



**A MINISTRY AFFILIATED WITH  
RIVER ROAD UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

# **Family Handbook**

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Accredited by the National Accreditation Commission for the  
Association for Early Learning Leaders



**OPEN ARMS CHRISTIAN PRESCHOOL**  
**River Road United Methodist Church**  
**8800 River Road**  
**Richmond, Virginia 23229**  
[www.openarmschristianpreschool.org](http://www.openarmschristianpreschool.org)  
**804-754-0227**

Dear Parents,

The Preschool Board of Directors and I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you and your child to the Open Arms Christian Preschool program at River Road United Methodist Church.

We take great pride in being an accredited preschool by NAC (National Accreditation Commission for the Association for Early Learning Leaders). You can read the standards for accreditation by visiting our school website and clicking on the NAC link on our home page.

We hope that your child's learning experiences in our program will be happy and meaningful. We look forward to sharing in the life of your child for a few hours each week, and we will do our best in caring for your child in all possible ways.

This handbook has been prepared in order that you may know our policies and better understand our program. We will count on close cooperation between parents and staff to assure a positive, successful experience for your child. Please read this handbook carefully and follow the guidelines and suggestions to help us have the best program for your child.

If there are any aspects of our program that you would like to discuss, please feel free to call me anytime. We welcome your questions, comments, and suggestions.

Nora Hamlet  
Preschool Director  
754-0227 (office)  
[openarms@riverroadumc.org](mailto:openarms@riverroadumc.org)

All policies of this program come under the direction of the Preschool Board of Directors of the River Road United Methodist Church, Richmond, Virginia, and may be revised at any time by the Board.

In compliance with the Code of Virginia, Section 63.2-1716, this Preschool is religiously exempt from licensure and is classified as a “religiously exempt child day center” and meets the qualifications for such classification. The center voluntarily meets many of the requirements for a state licensed program. Open Arms Christian Preschool is “accredited” by the NAC National Accreditation Commission for Early Learning Leaders and is prestigious recognition of a standard of excellence in early childhood education.

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## MISSION STATEMENT

River Road United Method Church is called by God in ministry to strengthen the family by providing a quality Christian Preschool to two through five year old children which allows them opportunities to develop physically, intellectually, emotionally, socially, and spiritually.

## GOALS

1. To provide Preschool children with a quality program of learning experiences in a Christian environment.
2. To strengthen the families of preschool children by supporting and assisting the parents in their parenting roles.
3. To minister to the needs of the church family, and to be an outreach of the church into the community.

## PHILOSOPHY & OBJECTIVES

The program will provide developmentally appropriate learning experiences and interaction between children and teachers which will enable children:

- To grow and develop to their greatest potential physically, mentally, socially, emotionally, and spiritually.
- To grow in the awareness that God made them and loves them.
- To grow in understanding and love for themselves, their families, and others in their world.
- To develop a positive self-concept, self-confidence, and self-respect.
- To develop a positive attitude toward learning.
- To develop social skills in relationships of mutual trust and respect with adults and peers, to gain understanding of the perspectives of other people, and to learn to negotiate and apply rules of group living.
- To develop the ability to think critically, reason, question, experiment, and solve problems.

- To encourage language development: to use language to communicate effectively, to facilitate thinking and learning, to develop listening and speaking skills, and to express ones thoughts and feelings appropriately.
- To enjoy creative expression (in music, art, drama, movement, construction, and dramatic play) and to develop an appreciation for the arts.
- To develop self-control and self-discipline.
- To enhance physical development and skills, both gross motor and fine motor.
- To encourage and demonstrate sound self-care habits involving health, safety, and nutrition.
- To respect cultural diversity.

## ADMISSION AND PROGRAMS

Open Arms Christian Preschool is open to anyone desiring a Christian, early education program for their child, subject to the Preschool's ability to provide such education without undue burden or expense, and without adversely affecting the educational experience of other students or the interests and capacities of the Preschool staff. Subject to the above, the Preschool will accept and serve children equally, without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or disability.

**AGE:** The Preschool will provide classes for one, two, three, four and five year old children (ages 12months - 5 years old). Children should be twelve months old before September 30, 2018 to be admitted into the program for the current academic year.

### MORNING PRESCHOOL CLASSES

**September through May (9:00 a.m. - noon, unless otherwise noted)**

#### One-year olds (12months - 23 months):

Tuesday/Thursday

Monday/Wednesday/Friday

Monday through Friday

These classes will have one teacher, one assistant teacher and eight children

#### Two-year olds and young three-year olds:

Tuesday/Thursday

Monday/Wednesday/Friday

Monday through Friday

These classes will have one teacher, one assistant teacher and twelve children

#### Older three-year olds and young four-year olds

Monday/Wednesday/Friday

Monday through Friday

These classes will have one teacher, one assistant teacher and fourteen children

### Pre-Kindergarten

Monday through Friday

Four-year olds

These classes will have one teacher, one assistant teacher and sixteen children

### Junior Kindergarten

9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Monday through Friday

Older four-year olds/Young five-year olds

These classes will have one teacher, one assistant teacher and sixteen children

## **EXTENDED CARE PROGRAMS**

These programs are available to children participating in the morning preschool program:

### Early care (AM) (7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.)

Open to all children enrolled in preschool program

September through May and year-round

### Afternoon Care (PM) (noon to 6:00 p.m.)

Open to all children enrolled in preschool program

Available for scheduled times or as needed options

Families choose (one or more) 2 hour block sessions:

- 12noon - 2pm

- 2pm - 4pm

- 4pm - 6pm

Includes Afternoon Enrichment classes

September through May and/or year-round option

## **CAMP OPEN ARMS**

(9:00 a.m. to noon)

Last week of May through last week of August

Open to all preschool children (both Open Arms and other preschools)

Early and afternoon extended care programs are available

Camp is included for children who participate in the year-round programs

See **Camp Open Arms** section for more information about this program

## APPLICATION

An application form with personal data, medical form, current and up-to-date immunization records, official birth certificate, permission slips, and emergency information **MUST** be completed and signed by a parent before a child can be enrolled. An original, official birth certificate is required to be seen and recorded within the first seven days of initial attendance. The preschool is legally responsible to report failure to submit this form. A \$100.00, non-refundable, registration fee per child for new families is due at the time of application. For returning families, the non-refundable registration fee is \$50.00 per child. All paperwork will be renewed and updated on an annual basis and information sent out for renewal in June. All children under the age of 24 months must submit a medical form updated every 6 months (all other children annually).

