

Parent

Handbook

Noah's Ark Children's Center



Revised January 2023

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**Welcome to Noah's Ark Children's Center;
we are so glad you have become a part of our community!**

About the Center

Admission is open to all children, and their families, regardless of race, religion, color, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability. The Center is open from 6:15 am to 6:15 pm Monday through Friday. Noah's Ark serves children from all economic backgrounds, ranging in age from two weeks through twelve years, including summer school-age care.

Noah's Ark maintains an open door policy. Parents are asked to stop in the office first so that we are aware of their presence in the Center. All visitors MUST register at the office upon arrival. It is important that we know who is visiting and when.

The State of Michigan Department of Human Services, Office of Young Children and Adult Licensing license Noah's Ark. A State Licensing consultant conducts renewal inspections every two years along with unannounced interim visits to the facility.

Noah's Ark voluntarily participates in the Shiawassee Great Start to Quality assessment program. This is a 5 star system. For more information you can visit greatstarttoquality.org.

Noah's Ark follows the guidelines of the US Department of Agriculture Food Program. Parents receive a copy of these requirements as children are enrolled and also a copy of the Health Care Plan. A Policy Booklet for Health, Safety and Nutrition is also available in the office for your use.

Noah's Ark opened in April 1970 in the First United Methodist Church as part of the church's commitment to community service and Christian outreach. The Center is a non-profit facility and tuition income maintains budgeted expenses. A Director who is responsible for implementing Center policy and for directing its day-to-day operations administers Noah's Ark. A Board of Directors made up of the Pastor, church members, and up to three parent representatives, is the policy-making body of the Center. It meets monthly except in July and December. Parents are welcome to attend board meetings. Prior notice would be appreciated.

Parent Handbook

This has been prepared by the Director and approved by the Noah's Ark Board to provide a clear set of guidelines for a fair and consistent relationship between Noah's Ark Children's Center and parents. It sets forth the policies and procedures of Noah's Ark Children's Center, as of the date it was prepared, *which may be revised at any time without notice*. The Handbook is NOT part of the contract between the parent and Noah's Ark, and nothing in it can be considered contractually binding, or provide any contractual right.

Please read the handbook carefully. Retain it for reference and sign the attached statement acknowledging receipt thereof, and your compliance with all policies. It should answer your questions about Center policies. The most up-to-date handbook can always be found on our website at www.naccpreschool.com/forms.

Mission Statement

Noah's Ark Children's Center is dedicated to providing for the intellectual, social, spiritual and physical growth and development of each child in its care in a Christian atmosphere. In keeping with the church's outreach commitment, the Center's teaching is founded on Christian principles.

Philosophy

The philosophy of Noah's Ark Children's Center is that children learn through play experience. The Director, Staff, and Board of Directors are committed to providing a high-quality program for young children and their families, and believe that each child deserves to be accepted for the unique individual he/she is. Children's learning and brain development increase through their sensory experiences. Seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching opportunities must be provided as children explore their environment and make new discoveries.

We believe that play provides children with these opportunities. We strive to offer a variety of "hands-on" open-ended activities that stimulate children in a relaxed, fun-filled atmosphere. We feel that these activities allow each child to reach his/her full potential, supporting their social and emotional growth in the process.

Objectives

A comprehensive childcare program is obliged to offer parents opportunities to better understand current childcare. Therefore the objectives are:

1. Every child who attends the Center will receive nurturing, affirming care that contributes to the well-being and appropriate development of the child.
2. Every parent of a child who attends the Center will receive information pertinent to the positive well-being of his or her child.
3. Spiritual awareness will be promoted through the use of age-appropriate Bible-based stories and activities as well as Chapel time with the Pastor twice a month.
4. Every child will have the opportunity to explore the world around them through books, music, play, creative activities and through experiments with nature, math, and science.
5. Every child's physical needs will be met by providing nutritious diets, rest periods, physical activities, and health supervision.
6. Every child will be encouraged to participate in activities that are structured to involve large and fine motor skills, as well as cognitive, creative, logical and deductive thought processes.

In addition, Noah's Ark strives to:

- *For Parents:*
 1. Provide up-to-date, quality, professional child care.
 2. Plan family events in which families have the opportunity to get acquainted and support each other.
 3. Make the parents feel welcome, invited to help plan events, get involved in decisions about the program, and take on leadership roles.
- *For Children:*
 1. Help children develop a positive attitude about him/herself and others.
 2. Model the use of oral language skills to express thoughts and feelings, as well as to expand vocabulary.
 3. Continue development for literacy, math, science and social studies skills.
 4. Provide opportunity for daily self-help skills.
 5. Help the child develop cooperative skills.

6. Development of life-long social skills, including problem solving and conflict resolution.

Confidentiality Policy

Employees must be constantly aware of the confidential nature of all information regarding the children in the program, their families and the affairs of the Center. All employees must sign a confidentiality agreement.

Information concerning the children or staff persons is not to be discussed outside the workplace. Information concerning the children or staff persons should not be released in any form, whether written, verbally or over the phone, to any individual or agency without the Director's approval.

Any employee who releases information in any form about a child pertaining to the child's HIV status, may be guilty of a misdemeanor, punishable by imprisonment for not more than one year or a fine of not more than \$5,000 or both, and is liable in a civil action for actual damages or \$1,000 whichever is greater, and costs and reasonable attorney fees.

If anyone requests such confidential information about a child, staff must immediately direct that person to the Director.

Staff

State licensing sets minimum qualifications for staff and limits on the size of class groups. Staff members are required to receive 24 hours annually of trainings through attendance at conferences and workshops, along with staff meetings. They must also maintain current training status in First Aid, CPR and blood borne pathogens, and have a physical and TB test every two years.

