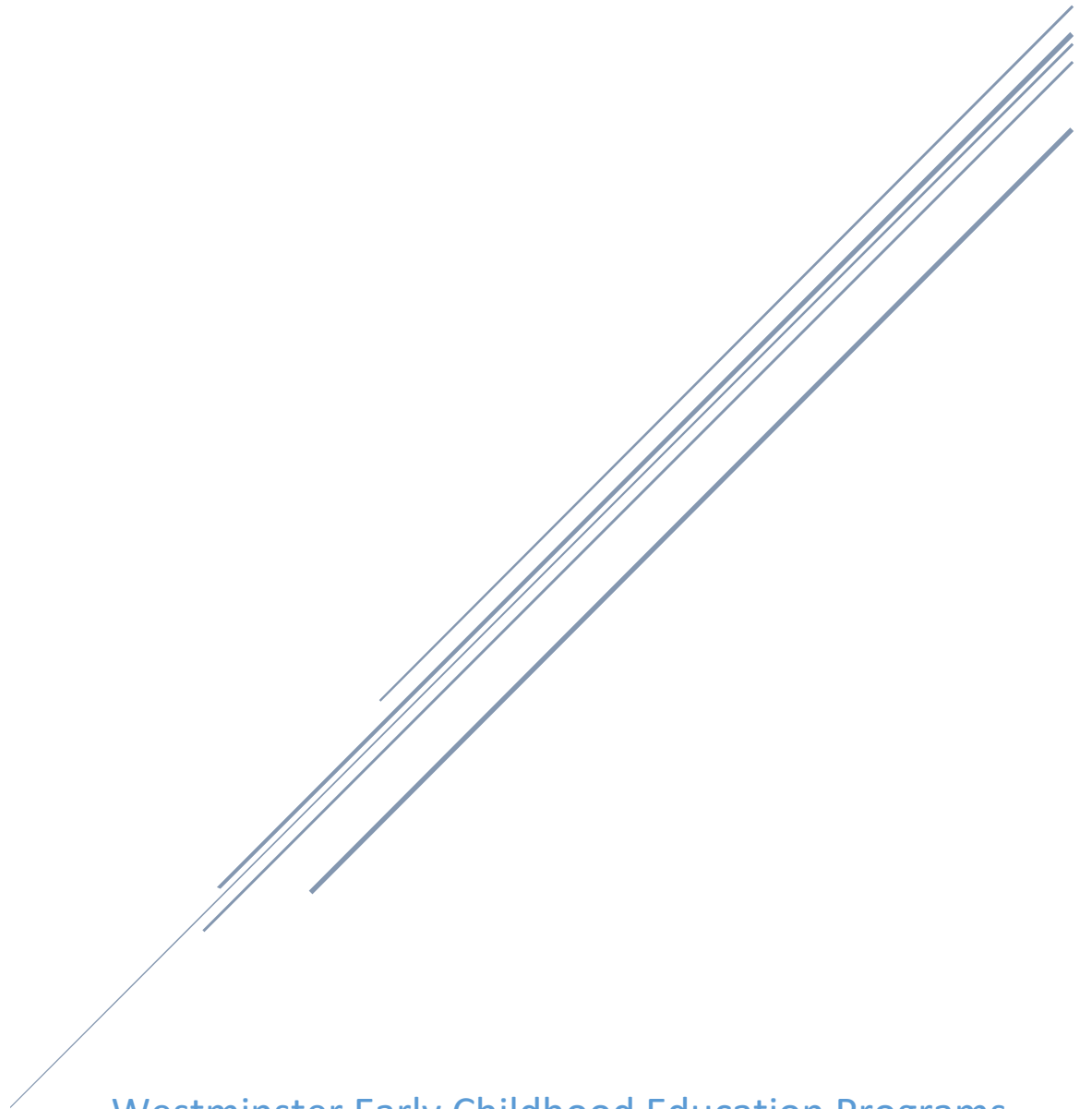


PARENT & FAMILY HANDBOOK

Nursery School



Westminster Early Childhood Education Programs
2024 –2025

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Overview

Phone Numbers

Office/room location	Phone Number
<i>Nursery school office</i>	412-835-2906
<i>Child development center</i>	412-835-9450
<i>Westminster church office</i>	412-835-6630

Location

2040 Washington Road

Upper St Clair, PA 15241

www.wecep.org

History

WECEP began as Westminster Nursery School in the fall of 1958 when Westminster Presbyterian Church recognized the need for a community preschool. Westminster Child Development Center opened as a church mission in 1983. Both functioned as two separate and distinct programs until 2015. At that time, both programs were organized under the Westminster Early Childhood Education Programs (WECEP), LLC.