## TUITION

Tuition for the morning preschool academic year program are monthly and dependent of signed registration agreement. Fees for extended (early and afternoon) care will be included in your monthly bill. Please contact the director regarding rates for these programs. Tuition and extended care payment(s) must be made by one of the following plans:

**MONTHLY:** A registration fee with equal payments of tuition due by August 1<sup>st</sup> and will be applied to the first month's tuition (September), tuition then will be due the first of each month through and including May.

**ANNUALLY:** Intent to enroll for Fall (Registration form) will be sent to families annually in January. The registration form along with renewal registration fee (\$50.00) is due prior to February 1<sup>st</sup> to confirm your child's place in school for Fall Enrollment. Enrollment spaces will open to the public after February 1<sup>st</sup>.

*If an alternate method of payment is needed, arrangements must be made with the director prior to February 1<sup>st</sup> to secure Fall space.*

*Families enrolled in any of full year programs will also be billed monthly, with the first payment due upon entering the program and the first of each month thereafter. (See **Enrichment/Extended Day** section for further information.)*

Please make tuition checks payable to Open Arms Christian Preschool. Include your child's name on the memo line of the check. Payments will be considered late if not received by the 8th of the month in which they are due and a \$10.00 late charge will be added per month. Mail or bring your payment to the Preschool. A \$25.00 charge will be made for any returned checks. ***No refund/discounts will be given for holidays, any unforeseen closures/delays, or days missed by any student.***

Address:

**Open Arms Christian Preschool  
River Road United Methodist Church  
8800 River Road  
Richmond, Virginia 23229**

## CURRICULUM

Units of study during the year will include the seasons, weather, holidays, colors, shapes, home and family, helpers, etc. A monthly newsletter will be sent home with pertinent information for parents concerning activities that their child's class will be doing. Teachers will send home information to families to keep you informed of the activities in the classroom. We also will provide updates on our website. This will enable you to converse with your child more easily about the events happening in the classroom.

## RELIGION

A Christian atmosphere will prevail through the Preschool. Children will learn about God's love through their interaction with their teachers. Bible stories, songs, thoughts, and prayers will be interwoven throughout the curriculum. A fifteen minute chapel time will be held once a week for our three-, four- and five-year olds. There will be no pressure for the child to become Methodist, however, we do welcome you to our church, and will seek to minister to the needs of all of our Preschool families.

## YEARLY CALENDAR

The Preschool will follow very closely the same schedule as the Henrico County School system. Some of the holidays and breaks may be slightly different. The school calendars are posted on our website. The Preschool has the right to refuse services on any given day for any given reason or no reason at all. In the case of inclement weather, we make decisions to delay/close based on Henrico County decisions. **(see INCLEMENT WEATHER section)**

## DAILY SCHEDULE

Your child's day will include a variety of activities and opportunities for learning. This is a sample of a typical full day schedule. Each teacher will inform you of your child's classroom schedule.

### **SAMPLE DAILY SCHEDULE:**

7:00 - 8:50	Early Morning Care Drop - Off (Children in Learning Centers in Room 101)
8:50 - 9:00	Early Arrival (Parents remain in cars/drop children off with a teacher at entrance.)
9:00 - 9:10	Arrival (Parents bring the children to the classroom door.)
9:10 - 9:30	Large Group Time Learning
9:30- 10:10	Learning Center Activities & Small Group Learning Time
10:10 - 10:25	Clean up - Rest room
10:45 - 11:00	Snack
11:00 - 11:30	Outside Play
11:35 - 11:50	Enhancement Classes Daily Schedule:  Mondays: Library Tuesdays: Music & Movement Wednesdays: Chapel Thursdays: P.E. Classes Fridays: AlsPals (Guidance Program -Manners & Gratitude)
11:50 - 12:00	Departure (for Preschool Morning Program)
12:00 - 12:10	Clean up - Restroom
12:10 - 12:45	Lunch
12:45 - 2:45	Younger Ages - Rest Time  Older Ages -  12:45- 1:45 Extended Learning - Small Groups & Individualized Learning Plans 1:45 - 2:45 Quiet Period
2:45 - 3:00	Wake-up/Clean up - Restroom
3:00 - 3:15	Snack
3:15 - 4:15	Afternoon Extended Day Enrichment Activities
4:15 - 5:00	Outside Play
5:00 - 6:00	Learning Centers (Room 101)

## ENRICHMENT/EXTENDED DAY/FULL DAY PROGRAMS

We understand that some families require more hours than the traditional half-day preschool program allows. Open Arms Christian Preschool offers two options for our preschool, extended day and year-round full care programs.

1. Before care from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.
2. After care (which includes in-house daily enrichment classes) from noon to 6:00 p.m. You may choose one or all three 2 hour blocks (12-2pm, 2pm-4pm and 4pm-6pm)

**Enrichment Classes.** Children love exploration – new ideas, new sounds, new tastes. Our extended day and after care programs provide opportunities to explore new areas that require more time than the morning program allows. We will also have special classes offered by outside instructors (e.g., Little Kicks soccer). These classes are optional and not included in our after care fees. All of our enrichment classes are designed to stimulate your child’s mind and senses.

The children start their afternoon with a peanut-free lunch, which the children bring. Children may bring milk to drink with their lunches.

For children enrolled in the full care program, rest time begins at 12:30 for our younger children. Older children will go down for rest at 1:00. Children who stay for rest are to bring a beach towel/blanket and a rest mat (both labeled with your child's name). Children may also bring a small "lovey" to help them rest. (no pacifiers, please).

After rest and snack, our special enrichment activities include classes such as:

Foreign languages (including sign language)	Story-telling
Cooking	Science Fun
Little Kicks soccer	Yoga
Bible stories and drama	Dance (including tap and folk)
Movement	Creative Expression Art

Following enrichment class, the children are involved in a small group instruction or other fun activities, snack and outside time. Our schedule will stay the same throughout the week.