All staff are encouraged to pursue ongoing professional childcare studies annually and/or advanced certification. Staff, volunteers & foster grandparents must have a child abuse/neglect central registry clearance from the Department of Human Services along with a criminal history check and fingerprinting. All staff receives a Personnel Policies and Practices Handbook, which outline their responsibilities.

The Director of Noah's Ark is a highly qualified professional who is both administrator and experienced caregiver/teacher. The Director is an individual who can provide documentation of having achieved a combination of formal education and experience. The Director is responsible for all aspects of the program. Along with business matters, the Director develops, implements, and evaluates Center policies and programs, administers day-to-day operations including being able to address parent, child and staff issues, and monitors and evaluates staff.

The Director is available to meet with parents by appointment to discuss any questions or concerns.

It is extremely important to maintain a close relationship between the classroom and Director, and the child's family. A parent desiring a meeting with a childcare provider should meet with him/her at a time when he/she is not busy with childcare duties. **Inside and outside the classroom, any childcare provider's first responsibility is the supervision of the children and that involves maintaining good global awareness skills at all times.**

Noah's Ark neither encourages nor discourages its staff members from babysitting for Center families on their own time. We do not arrange for any childcare outside of the Center's operating hours. All communication must be made directly between the parent and the individual staff member, outside of the staff member's work hours. Noah's Ark is not responsible for anything that may happen outside of the Center that involves its staff members. *"Recruiting" staff members to leave their positions at the Center in order to nanny and/or babysit is strictly prohibited.*

Clothing

All children MUST have at least one change of clothing at all times. Be sure all clothing is clearly labeled, appropriate for the season and not outgrown. Please provide extra undergarments and socks. Children should be dressed casually and comfortably. "Party" clothing inhibits a child's participation in Center activities. **Children will come home messy, dirty, and stained at times; please do not send children in clothes that you do not want to be soiled.**

There will be an automatic fee of \$10 per item of clothing that is "borrowed" from NACC if your child does not have sufficient extra clothes and/or shoes from home. This fee will automatically go onto your account, but will be automatically removed when you return NACC's extra clothes, cleaned, to the office *within the same week*. If you do not return the items, then you will need to pay your balance, in full, by the next Friday in order to avoid late fees. Late fees will be applied at a rate of \$10 per day, in conjunction with the current policy.

Clothes which allow the child to dress him/herself will help your child learn independence and self-reliance. It is also very important to have clothing that is functional for children in potty training stages. A child who feels the urge and expresses the need can't always wait until eight buttons are undone or a one-piece outfit is removed.

Outerwear is also extremely important. State licensing requires that ALL CHILDREN, infants included, go outdoors DAILY for fresh air and exercise, unless weather conditions prohibit (See pg 17 for more info). Appropriate clothing and outerwear is needed for ALL SEASONS: light clothing, hats and sunscreen for hot summer days; long pants and sweaters/jackets for cooler spring & fall days; and coat, snowsuit (one or two-piece outfits), mittens, hats and boots for winter days. No scarves, as they pose a choking hazard on playground equipment.

Parent Participation

Parents/Guardians are always encouraged to give support, advice and recommendations concerning Noah's Ark and/or their child. Parent meetings may be held when interest is there. If you are unable to attend the meetings and wish to provide ideas, please email us. Parent participation is always appreciated. Your special knowledge or talent may be a unique resource for the children and staff. Parent involvement also demonstrates to youngsters a sense of volunteerism and sharing with each other. Please let the Director know ahead of time and share your talents with us! Parent involvement is very important for FUNDRAISERS! We try to limit them to one or two per year which allows for special purchases.

Noah's Ark Children's Center always welcomes donations of new, age-appropriate toys and other equipment in good working condition. Donations of Kleenex, paper towels, laundry soap and hand soap are always welcome. All donations MUST go through the office. From time to time we have special needs where monetary donations are collected. If you or your business is interested, all donations are **tax-deductible** and a receipt will be provided. Donations must go through the office; not taken to any classrooms. The Center and all classrooms have Amazon wish lists that can be found on our website at www.naccpreschool.com/lists.

Toys from Home and Bring-a-Longs

Toys from home are **prohibited** in the Center. Your child's toys are guaranteed to cause disagreements, jealousy and aggressive behavior among the children. Some toys encourage combative play, which not only disrupts the classroom, but also establishes an unacceptable model of behavior. At the very least, your child's toys could easily be broken or misplaced. NOTE: Toys which represent weapons or methods of killing or destruction, are never allowed in Noah's Ark at any time for any reason.

The rest time cuddly is certainly an important bring-a-long! We only have space for one **small** stuffy and **small** blanket. **These must fit into your child's cubby or backpack.**

School Age children are permitted to bring an electronic device, for limited use, **in the summer only.** Noah's Ark and its staff reserve the right to discontinue the electronic policy at anytime should problems arise. Noah's Ark, and its staff, are not responsible for lost, stolen, "traded," "borrowed," or broken devices; **BRING AT YOUR OWN RISK!**

Special Events, Birthdays and other Celebrations

We love to celebrate birthdays and you may provide a treat if you wish (but it is NOT necessary). We recommend fruit, small cookies, or mini cupcakes. Single-serving food, which is not too high in sugar, is preferred. Please arrange in advance with your child's classroom staff if you plan to bring treats. Licensing prohibits the use of balloons around younger children.

Classroom celebrations that occur throughout the year include: Halloween trick-or-treating, regular family nights, NACC Sunday, and the Christmas program. Parents who wish to help out can donate healthy snacks and/or juice to any of these events.