Accreditation and Licensing Information

As a Pennsylvania Department of Education (DOE) licensed facility, we follow the standards set forth for private academic instruction.

As a Pennsylvania Department of Human Services licensed program, we hold a valid certificate of compliance, demonstrating fulfilment of state regulations with regards to the education, health, and safety standards.

PA Department of Human Services: <https://www.dhs.pa.gov>

Staff

WECEP's Nursery School teaching staff consists of highly qualified and credentialed staff.

Philosophy & Mission

Philosophy

We believe:

- Children are unique individuals who develop at their own pace.
- Children learn best when they are actively involved in their environment.
- Children learn best in a safe, nurturing, and creative environment.
- It is essential for children to test their own ideas and become confident, independent, and inquisitive learners.
- Children benefit from a strong guardian/teacher partnership.

As a ministry of Westminster Presbyterian Church, WECEP espouses Christian beliefs, values, and traditions. As a proponent of multicultural and racial diversity, WECEP respects the beliefs, values, and traditions of all peoples.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to create an educational community which provides the highest quality early childhood learning experiences in a safe, nurturing, and creative environment. Through a play based, developmentally appropriate curriculum centered around spirituality, we will offer young children an environment filled with discovery and the opportunity for children to develop social, emotional, physical, language, and cognitive skills. These skills will provide them with a strong foundation for future academic and social success, and instill in them an excitement to be lifelong learners.

Child & Family Outcome Statement

Child outcome: Children will experience growth and learning in a loving environment that offers safe, fun, and challenging opportunities.

Family outcome: Families will be active partners in the education process. We welcome family participation in many forms. With proper clearances, family members may assist in the classroom for a firsthand view of their child's learning experience. WECEP teachers and administration will serve as a support system to the families during their child's enrollment. For more information on how you can be involved please contact the office or speak with your child's teacher.

Program Information

Curriculum

Our curriculum focuses on the following areas:

- Social/Emotional Development: Self Awareness and Management, Establishing and Maintaining Relationships, Decision Making and Responsible Behavior
- Approaches to Learning through Play: Constructing and Gathering Knowledge, Organizing and Understanding Information, Applying Knowledge, Learning through Experience
- Language and Literacy Development: Foundational Skills in Writing, Speaking and Listening
- Mathematical Concepts: Number Recognition and operations, Geometry, Measurement, Graphs, Data and Probability
- Scientific Thinking: Biological Sciences-Living and Non-living Organisms, Chemistry, Physics, Earth Structures, Ecology, Natural Resources, Computer and Information Technology
- Social Studies Thinking: Government, Citizenship, Economics, Geography
- Creative Thinking and Expression: Music and Movement, Dramatic Play, Visual Arts
- Health, Wellness and Physical Development: Gross Motor Coordination, Healthy Living, Safety, Fine Motor, Movement
- Spiritual: Bible Stories, Christian Values

Teachers create theme based activities and incorporate art, music, movement, problem solving, language, and literacy into all lessons. Learning centers with hands-on, developmentally appropriate activities are implemented.

The Handwriting Without Tears program is introduced at the Pre-K level. This program focuses on letter recognition and letter formation.

Outside programs such as visits from the Upper St. Clair Librarian, Creative Environmental Education and Alcosan provide a variety of activities for children.

Daily Program Schedule

The daily schedule offers opportunities for socialization, emotional development, imaginative play, language and literacy, mathematical and scientific concepts, problem solving, creative thinking and expression, physical and spiritual development through center based child initiated activities. Teacher directed activities are also offered, such as circle time, music and story time. A variety of enrichment presentations, special visitors throughout the year, and Spanish, Bible Time and science programs complement the classes.

WECEP reflects Christian beliefs, values, and traditions by modeling daily the love of God, self, and others. We encourage and develop spiritual growth through classroom teaching, reading of Bible stories, prayers, and celebrating the seasons and holidays from a Christian perspective.

Classes Offered by WECEP Nursery School:

Transition class (must be 4 ½ by September 1)

Pre-Kindergarten (must be 4 by September 1)

Pre-School 3s (must be 3 by September 1)

Pre-School Prep 2s (must be 2 by September 1)

Communication Policy:

One of the goals of WNS is to work in active partnership with parents in the development of their children. Communication is a big part of that goal. At the start of the school year, all families will receive an invitation to join the Procure Parent Engagement App. School wide events will be posted on our WECEP Facebook page: facebook.com/WECEP412

Transitions

Beginning a new school year is an exciting transition for your child. We believe it should be a positive learning adventure. We will work with you and your child to ensure the smoothest possible transition occurs as new routines and new people are introduced.