Our afternoon program is truly an extension of our morning preschool program. We hire equally educated and experienced teachers and follow NAC accreditation guidelines, including maintaining accreditation teacher/child ratios.

Some of you may not need to have your child stay every week and want the flexibility of using the program occasionally and as needed. We will still accommodate drop-ins on a space-availability basis, with no less than 24 hours notice. If you find that, as the school year progresses, you would like your child to use the program regularly, please contact the director a minimum of 24 hours prior to needing extended care. We will do our best to accommodate you, if space permits.

## **CAMP OPEN ARMS**

A summer camp opportunity is offered weekly, starting the last week of May. This is a fun, educational opportunity for those desiring additional time at preschool before summer starts. Camp themes may include: Bubbles, Jesus is Our Friend, Camping Fun, Cooking, Fourth of July, Nursery Rhymes, Water, Sticky Stuff, Construction, Around the World, Story-telling, the Art of Science, Play Ball, Recycling, and Papas.

Camp Open Arms is the summer component for children participating in our full year programs.

Camp runs from 9:00 a.m. to noon Monday through Friday. Early drop-off (7:00 a.m.) and afternoon care (until 6:00 p.m.) is available, at an additional fee. Registration for Camp Open Arms will begin in January for those children in the morning preschool program and for children enrolled in other preschools.

## **ARRIVAL**

Upon Arrival all children must be physically signed in (on the Master Attendance Form located at the front table (parent area) or for carline on the clipboard with the teacher) by the parent or guardian bringing child to Preschool.

Arrival time is between 9:00 and 9:10 a.m. Each child must be accompanied to and from school by an adult who takes the responsibility for checking in the child. The child must be escorted to the classroom each day. Upon arrival, the child will be screened for signs and symptoms of communicable diseases. At this time, we also encourage parents to engage in free

communication with the teacher regarding concerns about the child such as extra tiredness or special events at home.

**Early arrival drop off (carpool)** at the driveway entrance to preschool building will begin at 8:50 a.m. and last until 9:00 a.m. (Please note that this is not for children under the age of 2 years old and not the same as Before Care, which starts at 7:00 a.m.) A teacher will greet your child, do the daily health screening, get any necessary information, and escort your child to a designated room until 9:00 a.m. After 9:00 a.m., please take your child to his/her classroom. Use the entrance to the Preschool building for arrival and departure. The preschool doors will be locked at 9:10. You will need to ring the buzzer to enter.

## DEPARTURE

Upon Departure all children must be physically signed in (on the Master Attendance Form located at the front table (parent area) or for carline on the clipboard with the teacher) by the parent or guardian picking up the child from Preschool.

Notify the school (either in person or by phone) and send a signed note if someone other than the parent or authorized person is to pick up your child. We will need this verbal and written consent in order to release a child to someone who is unfamiliar to the teacher. We also require to see the person's driver's license before we release your child. Departure is scheduled to take place between 11:50 a.m. and 12:00 noon. We appreciate you picking up your child promptly. It is necessary that children be brought and picked up during the specified times. If the above time schedule does not work into your schedule, it may be necessary to take your child out of the program. Parents who are late will be charged \$10 for each quarter hour of tardiness, after the first time. In the event that you are detained because of an emergency, please call the preschool office (754-0227).

At noon, please line up behind the other cars waiting to pick up students beginning at the drive-through entrance to the preschool building (please remember parents will need to walk children under 2 years old into the building & in to their classrooms). Hold up your car pool number as you get close to the loading area. Drive up as far as possible to enable more cars to be loaded at one time. Please do not get out of your car. We will escort the children to the waiting cars as they drive up. We will load all children on the right hand side of the car so that

they do not have to pass between the cars. You may want to place your child's car seat on that side of the car.

In order to keep the time of waiting in line to a minimum, we may not be able to fasten the children in their car seats. We ask that you have your child sit until you can drive to another area of the parking lot to buckle them in their car seats. Please be sure that your vehicle door is closed after your child is put in the car and you leave the area. Please do not pull around to pass another car that is in line. Be careful to observe all traffic markings on the parking lot and drive through. If you need to come into the building for any reason, please park briefly in a parking space at the side of the building, so that you will not have to cross the traffic with your child. Should you leave your car, always switch your car off and remove the keys. Never leave children unattended in the car.

*Please refrain from using cell phones during arrival and departure.* This enables us to communicate any important daily updates or schedule changes.

Car pools may be formed at the beginning of the school year. (See **Car Pools** section)

## DISMISSAL

Pupils may be dismissed by the Preschool Director subject to the subsequent approval of the Preschool Board of Directors when, in the sole discretion of the Director and the Board, dismissal is in the best interest of the Preschool, its pupils and/or staff, or River Road United Methodist Church. Such reasons may include by way of example, and not limitation, the following: non-cooperation of the pupil or the parent; delinquency of the payment of fees; inability of the child/parent to adjust to Preschool program.

## WITHDRAWAL

Children enrolled will be expected to continue in the classes throughout the school year. No refunds of tuition will be given except for the following reasons:

1. If parents are transferred from the city. One month's notice is required.
2. If the child becomes ill and the doctor recommends withdrawal. In this event, a note from the doctor will be requested.

Children withdrawn for acceptable reasons will not be obligated for further payment of tuition providing thirty days notice has been given of such withdrawal. Exceptions will be approved by members of the Board.

## SNACK AND LUNCH

We ask that you send in a daily snack(s) (AM/PM) and lunch (if applicable) for your child along with their water bottles. Please label all items including lunch bag. Provide a well balanced meal for your child. Families must include utensils (if needed) and paper products (as needed) for lunches & snacks for your child. Children may bring milk to have with lunch. Classrooms are not equipped to warm foods, please use thermos containers for foods to stay warm if you would like food to be served warm. Toddlers are asked to provide and include a suction bowl/plate/placemat and toddler size utensils that will remain at school for their use. Please refer to the snack guidelines that have been provided to choose an appropriate, nutritious snack: i.e. fruit, vegetables, whole-grain cereals, hummus, etc. ***We are a peanut free school!*** We will be teaching good nutrition throughout the year and will need to practice these principles at this time. The snack(s) and lunch should be easy for the child to handle without assistance.

## BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays are special! Your child will be able to choose a favorite book and songs, along with the classroom helper job that day. To continue our good eating habits, we will still have healthy snacks that day. You may supply special plates and napkins if desired. No favors or gifts please. Children with summer birthdays may arrange a day to celebrate their mid-year birthday or in the spring to celebrate their upcoming birthday. Schedule this day with the teacher. Birthday party invitations will only be distributed to classmates in school if the entire class is invited.

## CLOTHING

Children should wear play clothes that are comfortable and appropriate for the season or the weather. They should be durable, washable clothes that will not be ruined in active outdoor play or with art materials. A complete change of clothes, including shoes and socks, should be provided in the event of an accident. Place *labeled* clothes in a large ziploc bag and

label with the child's name. Shoes should give support and be appropriate for playing. Loose sandals, flip flops, crocs, jellies, and cowboy boots which slip off easily, inhibit activity and are, therefore, not acceptable. All clothing that is removed (sweaters, coats, jackets, hats, etc.) should be clearly labeled with the child's name. Avoid jackets with drawstrings.

We are a Christian preschool. Clothing should reflect this. No objectionable or suggestive graphics, words, phrases, designs or attire are permitted. *We require all parents and visitors to abide by this rule, as well.*

## Toilet (Potty) Training

Toilet-training will only be successful if both home and school are working on it together and follow the same steps. When you feel your child is ready for toilet training, we ask that you begin teaching at home during a weekend or vacation. When you start toilet-training at home, please let us know. We want this to be a positive experience for your child.

We will follow through and encourage your child while here at preschool. Potty training will be done in a relaxed manner with the cooperation of the family. We require that the child show signs of readiness (Please read the Potty Training Signs of Readiness below). Positive reinforcements and consistency must be continued at home.

### Clothing

Have your child wear underwear at home. He is a big boy/she is a big girl now and should wear big kid underwear. If your child has an accident at home while toilet training, help them change their clothes. Accidents will happen. Let your child know that it's ok.

Send in at least 3 changes of cloth underwear (not pull-ups), pants and socks (if your child is in the morning program only): 6 changes of underwear, pants and socks (if your child stays for the afternoon).

Have your child wear clothing that can be removed easily. The best items are shorts and pants with elastic waist. During toilet training, please **dress your child** in the following:

- Loose clothing
- Pants without belts, snaps or zippers
- Two-piece outfits (top and bottom)
- No overalls or bib-type clothing

Do not have your child come to school in diapers. This can be confusing for him/her.

## **Potty Learning Schedule**

We will have the children use the bathroom (toilet/wash hands):

- upon arrival
- before and after snacks/lunch
- before going outside
- before and after rest (full day children)
- before going home (full day children)
- other times as needed

## **Potty Training Signs of Readiness**

- stays dry for a long period of time
- can tell you that he/she has a wet diaper. Recognize that he/she is wet.
- can tell you she/he is peeing or that he/she has to pee.
- can control (hold) urge to pee in time to get to the potty
- has a bowel movement at regular times
- realizes when he/she is moving his/her bowels
- can undress/dress (pull down and up pants)
- shows interest in the potty and wants to wear underwear
- can follow three- and four-step instructions
- can physically get on and off potty without assistance
- must show a willingness to want to sit on the potty

## **PLAYTHINGS FROM HOME**

The Preschool is well-equipped with many toys and materials; therefore, it is recommended that no toys be brought from home. This tends to cause problems with other children. The exception will be items that are brought for special "show and tell" days or items that go along with the teaching theme for the week. Please check with the teacher before bringing these.

Comfort toys for children staying for rest time ( bears, blankets, etc.) may be brought if needed. Be sure they have your child's name attached. ***Guns, ropes, knives, and other toys which encourage rough and violent play are to be left at home at all times.***

## FIELD TRIPS

Field trips will be taken throughout the year in order for the children to enrich and enlarge upon their classroom experiences. In order for your child to accompany us on the field trips scheduled, it will be necessary for you to complete and sign the special Field Trip Permission Form for each trip. Parents will be notified in advance of each trip. Parents will provide transportation for their own children for each field trip. Parent drivers must have a valid Virginia driver's license, current inspection sticker on the car being driven, and proof of liability insurance. All children must be safely secured in their car seats while being transported. Field trips are times for our families to get together, so please feel free to bring siblings with you.

## MEDICATION

We will administer emergency medications to children such as inhalers, epi-pens, or other medications for which we have been supplied with a prescribed medication in its original container (prescription label stating child's name, name of medication, dosage and frequency), parental permission and the physician's directions. We ask that you schedule needed antibiotics or other medications outside of school hours. If your child is enrolled in our full care preschool program (7:00-6:00) and they are in need of medication other than emergency medications, please call the school office to discuss if it is possible.

If applicable after speaking with the director, all medications administered by the school are to be handed directly to the Preschool Director along with completed **Request for Administration of Medication Form** which is on the school website or in the school office. Medications will be administered and each dose documented by MAT-trained staff members. Medications are never to be transported to and from school in the child's bag. All medications will be kept out of reach of the children at all times. Parents are to take home the medication when it is no longer needed. ***We will not administer the first dose of a medication.***

Should your child need a non-prescription over-the-counter skin product, please fill out the correct form completely. We will keep all labeled skin products out of the reach of children. **Sunscreen lotion:** Please apply sunscreen to your child before coming to school.

## ILLNESS AND INJURY

We will make every effort possible to protect the health and safety of the children in our care. Parent cooperation in helping prevent the spread of communicable disease is of great importance. For the child's own protection and others in the school, parents should keep sick children at home. Children will not be accepted who have had a fever (greater than 100°) in the past 24 hours or who show any symptoms of illness, i.e., sore throat, nausea, vomiting, running nose, skin rash, diarrhea, inflamed eyes, discharging ear, coughing, ear ache, enlarged glands, flushed face. The Preschool has established a procedure for "hand-washing" by the staff and children before and after eating and after toiletry. Please reinforce this important means of interrupting the spread of disease at home. In the event that a child develops a fever (greater than 100°) or becomes otherwise ill, the child will be isolated from the other children. Parents will be called immediately to pick up the child. If we cannot reach you, we will then proceed with emergency numbers that you have provided.

