center may require a period of adjustment to help feel comfortable with their new surroundings. Parents should talk to the teachers and discuss how to help the child, so a plan can be tailored for the individual child and situation. We want to be sure that both parents and children are comfortable and secure with the Center.

Arrival

The center opens promptly at 7:30 AM. Your Key Card will not work before this time. Please do not ring the bell and try to enter the center before the 7:30 opening. This makes staff uncomfortable since they are not permitted to let you in any sooner. When you bring your child in the morning, please bring him or her into the classroom and make sure the teachers know you have arrived. Please let the teachers know of any pertinent information about your child (i.e. a late night, Mom is away on business etc.).

Clothing

Please dress your child in appropriate clothing for a childcare setting, including comfortable shoes. Remember your child will be wearing this apparel on the playground and for running and climbing. Children can sometimes be involved in messy activities so we recommend they do not wear anything you do not want soiled.

Children should always have at least one spare set of clothing at the Center. In addition, your child will need a warm coat, hat, mittens, boots, and snow pants in the cold weather as we get outside whenever possible. Please mark all clothing that may be removed within the course of the day with your child's name, especially gloves and boots/extra shoes.

Diapers

Parents are responsible for providing their own diapers, wipes, and any non-medicated creams you wish the teachers to use. A nonmedicated topical cream permission form must be completed and signed before staff can use any creams or ointments on your child. Children in diapers are changed approximately every two hours or immediately if there has been a bowel movement. Before diapering clean exam paper is pulled onto the diapering surface and the teacher puts on gloves. After diapering the teacher washes both the child's and their own hands. The changing table is disinfected after each use.



Potty Training



Parents, who believe their child is ready for potty training, should notify the teachers about their successes and efforts at home, and the teachers will do the same with their successes at the Center. Until the child shows signs of consistent readiness, encouraging the child before they are ready is both time consuming and confusing. We are happy to work with you by taking your child to the potty at consistent intervals during the day.

Food



We are a NUT FREE Center. We do not provide any nut products and parents must only provide NUT FREE food. The Center provides a morning and afternoon snack for children 18 months and over. We follow CACFP (Child and Adult Care Food Program) guidelines. Snacks usually consist of crackers, pretzels, vegetables, fruit, milk and occasionally the results of a classroom cooking project. Sugary foods are avoided for their lack of nutritional value.

Parents are responsible for providing a nutritious lunch for their child. Teachers may ask children with items of heavy sugar or artificial content to save such items until they get home. Parents of children less than 18 months will also need to provide lunch for their child and are responsible for providing breastmilk/formula or milk as well as any cereal, jar food or finger food needed. Infant parents can update the staff on the changes that occur in the infant's eating schedule as well as the introduction of solids. Infant parents will update the written feeding schedule as changes occur. Please be sure that bottles and sippy cups are labeled with first and last name as per the licensing regulations of NYS. Please also label your child's lunchbox or other feeding items. Teachers will feed young infants, but as they get older, they will be encouraged to feed themselves. We realize that although it may be messy, it is an important part of their developmental process.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO INFORM YOUR CHILD'S TEACHERS AND THE OFFICE OF ANY ALLERGIES.

Nap and Rest Time



Rest and Nap procedures vary with age group. Infants sleep several times a day, each in their own Center provided crib in the infant area. Older infants are gradually moved toward one midday nap on a cot to prepare them for entering the toddler room. Toddlers and preschoolers have nap/rest time after lunch and sleep/rest on cots in their own classrooms. Children rest on their cots for a short while and if they do not sleep will be provided books or other quiet activities while the other children sleep. Parents provide all sheets and blankets which are taken home each Friday, washed, and returned on Monday.

Weather (Inclement) Closings

The Center's policy is to stay open as much as possible. However, when the weather is inclement, it may be necessary to; close early, delay the Center's opening or close the Center for the entire day. We follow the lead of the Blind Brook Schools (Rye Brook) in the matter of Inclement Weather closings, and will close if Blind Brook Schools close. In the event Blind Brook indicates a "delayed opening," we will do the same. For example a 2 hour delay means our center will open at 9:30 AM. We will do our best to send out an email blast to notify of a delay or closing.



Behavior Management Policies

St. Paul's helps children develop self-control and learn acceptable forms of social behavior by explaining the limits and providing close supervision. Whenever possible, other children will be involved in the discussion. Positive reinforcement will always be used as well as re-direction. St. Paul's expects children to behave age appropriately, as harmful physical aggression or destruction of materials is unacceptable. Teachers share these expectations with children and their parents as they adjust to the Center. Teachers help children resolve conflicts by facilitating their use of words in explaining needs and feelings while guiding them towards positive conflict resolution. Teachers encourage children to find acceptable ways to problem solve by being aware of each individual's activities and by intervening when necessary. We create and foster an environment of positive interaction and reduction of conflict by: positive role modeling, reminders to cooperate, and praise and support in using words to resolve conflicts.