Prior to your child's first day, you will have the opportunity to tour the school, meet with your child's teachers, and communicate any anticipated concerns. You will be asked to complete a classroom intake form for your child before the start of the school year. Your child's teacher may also send home a "getting to know you" form and request a family photo to be hung in the classroom. These items provide a starting point for us to get to know your child and help them transition into the school environment.

We provide activities for pre-k classes to help with the transition from nursery school to elementary school. These activities include reading stories and talking about moving on to the next step, and a field trip on a school bus.

Distribution Policy

WECEP teachers may not distribute personal items from one family to another. Teachers may only pass out items like birthday invitations, holiday cards or other items to all children in the classroom. If parents do not have invitations or cards for all children in the class, we ask parents to mail them to the home or distribute them to families personally. Teachers may not distribute cards, invitations, etc. to specific children.

Termination of Services

Because we provide child care and education in a group setting, we must be concerned for the welfare and safety of all children and staff. We take action when a particular child or parent's behaviors threaten the safety of, or becomes abusive towards, the other children, parents, or center staff. As a result, we may disenroll the child immediately. We reserve the right to disenroll any child or terminate services as deemed necessary or appropriate at our sole discretion, with or without notice.

Drop-off & Pick-up Procedures

When arriving at the center, please park in one of the parking lots. Use caution when in the parking lots and crossing the street.

All children, enrolled or siblings of those enrolled, must be supervised at all times when on church property. Please do not leave children inside, outside, or in cars unattended. Adults dropping off or picking up must accompany children to and from their classrooms.

Please do not allow children to run in the hallways, on sidewalks, or in parking lots at drop-off or pick-up.

Upon arrival each day, parents should communicate any important information regarding the child's health, disposition, and changes in schedules, etc. This ensures that educators have current, important information about your child each day.

When children arrive, they should be greeted by their teachers, hang up belongings, wash hands, and select an activity.

Once the children are dismissed, the pick-up person is responsible for the child. For safety reasons, please do not take your child from the classroom or playground without the teacher's acknowledgment. Children must be accounted for at all times. Please only release children from the playground through the gate.

Please do not park in the handicapped spaces, unless you have proper identification to do so. USC Police will ticket violators. There are additional parking spaces available in the lot across the street. In the interest of safety, please do not leave children unattended in your car.

The driveway at the back of the building is closed to through traffic 8:30 am – 3:30 pm.

All persons who will be picking up must be listed on the Emergency Contact form (minimum age is 16). If additional individuals must be added to this list, please notify the office by email.

Please send an email to the office if someone on your Emergency Contact form (other than a parent) will be picking up your child.

If you have an emergency that requires you to make last minute alternative pick-up arrangements, please call the WNS office (412-835-2906) or email us. Such arrangements can only be made by the parent or legal guardian.

Children will not be released to any person without permission from parents or legal guardians. Staff are trained in procedures to protect each child in the program and are required to confirm the identity of any unfamiliar person before releasing a child. Staff will request a photo ID.

Staff will not release a child to any person who is impaired or in any way may endanger your child.

Late Pick-Up Policy

Westminster Nursery School requests that all children are picked up on time according to the child's classroom schedule. There is a 5 minute grace period extended without a late fee. If a child is picked up late on a regular basis, a late fee of \$2 per minute will be charged. The school recognizes the occurrence of unforeseen circumstances that would cause a parent to be late. In this case, a courtesy call (412-835-2906) is greatly appreciated.

Registration & Finance

Registration

In-house registration occurs in February and is open to:

- Children enrolled at WNS and WCDC, and their siblings, who plan to attend the following fall
- Children of Westminster Presbyterian Church members
- Children of alumni families (within 5 years)

Community registration is held after the in-house registration is completed, and is open to those in the community who do not meet the "in-house" registration requirements.

All registrations are completed online at wecep.org. Class placement is on a first come-first serve basis.

Notification of enrollment or waiting list placement is announced by the end of February.

There is a **NON-Refundable registration fee**.

Tuition

Tuition rates and details of tuition payments can be found at wecep.org. A variety of tuition payment options are available for the convenience of all families.

The first payment is due in April and is non-refundable. The second tuition payment is due in August before the onset of the school year. If payment is not received in April, your child's space will be relinquished. WECEP is a non-profit, but self-supporting community school; therefore, the WECEP Board of Directors reserves the right to investigate and act upon any delinquent account. All returned checks and late payments are subject to a \$30 fee.

Scholarships for WECEP tuition are available. Applications for scholarships are available in the WNS office.