Please let the office staff AND the classroom staff (each classroom as they move up) know if your family does not participate in certain holidays and/or holiday related traditions (i.e. Santa, Easter bunny, Halloween, etc.).

Child Assessments / Parent Conferences / Program Evaluations

Parents/Guardians will receive two written progress reports per year about their child, the first one by the end of November and the second one by the end of April. Our screening tool, the ASQ-3 (Ages & Stages Questionnaire) is filled out upon enrollment and when they move to each classroom on all children. The GSRP uses the High/Scope COR and all other rooms use the E-LAP/LAP-3 assessment tools. These reports are completed throughout the year.

Parents must be contacted and give prior permission before a child can be referred for any special services should the assessments show possible delays.

Your child's teacher will be happy to meet with you to discuss your child's interaction in the program. The weekly lesson plans posted on the classroom bulletin board is an organized framework that describes the content that the children are to learn, as well as the planned experiences, materials and teaching strategies that the staff members will use.

Conferences are held whenever the parent requests and at other times, as needed, to discuss children's progress, accomplishments and difficulties at home, and at the Center. Conferences do not take the place of daily communication but allow opportunities for in-depth discussion of children's development, and for parents to ask questions, express concerns, or make suggestions about the program. Conferences can be between teacher and parent or may be attended by the

Director. A private area will be arranged for the meeting. All information about the child is kept confidential. PreK hosts fall and spring conferences each year.

We conduct Program Evaluations at the end of each year. Parents also complete an annual Family Survey, and a tabulation of results listing strengths and weaknesses are given to parents. We welcome your input.

Communications

Children up to 3 years of age will have a Primary Caregiver. Parents will be notified in writing who that is. Parents will be given notice of the availability of the Center's licensing notebook. This will be available to parents during regular business hours.

Social media is an important communication tool. The Center **PRIMARILY** uses Facebook and ProCare (phone app) to share information, reminders, and updates about the Center. Please make sure to "like" us on Facebook and to download the ProCare app (it is required). Email is also a preferred method of communication. You can email the Director at nacc.preschool@gmail.com and all billing questions can be sent to billing.nacc@gmail.com.

Please also be sure to check your child's "mailbox" or folder by the classroom door, daily, for important documents and/or artwork.

Enrollment Requirements

The Parent/Guardian is responsible for completing all enrollment, and any other, forms which may be required. Some forms must be updated at least annually (including physicals, immunizations, food papers, and emergency card). In addition, any change in information contained in these forms must be provided to Noah's Ark, in writing, immediately. All information contained in these forms is CONFIDENTIAL.

1. Parents must sign Written Information Packet documentation.
2. Physical examination form, completed and signed by a physician once a year; the initial one is due within 30 days of enrollment.
3. Record of up-to-date immunizations/waiver form
4. Completed and signed enrollment contract.
5. Completed Emergency Medical Treatment form and card; renewed every October.
6. *Non-refundable* enrollment/registration fee--paid each year on or before March 15, or at time of enrollment within that year.
7. Food program papers filled out, including the Household Income Eligibility statement, race, and ethnicity; renewed every October.
8. Court order indicating custody/visitation, *if necessary*.
9. Signed permission slip for social media and marketing
10. Enrollment preference will be given to *full-time* enrollees. Whenever possible, part-time enrollees will be interfaced to fill in the schedule as completely as possible. Please let the Director know if your part-time care schedule is flexible and can accommodate this interface.
Due to limited space all Infants (Lambs & Penguins) must be scheduled for a minimum of 20 hours/week.
11. Any other forms required by licensing or the Center.
12. Download the ProCare app.

If you do not comply with any of the above, you will be asked to leave the program until the requirements are complete. Failure to comply in a timely manner will result in the loss of your spot(s).

Infant and toddler care requires that the parent/guardian supply Noah's Ark with sufficient supplies for the child's daily needs as listed below:

- Diapers in a labeled bag (\$5/diaper fee if failure to bring).
- Wet wipes and diaper ointment in labeled containers.
- At least TWO complete changes of clothing, appropriate for the time of year.
- Formula/Breast milk *already prepared* in bottles, if not using the Center's formula. Must be brought in labeled with the child's name and date, and BM if breast milk. You will also need to make sure that ALL of your child's bottles have lids.

Schedule of Care

Please turn in your child's schedule by *Wednesday at 4:00 pm* of the prior week; unless otherwise noted. Your weekly schedule establishes the hours of care you are setting for your child. Vacation requests must be requested, in writing, and turned into the office staff in this time frame, as well. All schedule changes are subject to space availability. Staffing is scheduled in advance and staffing schedules are based on care schedules. Licensing requirements mandate how many staff members must be on duty for a given number of children.

If a child is not picked up by the 6:15 pm closing time, a \$20 fee will be imposed at 15-minute increments starting at 6:15, *per child*. So 6:15-6:29 is \$20, 6:30-6:44 is \$40, etc.

Parents must turn their schedule changes in no later than 4:00 pm on the Wednesday preceding care. **We cannot guarantee care for children whose schedules are turned in late. Each and all schedule changes are subject to an automatic and non-negotiable \$10 fee.**

When scheduled days are to be missed, the parent/guardian must notify us prior to the scheduled time, to enable us to make the needed adjustments. *You are responsible to pay for all of the hours you contracted your child, whether they are here or not.*

Fees are waived for the following reasons *only*:

- Five personal/sick days per year are allowed, per child, for **full-time** enrollees. Personal days are awarded from January 1 through December 31, and may not be carried over to the next year and cannot be transferred over to siblings. Personal/Sick days may NOT be used the weeks of Christmas and New Years. You are responsible to pay for the hours you contract your child these weeks regardless if they are here or not.
- Any child who is hospitalized; must have a doctor's note for verification.
- For all holidays when Noah's Ark is closed:
 1. New Year's Eve & Day
 2. Good Friday
 3. Memorial Day
 4. July 4th
 5. Labor Day
 6. Thanksgiving (Thursday & Friday)
 7. Christmas Eve & Day
 8. Possibly July 3 & 5, December 26, and January 2 depending on parents' schedules. If other non-emergency closings are necessary, parents will be given notice.