Report all communicable diseases to the director immediately. When children have been exposed to a communicable disease listed in the Department of Health's current communicable disease chart (on our website), the parents will be notified within 24 hours or the next business day of the program being informed unless forbidden by law except for life-threatening diseases which must be reported to parents immediately.

In the case of accidental injury, we will make an immediate attempt to contact a parent. When necessary, we will call the child's physician, an ambulance or rescue squad, and utilize the emergency release you have provided. Parents are responsible for incurred expenses not covered by insurance.

OACP is covered under River Road United Methodist Church Public Liability Insurance, which provides coverage in the event that someone brings suit for personal bodily harm suffered under the operation of the center/church as a result of proven intentional negligence.

## INFECTION CONTROL POLICY

It is inevitable that children will get sick, no matter where they are. As children begin to have contact with the world outside that of their own families, they are exposed to viruses and bacteria that are foreign to their bodies. This is the way they build immunities. We cannot, nor would we want to, shield a child completely from the outside world. If we did, the natural immunities a child gains through contact with others would not develop and a simple cold could become a serious illness. However, we do want to protect a child from an unusually high exposure to germs all at once.

In a child care setting, children come into contact with groups of other children outside their families. It is in this situation that the illness of one child can spread rapidly through the group to other children and staff members if stringent measures to prevent this spread are not taken. For this reason, the staff at the center will take constant precautions to prevent the spread of disease. Many common childhood diseases are contagious. They are caused by germs which may be spread in several ways. Intestinal tract infections are spread through stools. Respiratory tract infections are spread through coughs, sneezes, and runny noses. Other diseases are spread through direct contact. Careful hand washing by staff and children can eliminate approximately 75 percent of the risk of spreading these illnesses. Other precautions include separating sick children from those who are well, taking extra precautions with diapering or toilet training children, and working to maintain sanitary conditions throughout the center.

You, the parents, can help us in our effort to keep your children healthy. We ask your cooperation in the following ways:

1. If your child has been exposed to any of the diseases listed on the accompanying chart, we ask that you notify us of the exposure.
2. If your child shows any of the following symptoms you will be called and asked to come immediately. Please help us protect the other children by responding promptly. If your child has any of the following symptoms at home, we ask that you keep him/her out of school until the symptoms are gone or until your physician says it is all right to return.

The symptoms include:

- ♥ fever greater than 101°F.
- ♥ severe coughing - child gets red or blue in the face
- ♥ high-pitched croupy or whooping sounds after coughing
- ♥ difficult or rapid breathing - especially in infants
- ♥ yellowish skin or eyes
- ♥ pinkeye - tears, redness of eyelid lining, followed by swelling and discharge of pus
- ♥ unusual spots or rashes
- ♥ sore throat or trouble swallowing
- ♥ infected skin patches
- ♥ crusty, bright yellow, dry, or gummy areas of skin - possibly accompanied by fever
- ♥ unusually dark, tea colored urine - especially with a fever
- ♥ grey or white stool

- ♥ headache and stiff neck
- ♥ vomiting
- ♥ severe itching of body or scalp or scratching of scalp

If any of the above symptoms are present or if a child appears cranky or less active than usual, cries more than usual, or just seems generally unwell at home, you are asked to look for any of the above symptoms or inform the child's teacher so that the child can be watched carefully for the development of symptoms.

*It is imperative that we all work together to keep all of the children who attend the center as healthy and happy as possible. We thank you for your cooperation*

## ATTENDANCE

We feel a responsibility for knowing about your child. If your child is going to be absent or will be in later than 9am please call or email the teachers and office prior to 9am and let us what time your child will be in or the reason for the absence. This includes any trips out of town.

## CAR POOL

Class lists will be available to parents at the parent orientation meeting. *Parents may arrange their own car pools of preferably 2 or 3, but not more than 4 students,* and provide the car pool lists to the director. Numbers will be assigned to each car pool and placards will be provided to each driver to identify car pools during dismissal time.

## PARTIES

We will have several parties during the year. The room parents will be responsible for overseeing and helping party parent volunteers. If you wish to celebrate your child's birthday or a significant event, please speak with your child's teacher to schedule accordingly.

## PARENT CONFERENCES

Parent/Teacher conferences will be held at school twice a year on the days scheduled on the calendar. This will give you an opportunity to review your child's progress with the teacher. Preschool will be in session. The assistant teacher and a substitute will be in the classroom with the children while the teacher meets with the parents. Times for conferences will be arranged between teachers and parents at mutually convenient times. Telephone conferences will be arranged as needed.

## DISCIPLINE

Positive guidance will be used in all situations to help a child develop self-control and assume responsibilities for his actions. The rules, setting limits of behavior, are consistent and known to everyone involved in the operation of the Preschool and communicated with parents at all times. We strongly believe that communication with parents and children through difficult behaviors will help resolve the concerns. Our priority is to provide a safe learning environment for all children, teachers and families in our program. We have included as part of our curriculum lessons and teaching children about positive guidance and self-control and self-regulating (AlsPals Guidance Program). We promote and teach children to appropriately work through their feelings to resolve the concerns. Some techniques used to help eliminate inappropriate behavior of a child may be redirection, short periods of inactivity from the large group to allow the child to think and reassess. The techniques used will depend on the age of the child and what works best for individual child. No child shall be subjected to harsh or physical discipline; nor shall loud, profane, threatening, frightening, or abusive language be used by staff or any person on the premises. Discipline shall not be associated with rest periods, toilet training, or food. While on the premises or preschool-sponsored function, parents are to abide by the Preschool's discipline policy. Parents are not permitted to discipline another child while at the preschool or preschool-sponsored function.

**When a child demonstrates disruptive and/or undesirable behavior the following steps will occur, but subject to discretion of the Preschool Director based on severity of behavior:**

1. When there are unacceptable behaviors demonstrated by a child the parents will be contacted by the child's teacher via phone and/or in person and parent will be notified of the concerns that have occurred. Teacher will discuss the guidance that was used with the child to work through the behavior to help with consistent expectations at home with the child. Our goal is to eliminate any unacceptable behavior by always partnering with the parents of our children. We believe that consistent communication and expectations for a child can resolve many unacceptable behaviors that may be demonstrated by a child.
2. If the undesirable behavior continues to be demonstrated (or is excessive/severe) after communicating and working with parents and with redirection and positive communication and redirection in the classroom an Incident Report documenting the child's behavior will be completed. If this occurs, a Parent will be notified via phone

regarding the behavior demonstrated and at pick up presented with the Incident Report to review and sign. The teacher (completing the incident report and witnessing the behavior), the Preschool Director and the Parent will all sign the Incident Report.