Withdrawals

The Director must be notified one month in advance, in writing, if a child is to be withdrawn. The first month's tuition is not refundable. Subsequent payments will be refunded on a pro-rated basis if the child's space can be filled. Tuition refunds after the first day of school will only be made if the withdrawal occurs before October 15th and is due to out of state family relocation,

illness or accident of child. Temporary withdrawals for vacations or short illnesses are not reasons for refunds.

The Director reserves the right to require withdrawal of any child whose needs cannot be met by WNS staff. The administrative staff also has the authority to move any child to another class, should it be deemed necessary for the welfare of the child and/or the class.

Assessments

Assessments

Assessing children is an integral part of the WNS program. We engage in ongoing assessment which examines teaching practices, guides curriculum planning, maintains communication with parents, identifies skills and interests of each child, recognizes children that are in need of additional support, and confirms the program is meeting its goals and objectives.

A comprehensive assessment requires a multi-method approach to record a complete picture of the child's skills and abilities. This is done by using the following methods: getting to know the child, using developmental checklists, requesting input from the parents, observing the child in the classroom, and collecting the child's work samples. Formal parent-teacher conferences take place in January. Age appropriate checklists are shared with parents during parent-teacher conferences and Reports of Progress are sent home with all students in May.

The assessment information is kept in the child's file. The child's teacher and administrative staff have access to children's files. No information from the child's file is given out without the parent's written permission.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

This is a time for you to talk with the teaching staff and learn about your child's development and progress. Conference dates and times will be offered to parents by their child's teachers. It is important for parents to make every effort to attend at the scheduled time. Parents and/or teachers may request additional conferences, if either feels there is a need. All conferences, as well as the child's records, are confidential.

Developmental Concerns

When it is suspected that a child has a developmental delay or other special need, this information is communicated to families in a sensitive, supportive, and confidential manner. The parent is provided with documentation and explanation for the concern, suggested next steps, and information about resources for assessment.

Safety Policies

Site Evacuation

If it is necessary to leave the school property, the teachers and children will be relocated to the primary relocation site. The following procedures will be in effect:

- Administration will notify the police department, the site, families and the Board President.

Security System

In order to provide a safe environment for your children, a security system is in place throughout the WNS/WCDC facility. An intercom system is available in the main lobby.

Suspected Child Abuse

Mandated reporters are required by law to report suspected child abuse or neglect immediately to the Youth and Family Services Agency. Due to their contact with children, all child development professionals are considered mandated reporters.

Guidance Policy

Positive approaches to help guide children's behavior as well as to encourage sharing, caring, and active participation in resolving conflict is the primary form of guidance used in the classroom. The guidance methods include redirection of focus, reminders of the classroom rules and expectations, and teacher facilitated arbitration when necessary. Classroom rules are few in number, clearly defined, and consistently followed. Teachers and school administrators will maintain open communication with parents for the purpose of developing a strategy that will enable the child to be successful. Behavioral Observation Reports (See chart on the next page) will be used as a tool to document any behaviors seen as challenging that may interfere with the learning of the child or other children in the classroom. After three related behavioral observational reports within a 3 month period, a meeting will be set up between parent and director and/or staff to develop an intervention.

WECEP reserves the right to disenroll a child from the school if a child's behavior is aggressive, overly disruptive or dangerous to the health and/or safety of other children or the staff.

Decisions about such terminations will be made by the director and board of directors. Staff never use physical punishment and do not engage in psychological abuse or coercion. Also, staff never use threats or derogatory remarks, and neither withhold nor threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline.

Behavior Category	Definition	Behavior Examples
Aggression	Making physical contact with an adult or peer where injury may occur	Striking, pulling hair, biting, scratching, pulling clothes, kicking, spitting
Disruption/Tantrums	Causing an interruption in class or activity	Throwing items, loud vocalizations, crying, screaming, cussing
Non-compliance	Refusing to follow directions (must be intentional and defiant)	Saying “no” and turning away, making eye contact and returning to previous activity
Extreme Withdrawal	Isolating self, little to no talking or interaction, avoidance of interactions, withdrawal interferes with ability to learn	Hiding under chair for long periods of time, moving away from any group activity, reluctance to interact (more than is typical for the child)
Inappropriate Language	Using words or phrases that are offensive or rude	Profanity, insults
Teasing	Verbally abusing another child	Name calling, threatening
Unsafe Behaviors	Engaging in dangerous acts with materials	Standing on furniture, inappropriate use of classroom materials
Running Away	Leaving the area (classroom, playground) alone and without permission	
Property Damage	Deliberately impairing or destroying items	Tearing paper, breaking items, writing on items
Stereotypic/Self-stimulatory behavior (extreme)	Engaging in repetitive actions, verbal or physical, that interfere with ability to learn	Spinning objects, body rocking, flapping hands, mouthing objects
Self-injury (intentional)	Physically abusing self	Self-scratching, head banging, self-biting, skin picking

Behavior Management, Suspension, and Expulsion

Our philosophy objectives:

1. To help children feel special about themselves by learning respect for themselves and others.
2. To bring children of different races, cultures, and religious beliefs together and introduce them to diverse social backgrounds.
3. To stimulate and excite children while providing a safe, warm, loving, and healthy environment.
4. To promote harmony through the encouragement of fair play and friendship.
5. To provide varied experiences to enrich each child's conceptual understanding.