Any extenuating circumstances should be discussed with the Director and will be made at his/her sole discretion.

Each family is allotted a total of 2 weeks "vacation" time per calendar year. Any further non scheduled time will require a holding fee of 8 hours/week/child (2 hours/week/child for all school age children only *during the school year*). Your child will have to be reenrolled, subject to space availability, if you choose to not hold his/her spot. If you would like to hold a spot for a school age child for "no school" days only there is a one time holding fee of \$100/child/school year. We can only guarantee school age care for days that align with the Owosso Public School calendar (this includes holidays, half days, and snow days).

ALL infants (Lambs and Penguins) are required to pay for at least 20 hours of care/child/week. You do not have to attend all those hours, but that is the minimum required to maintain an infant spot.

Rates / Fees

A *non-refundable* enrollment fee of \$50 per child is required upon enrollment and then an annual *non-refundable* fee of \$40 is due by March 15 each year. This amount is subject to change at any time. You will be given a fee schedule when you enroll your child, which lists the hourly rate per classroom for full-time and part-time, rounded up to the highest penny. Rates are subject to change at any time. Notice of any change in rates will be provided at least two weeks in advance. The daily care rate is based on the contract schedule and is the minimum fee due; *you are required to pay for all hours contracted whether your child is here or not.* This includes any subsequent approved schedule adjustments. Late arrival or early pick up will *not* result in a reduction of the daily rate. However, daily care, which is greater than the established schedule, will result in an automatic additional cost based on the hourly tuition (charged as "overtime" in ProCare the following Monday of care). Childcare payments are due, in full, by 6:15 pm on the Friday before care begins, unless otherwise noted. **An automatic and non-negotiable late fee of \$10 per day will be added to your bill if your payment is not paid in full.** *Childcare fee payments are considered late after 6:15 pm on the Friday prior to care and late fees will begin to go into effect at this time as day one.* Full-time enrollees are eligible for a sibling enrollment discount. All children must be attending 30+ hours per week to be eligible for the discount. School-age children are eligible for a sibling discount during full-time attendance in summer months only.

Parents receiving DHHS benefits are responsible to pay for care that exceeds the number of approved hours or that is not authorized by DHHS for any reason. All schedule and/or payment fees apply and are the responsibility of the parent(s).

Noah's Ark aggressively pursues delinquent fee accounts. Care may be refused to any child whose fee account is **one week** in arrears, until the account is paid in full, or until satisfactory arrangements for payment have been made through the office. Checks returned NSF will result in an automatic and non-negotiable \$25 service charge. We will send a warning letter before we turn a delinquent account over to small claims court and/or a collection agency. The parent/guardian will be held responsible for all costs of collection, including attorney fees, process servers, court costs, etc.

Withdrawal Policy

If a parent wishes to withdraw a child from care, **written notice** of intent to withdraw should be given **at least 2 weeks** in advance. Failure to do so will result in a fee not to exceed 2 weeks worth of "typical" care.

We reserve the right to remove a child/family from care for:

1. Delinquency in payment of fees.
2. Refusal of parent to comply with *all* Handbook policies and requirements.
3. The inability of a child to adjust to Noah's Ark's program and policies.
4. Children and/or parents who bully other children or staff; at the discretion of the Director.
5. Serious behavioral problems or developmental delays/disabilities requiring advanced professional intervention.
6. Part time infants in order to accommodate full time infants.
7. Attacking or criticizing the Center and/or its staff verbally or in writing; including social media
8. Other reasons that may arise that are not listed above.

Drop Off / Pick Up Procedure

Licensing requires every child be clocked into ProCare before the adult leaves and must be clocked out on ProCare before leaving. This is important for many reasons: licensing, record-keeping, custody disputes, etc. If you have more than one child enrolled, the younger children should be picked up first. In the event of a child custody conflict, Noah's Ark will always maintain the role of the CHILD'S advocate. Licensing states that **until custody has been established by a court action, one parent may not limit the other parent from picking up the child from our care.** The child information card (emergency card) that the enrolling parent signs states "persons other than parent. . . ". It is not within our legal right to withhold a child from a parent, unless there has been court action, which limits one parent's right/time to the child. In this case, we will request a copy of the Judge's order that establishes custody to be kept in the child's file.

A child will be released only to a those listed on the Emergency Card, unless the Center has been provided with written authorization to release the child to another responsible person. This must include the date of period of time covered and the name and phone number of designated person. The person picking up the child **MUST** provide a photo identification (school ID, state ID, driver's license) to confirm identity with the release form. If a parent wishes to authorize a person under the age of 18 to pick up their child they **MUST** sign a "Release of Child to Minor" form and have on file. NACC does not allow the release of children to anyone under the age of 14. *Parents/guardians have the right to pick up their child/children, but if staff feels that they, or any authorized pick up person, appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or transports the child without a proper booster/car seat, the authorities will be notified immediately.*

Please be prepared to show your ID at anytime for pick up as newly hired staff, staff substituting in unfamiliar rooms, or staff in a room your child just moved into may not know who you are. *Please inform anyone other than yourself to be prepared to show ID at any time during pick up.*

Nutrition/Allergies/Meals

Noah's Ark believes eating healthy and nutritious foods are important for children. We will help your child learn about, and enjoy, lots of good foods each day. Our menu is planned to provide meals and snacks that meet federal and state rules and guidelines. Children are able to enjoy foods that will help them grow and learn to choose foods that will help them live a healthy life.