Sickness Policies

General Sickness Policies

Parents are often faced with the decisions about bringing a sick child to school or keeping a child that may be sick at home. Please keep in mind the home and center environments are very different. Neither the sick child nor the healthy children can receive the care and attention they need when a sick child is at a childcare center. Teachers know your child's typical behavior and are generally good judges of a child's illness.



It is important to realize that in a group situation such as this, illness (both major and minor) spreads rapidly in spite of everyone's best efforts. Many of the specific conditions listed below can become epidemic in a group setting. Our policies are designed with this in mind.

Parents will be notified whenever there is a contagious illness in the center. We will call parents or authorized persons as soon as a child shows symptoms

of illness during the day, and request your child is picked up as soon as possible. A teacher or the Director/Assistant Director may also refuse to admit a child who appears to be ill. Children may return to school after the contagious period has passed; when they are fever free for 72 hours (without medication); and when they are able to resume normal activities at the Center. We strongly recommend that children with questionable symptoms stay home.

Non-Specific Conditions

Your child should not be at school if:

- ❖ they have a temperature of 100.4 degrees or more
- ❖ has a communicable disease
- ❖ is vomiting or has diarrhea
- ❖ is unable to participate in the usual daily activities.

Your child may return to school when:

- ❖ the fever has been absent, without fever reducer, for 72 hours
- ❖ nausea, vomiting and diarrhea have been absent for 24 hours
- ❖ the contagious stage of the communicable disease has passed ❖ a child under a doctor's care has permission to return ❖ the child can now participate in all activities.

Colds are common for children. Any child well enough to come to the Center with a cold will be expected to participate with other children in all the usual inside and outside activities.

Specific Conditions

Conjunctivitis: A condition of the eye caused by infection. An eye pink in color and watery can be caused by an infection or an allergy. A yellow crusting eye is often associated with a bacterial infection and needs to be treated by a medical professional. A child must be out of the Center for 24 hours from the time conjunctivitis is treated. If the Center has a question regarding the need for treatment or risk to other children, parents may be

asked to provide a note from their child's pediatrician before the child is allowed to return.

Coxsackie (Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease): A viral infection characterized by a fever and tiny blisters on the palms, soles of feet and in the mouth, following a 3-6 day incubation period. Children may exhibit a low-grade fever, sore throat, and abdominal discomfort during the incubation period. Your child should remain home if feverish, if any oozing sores are present, and if generally uncomfortable.

Ringworm: A very contagious fungal infection of the scalp or skin. Symptoms include a rash that is often itchy and flaky. Ringworm on the scalp may leave a flaky patch of baldness and on other areas of the skin; ringworm causes a reddish ring like rash that may itch or burn. The same fungus that infects humans can also infect domestic animals such as cats and dogs. The infection can be acquired from pets as well as from infected humans. Children with ringworm should minimize close contact with other children until effectively treated and the lesions shrink.

Chicken Pox: A child with chicken pox must stay home until all the blisters have scabbed. This often takes a week to happen after the initial outbreak of the blisters.

Ear Infections: Although ear infections are not contagious, they can cause permanent damage to the ear. An infant or child with a suspected ear infection may be asked to have it checked by their pediatrician. A child may return once they are fever-free and able to function in the group, i.e., not crying continuously or lacking energy.

Head Lice: When a teacher has reason to believe that a child has head lice, the child will be sent home. The child's head/scalp/hair must be treated and the nits (eggs) removed. Even after treatment, nits remain in the hair and must be combed or picked out. A child must be nit-free before he/she may return to the Center. All clothing and blankets must be laundered.

Impetigo: This is a highly contagious skin infection that usually starts as small red bumps. The bumps form clear or pus-filled blisters, which can break, leaving a honey colored encrusted sore. A child may return when the sores are no longer blistering or oozing. In any case, a child should be treated for 24 hours before returning to the Center.

Strep Throat: This is a contagious bacterial infection with a variety of symptoms. Have a doctor check for strep throat if your child complains of a sore throat, has a rash or a fever. A child with strep throat must be on antibiotics for 24 hours and fever-free before returning to the Center. Your child must be rechecked for strep after the medication to insure that the strep is gone. Certain forms of streptococcus infection can be more serious and develop into Scarlet Fever, a more serious condition. As prevention, all forms of streptococcus infection should be treated quickly to prevent complications. We will notify you if any cases of strep have been identified in the Center so that you can discuss the appropriate precautions with your pediatrician.

We hope this explains more in-depth our philosophies and policies. Please always feel free to speak to the director, assistant director or teachers with any concerns.