One of our goals at WECEP is to develop self-confidence in every child. The level of a child's self-confidence determines to a large degree how he/she will perform with others and how she/he handles life's problems. We teach children many things, but the most important thing we teach is the social skills necessary to become confident and successful people.

Part of self-confidence is self-regulation and it has been found to be a key attribute in children's success. All children need structure and behavior guidelines in order to develop self-regulation. At times children will challenge rules and even disregard them. We want to partner with you, the parents, in helping your child develop appropriate social skills, this can seem like a long, tough journey and it is! If we do it together, your child will be the winner. Self-confidence will grow and with appropriate social skills your child will achieve both in school and in life.

We know that children may become angry or frustrated, but we want to help them express these emotions in an appropriate way. Staff work with children to encourage them to develop self-regulation and conflict resolution skills each day. Staff will also use the following strategies as needed:

- Request assistance from program leadership to determine need for individual program modification.
- Give positive feedback to build upon strengths.
- Provide clear expectations (show or tell the child what is expected)
- Provide accommodations to increase success
- Give choices, within parameters to maintain control
- Provide access to breaks
- Provide a safe, calm down space
- Use positive reinforcement to reward desired behavior.
- Teach skills and replacement behaviors to build new abilities

If behaviors continue, a conference with the parent will be scheduled for discussion, sharing of literature, and other supportive resources and guidance as to next steps. An outside referral may

be necessary to request an assessment and interventions. WECEP staff will utilize these community resources as needed:

- Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation
- CONNECT 1.800.692.7288
- The Alliance for Infants & Toddlers
- Project DART (3-5 years old)
- Child Development Unit (Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh)
- Behavioral health organizations
- OCDEL Survey link: [PA Key Expulsion/Suspension Support Request Survey \(surveymonkey.com\)](#)
- ELRC Rapid Response Team

Employees of WECEP will participate in all required professional development activities, seek technical assistance, and engage in culturally sustaining practices based upon current needs of staff and the children and families served. Teacher's expectations, management skills, and intervention techniques will be evaluated and changed to adapt to individual circumstances. And, staff will work with therapists, special educators, and other professionals supporting the child.

WECEP will work with and support the parents and professionals if parents actively follow recommendations. If the behavior challenges are severe, and if we feel, as a team, that the child has not made any progress, by using the above-mentioned resources, we reserve the right, after professional observation, to recommend another preschool environment that would benefit the child. We may not be equipped to meet the special needs of every child, but want every child to succeed. If WECEP makes the decision to discontinue a child's enrollment in the program, we will maintain on file, a record of the circumstances, parental notification, and any action steps taken to assist with finding alternate arrangements for the family.

Note: Parents or caregivers who use profanity, threatening language, and acts of violence are all grounds for termination from our programs. WECEP has zero tolerance for behaviors and actions that make others feel threatened and unsafe. We focus on providing families and their children with a safe and comfortable environment for childcare and family support. Any individuals who disrupt the work and the sense of safety by using profanity, threatening language, and acts of violence will be asked to leave the center immediately and will face additional consequences, up to and including having their enrollment terminated.

Health Policies

All illness policies are aligned with the recommendations of Caring for Our Children.
<https://nrckids.org/CFOC>

Illness

Children may become sick during the day, or show signs or symptoms of illness prior to arrival. If you keep your child at home, please notify the director by 9:00 AM. If your child becomes ill while at school and we think it's better for him or her to be home rather in contact with other children, we'll call and ask you to pick your child up no more than one hour later. In the event of a serious accident or illness, an ambulance will be called. To ensure your child's safety, your Emergency Contact form provides a record of names, addresses, and phone numbers of those people you have authorized to pick up your child. We ask you to keep this information current, and the supply name and phone number of your family doctor.

If your child is diagnosed with a contagious disease, you are required to notify the director. Per DHS licensing, if any case of a contagious disease is reported, a health notice will be posted on the entrance doors of the school.

Refer to the table on pages 13 & 14 for a list of common childhood contagious illnesses.