Noah's Ark serves all children on site breakfast, a mid-morning snack, lunch and an afternoon snack. Our Center participates in the USDA Child and Adult Care Food (CACFP) program. The main purpose of the program is to help children receive nutritious food and well-balanced meals. Noah's Ark follows the required discrimination policy according to Federal Law and US Department of

Agriculture policy. We receive a small reimbursement for meals and snacks served to enrolled children at mealtimes.

Noah's Ark provides a supportive, attentive and accommodating environment for children with food allergies or special dietary requirements. All staff will receive training in food allergy/use of EpiPen and other sensitivity issues. Parents/Guardians will have their physician sign and date the Allergy Action Card. They will also need to sign a permission form for their child's name and allergy to be displayed on the classroom allergy board. If a child needs an EpiPen for the allergy, the box it comes in will be copied with all the necessary information. This will be stapled to the Physician order form with information parents have filled out.

A Medical Exception form must be filled out, signed and dated by the child's physician if the child has a disability or needs a food substitution *due to allergies* (this does not include food preferences or "picky" eaters). If the child has a food disability, we will be responsible to supply what the child needs. Food alternatives will be identified with the parents, and be kept readily available where food is prepared and served. If the child does not have a disability, but has a signed form from the physician stating the child's allergies, then the parent must bring in what needs to be substituted. All foods that are brought from home must be labeled with child's name and dated. We do not allow children to be served fast foods or soda in their classrooms; no exceptions. Menus are posted on our website and on the ProCare app. Meals and snacks must meet meal pattern requirements.

We make every effort to keep peanut and tree nut products out of the classroom. Call the office first to check that a food brought in from the outside does not contain anything that would cause an allergic reaction in a susceptible child in the classroom. Thusly, almond milk is not allowed to be used as a cow's milk substitute.

Specialty diets (organic, vegan, religious, etc.) can be discussed with the Director, but does not qualify for a medical exception.

Noah's Ark offers an iron-fortified, ready to feed formula for infants up to one year of age as part of the food program option. If you prefer to use your own formula or breast milk, you will need to complete a sign-off statement in the office. Bottles must be prepared with child's name, date and contents of bottle. Our program welcomes breastfeeding moms and will provide a place for mothers to nurse or pump. Staff is trained in the benefits of breastfeeding. Storage and feeding of breast milk, and resources, are available for parents. Our program communicates with parents about how/ what their infants eat through the ProCare app. Infants have changing meal pattern requirements and we follow each child's pattern. The food program pattern divides up by ages: Birth-3 months; 4-7 months, and 8-11 months. Infants may begin to eat foods on the menu when they are under one year of age if parents request. When a child turns one, they are served foods on the menu. If a child of one year cannot drink cow's milk, a physician must fill out the Fluid Milk Substitution Request. The child's name must be placed on this substitution form.

Our meals are served family style for toddlers, preschool, PreK and school age children. Staff will sit and eat with the children, enjoying the same foods the children are eating. Children are encouraged to help with meals in age-appropriate ways. Scheduled meals and/or snacks are available to all children enrolled in the program.

Non-Discrimination Statement

The US Department of Agriculture prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.)

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call 866-632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter by mail at US Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax 202-690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.

Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at 800-877-8339; or 800-845-6136 (Spanish).

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Healthy Environment/Hand Washing/Smoking/Pest Control

Our goal is to protect and enhance the health and safety of the children and adults at Noah's Ark and to do everything possible to prevent the spread of illness. It is impossible to ward off ALL illnesses in a large group childcare setting. Children like to touch, share toys, and play close to each other and no matter how careful we are germs get passed around among the children.

A toy that makes its way into a child's mouth must be washed first in soapy water, rinsed in clean water, sanitized in bleach water, and left to air dry. All toys and equipment are cleaned using this procedure on a regular basis throughout each day.

Hand washing is the first line of defense against infectious disease. Hands must be washed using soap and running water for at least 20 seconds. Noah's Ark staff and volunteers are required to wash their hands:

- Before entering their classroom, after clocking in in the lounge.
- Before preparing, eating or handling food.
- After eating.
- Before feeding a child.
- After diapering and toileting each child.
- After handling or cleaning bodily fluids (blood, mucous, vomit, etc.).
- After wiping noses, mouths, bottoms or sores of each child.
- After handling or feeding pets.
- After playing outdoors.
- Before giving medication.
- When visibly dirty.

Children wash their hands:

- After diapering or toileting.
- Before and after eating meals and snacks.
- After coming in from outdoor play.
- Before and after playing in the water/sensory table(s).
- When visibly dirty.

Tables in the classroom are sanitized before and after meals and other times as necessary. Staff wash tables according to the following 3-step cleaning method:

1. spray table with soapy water and wipe with clean paper towel
2. rinse with clear water and wipe with clean paper towel
3. spray with sanitizing bleach water and allow to air dry

We will provide children with an opportunity to brush their teeth after at least one meal or snack. Check the classroom daily schedule for specific time. We will provide toothbrushes and developmentally appropriate toothpaste.

Parents should know that smoking and vaping are not permitted in licensed centers or on the property (including in vehicles while on the property). The Michigan Clean Indoor Air Act protects children who attend licensed childcare centers from exposure to tobacco smoke. This law prohibits smoking on the grounds of childcare centers, inside the centers, and all related buildings. Part of our duty is to protect your child from second hand smoke.