3. If there is continued demonstration of undesirable behavior (3 or more incident reports) the following steps will take place:
  - Immediately, the teaching staff will begin documenting via a behavior log the continued undesirable behavior to look for conditions, times or reasons that may be happening that are escalating the undesirable behaviors that are unable to be resolved in the classroom within a reasonable time frame (and potentially causing harm to themselves (child) or others).
  - A meeting will be scheduled within 24-48 hours. Present at the meeting will be all parents/guardians of the child, the teaching staff, and the Preschool Director.
  - At the meeting a Behavior Action Plan will be implemented to address the behaviors in the classroom and continue at home with expected behaviors. We believe in consistency for a child to understand expectations and outcomes from undesirable behaviors. Parents will assist in setting up behavior plan.
4. After the meeting, the Behavior Action Plan will immediately be implemented.
5. If there is another incident upon implementation of the Behavior Action Plan, that the child's undesirable behavior is exhibited and is unable to be controlled based on Behavior Plan, the school we will contact the parents via phone to allow parents to speak with the child regarding the unacceptable behavior. This will allow parents to address their child immediately regarding the behavior demonstrated and communicate expectations while at school. If the child's behavior is able to be resolved via the phone call with parents the child will return to normal classroom schedule.
6. If after the incident that parents are called to speak with child via phone to resolve undesirable behavior we see undesirable behavior return, at this second incident (first being the phone call) the child's Parents will be contacted to pick up their child and keep them home for that day to help communicate expectations and address undesirable behavior.

7. If after the second incident (child was sent home for the day) the behavior is exhibited and persists, the Parents will be called and their child will be sent home and not allowed to return for 2 days (not including the day being sent home).
8. If after the 2 day break from preschool attendance the child returns and continues to demonstrate undesirable behavior dismissal from the preschool program will be the final outcome.

We strive to keep open communication with all our families. It is our desire to provide a safe, loving, nurturing and well-balanced program for all children in our school. Our teachers and staff provide learning and guidance in a large group Preschool setting. We understand and respect that our program may not be an environment that is conducive to every child's individual needs. As professionals in the Early Childhood Education field we can provide resources that may support families and children with needs outside our program. Please see the Preschool Director for resources.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY**

In the event of inclement weather or other unforeseen event, the Preschool School Board will make the decision to open, delay or close as soon as possible. The safety of our families and staff is always our first concern.

- If Henrico County Public Schools closes, we will close for all students and staff 1st day.
- If Henrico County closes the 2nd consecutive day, the School Board will decide if it is safe for our *full care* children and staff to return. (We will remain closed for our morning preschool program.) The Church office will update us on parking lot conditions. The lot must be passable in order for the preschool to open. Once that status has been determined, the preschool will notify families and staff through our webpage, emails, and Facebook. We will make every attempt to open, even if we are on a delayed opening schedule. The School Board will make their decision the night before the second day of closing, if Henrico publicizes its schedule change by then.
- Should Henrico County close the third consecutive day, the School Board will decide if it is safe for *all* children and staff to return, based on the above parameters.

- Should the school not have power and/or water, we will close, after conferring with the utility companies and the School Board. We will update families on the situation and opening date and time.

Should weather conditions worsen during the school day that would necessitate a schedule change, we will notify families of any early closing (through emails, website & Facebook).

## CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION

All Preschool staff is trained to recognize the signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect. Any child identified as a possible victim of child abuse/neglect will be reported directly to the Department of Social Services by the director or any classroom teacher within 24 hours. This is required by law.

## EMERGENCY AND EVACUATION PROCEDURES INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

The preschool will hold monthly drills for weather-related emergencies. Additionally, we will hold periodic drills for shelter-in-place and evacuations. You will find attached our fire, disaster and evacuation plans, as well as our information on unauthorized person/intruder/active shooter plans.

At all times, the children's safety is our primary concern. The director (or staff designee) will notify parents and continue to update them to the situation, as needed. We will follow emergency personnel (fire and police) guidelines and recommendations.

We are listing our procedures for your information. Additionally, if a parent is in the building at the time, we want him or her to be knowledgeable about emergency procedures. At all times, preschool staff members will be in charge of the children. Parents will not assume responsibility of any group of children.

### FIRE/DISASTER PLANS

#### **Fire Evacuation Plan**

At the sound of the alarm teachers will instruct their children to line up quickly and quietly at the door. Assistant teachers will take emergency notebook.

Children will be instructed to quickly and quietly follow their teacher to the appropriate exit. Teacher will close any opened windows and room door after everyone is out.

All staff and children are to walk quickly and calmly out of the appropriate exit to the designated spot against the fence at the far end of the playground and line up according to classes.

The appropriate exit is the back door which leads to the playground. If inaccessible, use the front door and line up on grass behind parking lot, next to the wooded area..

Teachers will take attendance to make sure that all children have been evacuated and will space themselves among the children in order to maintain control of the group. .

The director will call the fire department using 911 and retrieve the emergency notebook. In the event that we cannot return to the building, the children will be escorted to the fellowship hall or nearest shelter.

The director will call parents to come pick up their children

### **Tornado Disaster Plan**

At the sound of an intermittent whistle and voice shout "Turtle Drill," teachers will instruct their children to line up quickly and quietly at the door. Assistant teachers will get emergency notebooks to take with them. Children will be instructed to walk quickly and calmly to the inner hallway.

Children will be lined up against the walls and instructed to sit with their head and knees in and their arms over their head (like "turtles") until the signal is given that all is clear.

Teachers will take attendance to make sure that all children have been evacuated and will space themselves among the children in order to maintain control of the group.

### **Earthquake Disaster Plan**

At the sound of a whistle and voice shout "Bears in Caves", the children will turn away from the windows and get under a table if possible.