Depending on the illness, a doctor's note stating the child is no longer contagious may be required to return to school.

Medication

All medication must be labeled with the child's full name. Please bring all medication to the WNS office, so it may be processed with a medication log and other necessary paperwork.

Prescription medication must have the original packaging with the doctor's orders of dosage on the package, as well as the child's full name. Staff will not dispense medication without written parental consent. Epi-pens, along with all other medications, must be in their original packaging. All staff is trained in the administration of Epi-pens.

Handwashing

In order to maintain a healthy environment and reduce the risk of transmitting infectious diseases, all children, staff, and volunteers will wash their hands upon entering any WECEP classroom.

Health Standards

All health assessment forms must be current, complete, and submitted annually for children 2 years and older. The form must be completed, signed, and dated by the physician.

Per DHS licensing, children are required to have the immunizations in the timeline of the recommendation of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Please see the immunization schedule for children using the link below. When a child in the program is under immunized because of a medical condition, or the family's beliefs, we must have handwritten documentation by either physician for medical reason, or parent if due to family beliefs.

<https://publications.aap.org/redbook/pages/Immunization-Schedules?autologincheck=redirected>

In addition to the illnesses referenced in the table that follows, we may require a health care provider clearance for other illnesses at our discretion.

Illness	Criteria for Return
Abdominal Pain which is persistent and continues two or more hours	When symptoms no longer present
Boil, abscess, or cellulitis	When lesion(s) are covered and drainage is contained in covering/bandage
Chicken Pox/Varicella	When all sores have dried and crusted, usually after 6 days
Conjunctivitis (eye discharge) or pink eye accompanied by a fever, behavioral changes, or a recommendation for exclusion from the health department	24 hours after start of treatment and when fever and behavioral changes are no longer present and symptoms of red, watery eyes are resolved
Coughing (severe) & Croup	When symptoms are improving or no longer present
COVID-19	Health Care Provider clearance required
Cytomegalovirus accompanied by a fever	When fever has resolved (24 hours with no medication)
Diarrhea – including conditions with diarrhea symptoms (campylobacter, Yersina, Giardiasis, Rotavirus)	Must be free from diarrhea for 24 hours. Bloody diarrhea caused by Cryptosporidium requires a Health Care Provider clearance to return.
Diphtheria	Health Care Provider clearance required
E-coli	Health care provider and public health authority clearances required
Fever greater than or equal to 100.4	When fever is below 100.4 without the use of medication for 24 hours.
Fifth Disease (Human Parvovirus) accompanied by fever or behavior change or the child has an underlying blood disorder, such as sickle cell disease, or compromised immune system; children with these conditions may shed large amounts of virus and may appear ill	When symptoms are no longer present
Hand-Foot-Mouth disease (coxsackievirus) accompanied by mouth ulcers or blisters and no control of drooling or fever or behavior change	When the child has stopped drooling, does not have exposed open sores, and is fever free
Head lice/nits or other infestations	When all signs of lice/nits or other infestations are absent for a period of 24 hours
Hepatitis A virus	Health Care provider clearance

Hepatitis B virus	Health Care provider clearance required and skin lesions, if any, are dry or able to be completely covered by a bandage
Herpes Simplex accompanied by mouth ulcers or blisters and no control of drooling or fever or behavior change	When the child has stopped drooling and does not have exposed open sores
Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV/AIDS)	Health Care Provider clearance required and skin lesions, if any, are dry or able to be completely covered by a bandage
Impetigo	When 24 hours have passed since topical, oral, or other systemic antibiotics were started, if the sores can be kept clean and dry and if they can be completely covered.
Influenza/Flu (including H1N1 and H5N1) accompanied by fever	Child's fever and signs of fever must be resolved for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications
Lyme Disease (or other tickborne diseases) accompanied by fever	When fever is no longer present
Measles	Health Care provider clearance required
Meningitis (bacterial or viral)	Health Care provider clearance required
Mononucleosis accompanied by fever and/or behavior change	When fever is no longer present
MRSA (Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus)	Health Care provider clearance required
Mumps	Health Care provider clearance required
Pertussis (whooping cough)	Health Care provider clearance required
Pneumonia if accompanied by fever, severe coughing, rapid breathing, or behavior change	When symptoms are no longer present
Ringworm	After treatment has been started
Roseola (Human Herpesvirus 6) accompanied by fever	When fever is no longer present
Rubella	Health Care provider clearance required
Salmonella	Health Care provider clearance required
Scabies	After treatment has been completed
Shigella	Health care provider clearance
Strep Throat or other streptococcal infection	24 hours after initial antibiotic treatment and when fever is no longer present
Tuberculosis	Health Care Provider clearance required
Vomiting	When symptoms are no longer present over a 24 hour period

General Information

Food Policy/Snack/Nutrition

WECEP is a tree nut/peanut free facility. Foods that may cause allergic reactions in some children (peanuts and tree nuts) **must** be avoided. This includes all items with labels saying “may contain”, “processed on shared equipment”, and/or “processed in a facility that processes nuts”. Teachers will make parents aware of the known food allergies in the classroom.