*If a child comes in smelling like smoke (tobacco, vape, and/or marijuana), we will change him/her into another outfit, launder his/her clothing to remove the smoky odor, and then dress him/her back in the original clothing; **with an automatic \$25 fee per launder.***

Pest Control - Rose Pest Solutions comes once a month to inspect for insect and rodent activity. We will notify parents anytime a toxic chemical is sprayed in the building or on the grounds during the week. Most often, we spray over the weekend so it is safe to return during the week.

Health Plan - Exclusion for Illness Policy

Noah's Ark has developed an **Exclusion for Illness Policy** following guidelines established by the Department of Health and Human Services, the US Public Health Service, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The Center's policy specifies the conditions under which a sick child will have to be excluded from care, or included in the classroom, based on the comfort level of the sick child and the protection of the well children and staff. When strictly applied, it has been very successful in reducing the incidence of illness and the spread of contagious disease at Noah's Ark. Please note that additional policies may be implemented during established pandemics.

If a child develops any of the following symptoms while at Noah's Ark, the parent/guardian will be contacted to pick up the child *immediately*. If the child already shows any of the symptoms before being brought in, *alternate care arrangements must be made*. If your child exhibits any of the following symptoms, he/she will have to be excluded from childcare at Noah's Ark:

- **Fever** - having a temperature of 100.5 degrees Fahrenheit or higher.
- **Diarrhea**— loose, runny, watery, or bloody stools; or uncontrolled diarrhea, defined as increased (from normal) number of stools not contained by the diaper or toilet use. Parents will be notified on the 3rd instance.
- **Vomiting** - for any reason.
- **Body rash**
- **Sore throat *with fever over 100.00***
- **Severe coughing**— child cannot catch breath, gets red or blue in the face, or makes high-pitched whooping sound after coughing, or exhibits belly breathing.
- **Eye/Nose discharge**—thick yellow or green mucus or pus draining from the eyes and/or nose, or contagious pinkeye
- **Yellowing skin or eyes**
- **Child is irritable, continuously crying, or requires more attention than we can provide without hurting the health and safety of other children in our care**

- **Head or body lice/nits**
- **Any easily spread parasite/fungus**
- **Lethargy and/or seizures** (unless a medical action plan has been established)

We realize that there might be non-contagious causes for some of the above, but as the staff members are not medically trained personnel, we cannot assume the risk that a rash could be just dermatitis and not measles. **A physician must first see the child.** To ensure that the risk of contagion is minimal children should **not** be brought in to Noah's Ark for care until the above symptoms have subsided completely *for 24 hours without medication or until you bring a physician's written statement which provides the following information:*

- a diagnosis that a rash/sore is not contagious
- a diagnosed disease is no longer contagious
- medication information, including dosage instructions and possible side effects.

Many illnesses are contagious long before any symptoms appear and the sick child has usually exposed others before seeming sick. Many illnesses stop being contagious once treatment is started, while with some conditions children are no longer contagious when symptoms appear.

Sign-in will be refused if the child shows symptoms of illness upon arrival. *If symptoms develop while the child is at Noah's Ark, the parent/guardian will be notified to pick up the child.*

If your child or the sibling of a child in care comes down with a contagious illness, it is important that you notify Noah's Ark immediately. We are required to report all illnesses to the Shiawassee County Health Department weekly. We will also post a graphic on ProCare (either class specific or center wide, as needed) with details of the illness, so that other parents may be on the lookout for symptoms, to minimize the risk of exposure and re-exposure among the other children. The child's name will be kept confidential.

Immunizations

All children enrolled in Noah's Ark must have their immunizations up-to-date. These may be obtained from the County Health Department, which provides immunizations for a reasonable fee, or from your family doctor or pediatrician. Licensing requires that the schedule of immunizations be maintained and recorded. As immunizations are obtained, a copy of updated immunization records must be provided. School-age children must have a statement on file that their shots are up-to-date.

If you have religious, or other, objections to immunizations you must obtain a waiver through the Shiawassee County Health Department. A copy of the waiver must be kept on file in the Center.

NACC does not grant and/or deny care to any child based on their immunization status (including covid) as long as required documents are in place.

Physical Exams

All children enrolling in Noah's Ark must have a physical examination and physician completed/signed exam form, which we will provide, verifying they are able to participate in child care and currently appears to be free from contagious or communicable diseases. Physical exams must be **RENEWED ANNUALLY FOR ALL NON-SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN.** School-age children must have a Statement of Good Health signed by their parents on file, which must also be renewed **ANNUALLY.**

These help to ensure the safety of all children and staff. If you are in need of a physician, please stop by the office for a list of local offices or contact the Shiawassee County Health Department.

Medicine

Noah's Ark will dispense **prescription medication** (including breathing treatments with a copy of the doctor's prescription attached) to your child ONLY according to your physician's written and signed instructions on the appropriate authorization form, and **non-prescription medication** according to the parent's written and signed instructions on the appropriate authorization form in compliance with the instructions on the label.

Both **authorization forms for the administration of medicine** are located at the parent desk in the hallway. When authorized by the parent, we will dispense non-prescription medication to the child for a limited time only, and never on an "as needed" basis. We cannot give the child a bigger dose of medicine or administer it more often than directed on the label. A caregiver shall keep all medication out of the reach of children and shall return it to the child's parent or destroy it when the parent determines it is no longer needed or has expired. A caregiver shall not add medication to a child's bottle, beverage, or food unless indicated on the prescription label. Topical nonprescription medication, including, but not limited to sunscreen, insect repellent, and diaper cream requires written parental authorization annually. The Center shall maintain a record as to the time and the amount of medication given or applied on the ProCare app.