Children will clasp hands behind neck, bring arms against head (covering ears), close eyes, drop head to knees.

Remain silent and hold position for five minutes, or until shaking is stopped, whichever is longer.

If furniture moves, move own body with it, remaining under cover.

Inform children that a loud rumbling sound is an expected part of an earthquake.

Adults duck and cover as do children. If there is no room under furniture after children have been positioned, stand in an interior doorway. Brace back against one side of doorframe, feet slightly bent. Cover head as for "duck and cover" and bend down slightly, keeping eyes closed. If glass is not shattering, open eyes to monitor children.

Stay away from glass windows and fluorescent light fixtures since these pose the greatest dangers. Protect your head! Stay where you are since aftershocks are likely to occur.

## **Emergency Evacuation Plan**

In the event of an emergency situation that requires an evacuation of Open Arms Christian Preschool, one of the following plans shall be implemented.

In all situations, the caregiver in charge when evacuating shall:

- Take an accurate attendee list each time a group of children is moved;
- Account for all children and staff as they board/depart vehicles;
- Bring any necessary medications/supplies and emergency records;
- Take a cellular phone to be used for emergency notifications.

1. If the emergency environment is confined to the immediate area of the child care facility, e.g. fire or toxic fumes and the children cannot stay on the preschool building,

the children will be brought to the church fellowship hall , by foot where they will remain accompanied by caregivers while family/guardian/emergency contacts are notified of the situation and arrangements are made for either the transporting home or care taking for the remainder of the day.

In the event of exposure to toxic materials or gases, and a physical examination is recommended, children will be transported by teachers' cars to St. Mary's Hospital or Henrico Doctor's Hospital where they will be examined by a health provider and family/guardian/emergency contacts will be notified.

2. If the emergency is more widespread and encompasses a larger area such as a neighborhood or several homes due to a non-confined environmental threat, e.g. toxic fumes from a spill, flood waters, brush fires, etc. and the children cannot remain in the area, the children will be brought to All Saints Episcopal Church, in teachers' cars where they will remain accompanied by caregivers while family/guardian/emergency contacts are notified and arrangements for either transportation home or a continuation of care are made. The place of safety is located on River Road - 8787 River Road. Directions: take right on Doverland, left (southeast) on River Road for .3 mile. Church will be on the right.
  
3. In the event of a **major environmental hazard that necessitates a larger area evacuation** such as several neighborhoods, a city/town or geographical area, due to a large non-confined hazard., e.g. earthquake, hurricane, etc. children will be transported to: a Red Cross designated mass shelter, Hermitage High School, by teachers' cars where they will remain accompanied by caregivers while family/guardian/emergency contacts are notified and arrangements are made for their pick up. Hermitage High School is located at: **8301 Hungary Spring Road, Henrico**. Directions from school:  
Head southeast on River Road - .3 mile  
Turn left toward N. Parham Road - .1 mile  
Turn right on N. Parham Road - 6.1 miles  
Turn left on Hungary Spring Road - .2 mile  
School will be on the right. An Open Arms staff member will be there to guide you to the children's location.

Open Arms Christian Preschool staff will remain with and care for the children at all times during an event. Attendance will be checked whenever children are moved. Staff will bring any necessary medications, supplies, and emergency records.

**Signs with directions will be posted on the school doors, should evacuation be necessary.**

The director of Open Arms Christian Preschool or designee will manage media relations, should it be necessary to inform the public of an event.

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION

This program works very diligently toward establishing and maintaining collaborative partnerships with families. However, in the event that an unanticipated difficulty should arise, the following procedure should be used: Contact the teacher and the director to discuss the situation and allow enough time for the difficulty to be resolved. After sufficient time is given, if the situation is not resolved and further discussion is warranted, contact the director again, who will then appeal to the board of directors for direction. In the event that the conflict cannot be resolved by this procedure, a direct appeal may be made to the preschool board of directors. The board of directors will make the final disposition of the difficulty.

## FACILITIES

The Preschool primarily uses the Children's building of River Road United Methodist Church. We will use the church fellowship hall and meeting rooms for special activities, indoor playroom, and parent meetings. The director's office is located in the area where the Preschool and the main education building join. The facility features a handicapped accessible covered entry and other features which provide for the needs of the handicapped person. The Preschool provides secure entry with a camera/buzzer system. The kitchen facilities are available for classroom cooking experiences. The Preschool does not intend to provide food service. Therefore, parents will provide the mid-morning snack, lunch and afternoon snack as well as water/drinks and any items needed for meal time. The maximum number of children that the center will enroll is 82. The maximum number of children to be in the care of the preschool (children's wing) at any one time (as dictated by the local building inspector) is 82.

## STAFF

Teachers are trained in early childhood education or a related field, and have experience in a Preschool setting. Assistants must be at least eighteen years old, possess a high school education or GED, and preferably have had previous experience with Preschoolers in a group setting. Staff must meet all state requirements regarding health and safety. All staff will be certified annually by a practicing physician to be free from any disability which would prevent them from caring for children. Criminal record checks will be made on each staff person in

compliance with state standards. At least one staff person trained in CPR/First Aid will be present at the center whenever children are present. State requirements for student/teacher ratio will be met at all times to insure adequate supervision of students. Position descriptions in our school are as follows:

**POSITION DESCRIPTION - PRESCHOOL TEACHER  
(School Year and Year-Round)**

**Qualifications:**

The teacher shall have a deep commitment to Christian faith and a calling to Christian education.

The teacher shall have an undergraduate degree, an Associates Degree in child development, early childhood or elementary education, or a related field (with a minimum of 12 credits in early childhood), a CDA or enrolled in CDA courses.

The teacher shall have a minimum of two years of experience in an early care and education classroom. In addition, the teacher shall have leadership experience.

The teacher shall be aware of children with special education needs and socioeconomic/cultural differences and be able to adapt the program to include them whenever possible.

The teacher shall be able to implement behavior management policies that would reflect the church's Christian values.

**Accountability:**

The teacher reports to the Preschool Director.