Please refer to the healthy snack list for acceptable snacks/treats. No home-made treats will be permitted due to the possibility of cross-contamination.

Toys from Home

Toys from home, except for a special item needed for a transitional period or during a special class activity (show and tell), are not permitted.

Items for show and tell, etc. will not resemble a weapon.

WECEP is not responsible for damaged, lost, or stolen toys.

Clothing

Please dress your child in comfortable clothing, suitable for active play. All clothing should be clearly marked with the child’s name.

Children are often taken outside to play. Please be aware of the weather and send a jacket with your child if you would like them to wear one while outside. Children who do not bring jackets will still be taken outside with the understanding that you would not like them to wear one outside.

Boots should be large enough for the child to put them on with minimum assistance. Snow pants are necessary only when teachers specify outside activity during the winter months.

It is highly recommended that children wear tennis shoes every day they attend WNS. We strongly recommend children do not wear sandals, flip flops or clogs of any kind, as they are a tripping hazard.

Please send in extra clothing for your child in case of spills, bathroom accidents, etc.

Field Trips

T-class and Pre-K do attend local field trips during the school year. We welcome parents to attend field trips. Any parent attending a field trip must obtain all volunteer clearances prior to attending the trip. See volunteer clearance requirements on page 19.

Birthdays

You may sign up to send a special birthday snack to share with the class. Please refer to the Food Policy/Snack/Nutrition section and coordinate birthday snacks with classroom teachers.

Parent Involvement

One of the goals of WECEP is to work in active partnership with parents.

Parents are encouraged to participate in a variety of ways:

- Fundraising events
- Classroom parties
- Assisting with speech/hearing screenings & vision screenings
- Parent committee
- Board of directors
- Guest reading
- Field trip chaperones

Clearances

Volunteers (regardless of how long they volunteer) must complete the paperwork required by the state licensing division. We require the following five clearances for all volunteers: PA Child Abuse, PA Criminal History, Federal Criminal History (FBI fingerprints), National Sex Offenders Registry (NSOR) verification and mandated reporter training certificate.

PA Child Abuse (no cost) & PA Criminal History (no cost): Go to <https://www.dhs.pa.gov/keepkidssafe/clearances>

We have updated our Federal Criminal History Record (FBI fingerprints) clearance requirement: The Federal Criminal History Record can be waived if the volunteer is unpaid, has been a resident of Pennsylvania during the entirety of the previous ten-year period, and swears and affirms in writing (disclosure statement) that they are not disqualified from service based upon a conviction of an offense under §6344 of the Child Protective Services Law.

The disclosure statement for volunteers who meet the above criteria (no cost) can be found at the link below:

<https://www.dhs.pa.gov/KeepKidsSafe/Resources/Documents/Disclosure%20Statement%20for%20Volunteers.pdf>

If you don't meet the requirements, please go to <https://www.dhs.pa.gov/keepkidssafe/clearances> for more info. Use service code: 1KG6ZJ (fee \$23.25)

National Sex Offenders Registry Verification (NSOR) (no cost):

<https://www.dhs.pa.gov/KeepKidsSafe/Resources/Documents/NSOR.APPLICATION.05.02.22.pdf>

You need to print the form, fill it out and scan it back to the email address on the form. It takes about two weeks to get this back.

In addition, volunteers must complete mandated reporter training within 90 days before volunteering. This training can be located at: <https://www.reportabusepa.pitt.edu/>

School Closings & Delays

In rare instances or during a state of emergency, WECEP may close for weather related occurrences. Announcements will be made on KDKA, WPXI and WTAE, as well as on their websites. Families will also receive a message via the Procure App and email.

There may be times when Westminster Nursery School is closed or has a delayed opening. The WCDC may remain open even if the WNS program is closed.

Children enrolled in both the WNS and WCDC program may attend the WCDC program, if ratios allow, on WNS closing days. Parents are required to contact the WCDC director via writing to get approval of their child attending the WCDC for added hours. Parents will be charged the hourly rate for the time attended in WCDC.

Notification of Absence

Parents are asked to inform the school by 9:00 am if their child is not attending on their scheduled day. Please call 412-835-2906 to report an absence.