Staff will NOT administer fever reducing medication unless prescribed by a doctor.

Incidents/Accidents/Emergencies

In case of a non medical incident parents/guardians will be notified the same day as to the nature of the incident (via ProCare, phone, email, or in person) and the plan moving forward. Licensing will be notified within 24 hours, if needed, along with any other authorities.

In case of accidents/emergencies/medical incidents the parents/guardians will be notified as soon as the situation allows (via ProCare, phone, or email). If he/she cannot be reached, the emergency contact persons will be notified in order according to the emergency card, if needed. If neither the parent/guardian nor the emergency contact persons can be reached, the physician on file will be contacted. Licensing must be informed of any injury while at Noah's Ark to a child requiring medical treatment by a physician. A copy of the hospital/doctor report must accompany this. Please let us know right away if you seek medical treatment for an incident/accident that happened while in attendance at the Center.

You will receive a digital report on ProCare of any minor accident (bumps, cuts, bruises, etc.) involving your child, describing the incident and the action(s) taken. You will receive a written report if your child requires medical attention or was bitten. After you sign the form, the white page will become your copy and the yellow page will be kept in your child's file.

Parents must complete an emergency medical treatment release form when enrolling their child in the Center in order to allow staff to take appropriate action in the event of serious injury or sudden illness. Depending on the severity of the injury the child will be transported for emergency medical treatment to an appropriate medical facility, accompanied by a staff member, if this is allowed.

Evacuation/Lockdown

In the event an evacuation of the building is ordered (bomb threat, gas leak, etc.), Kiwanis Village of Owosso has agreed to allow Noah's Ark Children's Center the use of the community room as a designated emergency evacuation site; infants will be taken out in evacuation cribs.

Noah's Ark agrees to hold Kiwanis Village and/or its Board of Directors harmless, should any injury to staff or children occur as a result of using the community room. We further agree to be responsible for any damages to Kiwanis Village property as a result of utilizing said space.

Parents/Guardians will be notified of all evacuations as soon as all children/staff are safe and the situation allows and after the proper authorities have been contacted. We will let you know if you need to pick your child up immediately or if it is safe to return to the Center. Parents will be notified via ProCare, Facebook, and Telephone (if possible). ***It is the parent's responsibility to sign up for the ProCare app. Information on this can be obtained in the office.***

In the event a formal lockdown (direct threat to Center - building/property, children, and/or staff or active emergency/threat within 5 miles of Center that could be harmful to Center) of the building is necessary ALL doors will be locked and all children will be kept *in their classrooms*, regardless of their daily schedule (with the exception of supervised bathroom use as necessary, if appropriate). In the event of an informal lockdown (suspected threat or emergency/threat in area deemed not likely to be harmful to Center) ALL doors will be locked and children will not go outside for recess; the daily schedule will be followed as appropriate and staff/children will be allowed to move through the hallway as needed. Parents/Guardians will be notified of either lockdown as soon as the situation allows (via Facebook and ProCare), after the proper authorities have been notified if needed, and will be advised if immediate pick up is needed or not. Parents/Guardians will also be notified when either lockdown ends.

Weather

Noah's Ark makes every effort to open in spite of weather conditions. Licensing requires a minimum number of staff per children. If staff are unable to reach Noah's Ark it would not be safe, responsible, or in accordance with licensing regulations to try to operate the Center with insufficient staff. The decision to close will be made by the Director at the earliest possible time. Notification of closure will be done via Facebook and ProCare.

If there are not enough caretakers to watch all scheduled children and care has already begun, then childcare services will be provided on a first come first serve basis until the maximum number of children per caretaker is met. Under these circumstances, calling ahead is necessary if your child is scheduled for a later arrival time to ensure there is room for your child given the reduced number of caretakers.

Michigan Licensing dictates that we take all children outdoors every day unless weather is inclement. (Ex. sleet, blizzards, frigid wind, tornado watches/warnings, severe rain or thunderstorms/lightning).

The following temperature guidelines will be used based on the AccuWeather app:

Infants and Toddlers will go outside with a *real feel* of 20-90 degrees F

Preschool, PreK, and School Age will go outside with a *real feel* of 10-90 degrees F

Temperatures on the extreme ends will result in a shortened period of time outside if it seems to be affecting the children. For safety reasons, in the summer, shady play areas and lots of drinking water are provided. *Parents/Guardians must provide proper attire for the weather as the children will go outside with or without it.*

Fire and Tornado Drills, Tornado Watches and Warnings

Fire and tornado drills are practiced seasonally by the Center in accordance to licensing policies. Fire and tornado drill procedures are posted in each room. Noah's Ark monitors radio and online weather reports in order to be prepared for severe weather conditions.

During a tornado watch, normal activities will continue with at least one staff member listening/checking for weather updates. When a tornado warning is in effect, emergency procedures will be followed as posted in each room. Children will be released only to their parent/guardian, unless we receive prior notification.

If you wish to pick up your child due to bad weather conditions, please do not phone Noah's Ark. We need to keep the lines open for emergency use. You may message us via ProCare. When you arrive calmly prepare your child to leave the Center without talking about the weather, which may excite and/or upset the other children.

Emergency Closing and Man Made Incidents (gas leaks, burst water pipes, etc.)