**Principal Duties and Responsibilities:**

1. Help provide and maintain a spiritual ministry through the school in keeping with the church's purpose in establishing the program and promoting the church's activities.
2. Foster a Christian atmosphere in the curriculum through daily prayers, Bible songs, Bible stories and regularly scheduled Chapel time.
3. Be a positive role model to children and families, creating a positive environment that cultivates a place of partnership and demonstrating servant leadership.
4. Shall be able to assume authority in the absence of the director.
5. Provide activities which will promote children's physical, emotional, mental, social, and spiritual growth.
6. Work according to the schedule outlined by the director and maintain prompt hours.
7. Plan, supervise, and implement a daily teaching program in accordance with the policies and procedures of the program as outlined in the personnel handbook, as well as meeting all health and safety requirements as established by the Code of Virginia.

8. Gear the program to the needs of individual children with concerns for their interests, handicaps, special talents, and individual style and pace of learning, considering each child in relationship to their cultural and socioeconomic background.
9. Give each child the attention needed to assure his best welfare (includes needs related to learning experiences, eating, toileting, sleeping, playing, working, health care, and safety).
10. Meet the physical needs of special needs children so that they can participate in daily activities (i.e. to include diaper changing, transferring, feeding, assistance on playground, etc.).
11. In cooperation with the director, establish relationship with each child's family. Become acquainted with all children, aware of their needs, and knowledgeable of their family backgrounds and home environments.
12. Maintain regular, verbal communication with the parents regarding the progress, adjustment, and needs of the child.
13. Maintain progress records of each child's growth and development, and place the information in the child's personal, confidential file. Record significant incidents and experiences observed in the child.
14. Attend at least 20 hours of staff development activities annually which shall consist of in-service training programs, workshops, or conferences closely related to group care of children, for personal and professional growth.
15. Work with maintenance and cleaning personnel to assure a clean and orderly room each day.
16. In cooperation with the director, plan with other teachers using the same room to assure maximum benefit of facilities.
17. Attend all parent and staff meetings.
18. Inform the director of needed supplies, repairs, and materials as far in advance as possible.
19. Enrich daily programs in a variety of ways, using the best methods of teaching and helps provided for the learning experience.
20. Obtain training and maintain certification in performing CPR/First Aid procedures, in recognizing signs and symptoms of Communicable Diseases (in order to do a daily health observation of children) and of child abuse and neglect.
21. Maintain a professional attitude and loyalty to the preschool at all times, keeping personal information about children and their families confidential.

21. Be consistently mindful of the goals of the preschool program and work for the daily realization of these goals.

22. Any other duties and responsibilities as designated by the Director and/or School Board

**POSITION DESCRIPTION - PRESCHOOL CO-TEACHER (ASSISTANT TEACHER)  
(School Year and Year-Round)**

**Qualifications:**

The co-teacher shall have a deep commitment to Christian faith and a calling to Christian education.

The co-teacher shall have an undergraduate degree or Associates Degree in child development, early childhood or elementary education, or a related field (with a minimum of 12 credits in early childhood), a CDA or enrolled in CDA courses.

The co-teacher must have a minimum of one year of experience teaching in an early care and education classroom.

The co-teacher shall be prepared to work with children with special education needs and socioeconomic/cultural differences, and be able to assist in adapting the program to include them whenever possible.

The co-teacher shall be able to implement behavior management policies that would reflect the church's Christian values.

**Accountability:**

The co-teacher is accountable to the director and School Board of the program.

**Principal Duties and Responsibilities:**

1. Be consistently mindful of the goals of the preschool program and work for the daily realization of these goals.
2. Become acquainted with and abide by all policies and procedures of the preschool program.
3. Maintain a professional attitude and loyalty to the preschool at all times, keeping personal information about children and their families confidential.
4. Be a positive role model to children and families, creating a positive environment that cultivates a place of partnership and demonstrating servant leadership.
5. Assist the director or the teacher in providing appropriate learning experiences for the children.
6. Confer with teacher about definite responsibilities and schedules, and carry out duties with flexibility.

7. Become acquainted with all children, aware of their needs, and knowledgeable of their family backgrounds and home environments.
8. Cooperate in maintaining a happy atmosphere in which each child may come to know his freedom and his limitations.
9. Treat each child consistently and kindly in the patterns established by the teacher and according to the discipline policy/guidelines established by the center.
10. Assist the teacher in giving each child the attention needed to assure his best welfare (to include needs related to learning experiences, eating, toileting, sleeping, playing, working, health care, and safety) including all the needs of a special needs child.
11. Assist the teacher in meeting the physical needs of special needs children so that they can participate in daily activities (i.e. to include diaper changing, transferring, feeding, assistance on playground, etc.).
12. Make careful observations and written notations of significant behavior of children for whom you are responsible, and share them with the teacher.
13. Assist in the planning process for each unit of study, and carry out any responsibilities assigned.
14. Assist in preparing the learning environment, setting up interest centers, preparing needed materials and supplies, as well as returning materials and supplies at the end of the day.
15. Help with the general housekeeping tasks.
16. Supervise the classroom when the teacher is out of the room.
17. Attend all parent and staff meetings.
18. Participate in at least 20 hours of recommended in-service training, workshops, and other educational opportunities for personal and professional growth. These hours will fulfill a partial requirement for your CDA (Child Development Associate).
19. Work towards and obtain your CDA within 5 years of employment.
20. Obtain training and maintain certification in performing CPR/First Aid procedures, in recognizing signs and symptoms of Communicable Diseases (in order to do a daily health observation of children) and of child abuse and neglect.

Any other duties and responsibilities as designated by the Director and/or School Board.

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Darcey Johnson, Lead Pastor**

**Danielle Rinker, RRUMC Children's Ministry**

**Karen Goree, Board Secretary**

**Sarah Taylor**

**Jeffrey Williams, RRUMC Lay Leader**

**Alana Ritenour, Board Chair**

**Lynda Weston, Board Finance Chair**

**Sarah Wilbur**

**Adrienne Neel**

**Nora Hamlet, OACP Director**

## **Parent Handbook Acknowledgement**

I (we), \_\_\_\_\_,  
have read and understand the Open Arms Christian  
Preschool Parent Handbook and understand the  
policies and my (our) responsibility as the  
parent/guardian of:

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child/ren) that will be enrolled in the school.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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Office Use Only

Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_

Received by: \_\_\_\_\_