No Smoking Policy

WECEP is a smoke free facility. The outdoor play area is considered part of the facility in that no smoking is permitted in the presence of children.

Playground Use

State regulations prohibit families from utilizing the playground when any classes are in session. The playground may only be used by children enrolled and attending our program. The playground may only be used by the community before 7:00 am and after 6:00 pm, Monday to Friday, and on weekends.

Other WECEP Services & Programs

WNS Enrichment Classes & Lunch Bunch

Extend your child's day with lunch time with their friends before or after an enrichment class. Classes are offered in the fall and spring. Lunch is to be provided from home and must be peanut/tree nut free. Lunches cannot require refrigeration. A glass of water will be provided. Each enrichment class focuses on a specific topic such as art, cooking, STEAM, and animal exploration. These classes are offered to children enrolled in WNS T-class or Pre-K.

WECEP Child Development Center

The WCDC is open from 7am-6pm Monday to Friday. For more information, please call 412-835-9450.

Inclusion Policy

WECEP welcomes all children and provides developmentally appropriate early learning and development experiences that support the full participation of every child. We believe that each

child is unique and work in partnership with families and other professionals involved with the child to provide the support every child needs to reach their full potential.

The staff at WECEP use developmentally appropriate practices and consider the unique needs of all children when planning activities and experiences. Staff will make every attempt to make any adaptations or modifications necessary to meet the needs of the children. Schedules, routines and activities are flexible and staff will work with therapists, special educators and other professionals to integrate individual accommodations, modifications and strategies into classroom routines and activities. Any adaptations will be reviewed with families and other professionals supporting the child.

WECEP acknowledges and respects the priorities each family has for their child. Families are encouraged and supported to collaborate with staff to ensure that each child has an opportunity for their greatest success. WECEP regularly communicates with families and has meetings, as needed, to discuss the child's strengths and challenges.

Training and support are provided to ensure that all staff are competent to meet the developmental and educational needs of all children. All staff participate annually in training focused on effective inclusion and/or other disability topics. The director provides additional support and resources as appropriate.

WECEP seeks to meet the needs of all children. If your child is currently receiving early intervention services, wraparound therapists (speech, developmental, OT and PT) are welcome to deliver services to your child during the day. Please share this information with us upon enrollment so that scheduling arrangements can be made.

For more information regarding your rights regarding inclusion please visit: <https://www.dol.gov/general/topic/disability/ada>

With family collaboration, if further support is needed, we may recommend support from the PA KEYS Infant Early Childhood Mental Health program, or IECMH.

We would appreciate a copy of the IFSP (Individualized Family Service Plan)/IEP (Individualized Education Plan) to incorporate the plan into the classroom routine and to modify curriculum and lesson plans, as needed. If possible, we will actively participate and/or provide input at scheduled IFSP/IEP meetings, as well.

We are always open to hear parent concerns and will share concerns as well, to best serve your child. We will share referral resources, as needed, if you are interested in obtaining more information regarding support services for which your child may be eligible.

Please complete the IEP/IFSP Request and Sign-off form (separate document).

Nondiscrimination Policy

Admissions, the provisions of services, and referrals of clients shall be made without regard to race, color, religious creed, disability, ancestry, national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, or sex.

Program services shall be made accessible to eligible individuals with disabilities through the most practical and economically feasible methods available. These methods include, but are not limited to, the provisions of aids or the use of alternative service delivery locations. Structural modifications shall be considered only as a last resort among the available methods and subject to available funds.

Any individual/student (and or their guardian) who believes they have been discriminated against may file a complaint of discrimination with any of the following:

- Westminster Early Childhood Education Programs
2040 Washington Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15241
- Bureau of Civil Rights Compliance
Department of Public Welfare
Room 223 Health and Welfare Building
P.O. 2675
Harrisburg, PA 17105
- US Department of Health and Human Services
Office of Civil Rights
Suite 372, Public Ledger Building
150 South Independence Mall West
Philadelphia, PA 19106-9111
- Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission
301 Fifth Ave
Suite 390, Piatt Place
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
- Bureau of Equal Opportunity
Department of Human Services
301 Fifth Ave
Suite 410, Piatt Place
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Lori Feldmann, WECEP WNS Education Director

Megan Baumgartner, WECEP CDC Program Director

Peggy Canose, WECEP Finance Manager

Liz Heslin, WECEP Office Manager

Rev. Jo Forest, WPC Head of Staff

WECEP Board of Directors: wecepbboard@westminster-church.org

*Westminster Nursery School is one of two programs
operated by Westminster Early Childhood Education
Programs (WECEP), LLC.*

*WECEP is a 501c3 not for profit organization, which operates as an
extension of the Westminster Presbyterian Church.*