In the event Noah's Ark must be closed or open at a later than normal time, parents will be notified via ProCare and Facebook. ***It is the parent's responsibility to sign up for the ProCare app. Information on this can be obtained in the office.***

If the Center loses power or is without water for an extended period of time, it will be closed until all affected utilities are restored. If the Center loses power or water during normal operating hours, parents will be contacted and asked to pick their children up as soon as possible. The staff will use ProCare first then the phone number(s) listed on the child's emergency card if needed.

The Center will be automatically **CLOSED** when we are under a State of Emergency, declared by the city, county, state, or nation, and outside travel is deemed unsafe due to severe weather or threat of violence. The Center will only reopen once the State of Emergency has been lifted or redefined to allow for safe travel.

Fees are waived for emergencies **when the Center unexpectedly closes.**

Snow Days

Fees are waived on snow days when Owosso Public Schools are closed and you choose to keep your child at home, **but only if you call in.**

Fees are waived for snow days **when the Center is closed.**

Noah's Ark makes every effort to remain open on snow days, but can only do so if enough staff are able to safely travel to work AND if we have enough children needing care to warrant staying open.

Safety

Michigan law states that all children under age four must be properly restrained in a car seat. We will report anyone who drives away from the Center without securing the child in a car seat. Children younger than age 4 ride in a car seat in the rear seat if the vehicle has a rear seat. If all available rear seats are occupied by children under 4, then a child under 4 may ride in a car seat in the front seat. Children are to be properly buckled in a car seat or booster seat until they are 8 years old or 4 feet 9 inches tall. Children must ride in a seat until they reach the age requirement or the height requirement, whichever comes first.

Michigan law states that children under the age of 7 may not be left unattended in a vehicle. Noah's Ark does not condone leaving a child of any age unattended in a vehicle, for any period of time; especially if the vehicle is still running. Noah's Ark will report anyone who leaves children under the age of 7 unattended in a vehicle.

We request that children who ride the Center's tricycles and tractors on the playground wear bike helmets. Noah's Ark has a few helmets available for children's use. Children who participate in bike/wheel days during the summer *must bring their own riding vehicles and bike helmets*. Your child must wear a bike helmet in order to ride his/her vehicle. Children must remain in the designated riding area AND ride safely around others in order to continue to participate. This is a privilege and not a right.

Children *must* wear tennis shoes on the playground, on walks/field trips, and when playing in the gym. Shoes in the classrooms *should* have straps that fit snugly on the heels. Flip-flops, loose sandals, slippers, and other footwear are able to be worn *in classrooms* at your own risk. NACC, its board, and/or staff are not responsible for injuries caused by improper footwear provided by parents. Children who participate in water days *must* have some kind of well fitting water shoes to protect their feet on the sidewalk, mulch, and grass.

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the sudden unexplained death of an infant under one year of age, usually during sleep time. Noah's Ark supports the "Safe Sleep--Back to Sleep" Program promoted by the US Public Health Service, American Academy of Pediatrics, SIDS Alliance, and the Association of SIDS and Infant Mortality Programs that recommends putting an infant to sleep on his/her back on a firm mattress without a blanket, pillow, stuffed animals, and/or other smothering hazards. Infants in our program are placed on their backs in an empty crib as required by Licensing. A current doctor's note must be posted for any exception (including, but not limited to swaddling after 2 months of age, propping mattresses, sleeping up right after feeding).

Animals, other than classroom pets, of any kind are not encouraged on the Center's premises. Families/Staff *must* have prior approval before bringing their pets to Noah's Ark for any reason. The animal owner assumes responsibility for any damage/injury that occurs to property, people, or animal whether or not they have received permission to bring the animal.

Noah's Ark Children's Center is committed to maintaining a safe environment for the children in its care. Staff members are certified in CPR, First Aid, and Blood Borne Pathogens and are trained in global awareness skills which allow them to effectively focus on large areas of play in the classroom and playground. Although we take every safety precaution accidents do happen. The Center cannot guarantee that a child getting hurt in our care will never occur.

Regarding building security, the doors in the Center will be locked as follows:

- The Center's main entrance exterior door (through gate by playground) will be unlocked at 6:10 am and locked at 6:15 pm. The interior door is locked at all times. All visitors must ring the bell for assistance.
- The outside door at the end of the Zoo Crew wing is locked at all times.
- All church doors are kept locked unless there is a church activity (funeral, luncheon, etc.). Visitors must ring bell for assistance.
- All classroom doors are to be kept shut and locked unless circumstances (smells, heat, cold, etc.) deem it necessary.

Suspected Child Abuse Policy

Child abuse and neglect are against the law. The law mandates caregivers to report any suspected cases of child abuse and neglect. Noah's Ark Children's Center has established a procedure to be followed when employees suspect abuse. Please know that this procedure is in the best interest of the child and is for their immediate safety. NACC does not make false claims of abuse/neglect for retaliation purposes. If we do report suspected abuse and it is cleared by CPS please remember that we do so only to protect the child. While we understand that this may cause negative emotions it is done with the child's best interest in mind because of how much we care about them.

The procedure is as follows:

- *Children will be observed as they play and interact with other children. Actions or comments from children that appear to be inappropriate for that age group will be noted.*
- *Children will be observed for any evidence of physical abuse. (Unexplainable bruises or marks on a child). Parents may be asked how a child got hurt.*
- *It is the staff's responsibility to report any incidents of suspected child abuse.*
- *Staff will bring these concerns to the Director. This should not be talked about with other parents or staff in other classrooms.*
- *The Director will observe the child and then talk with staff involved with the child.*
- *The Director will report suspicions to Child Protective Services (CPS).*
- *The Director may or may not let the parent know of these concerns. This will depend on what the suspected abuse involves.*

Curriculum

All staff at Noah's Ark Children's Center (with the exception of GSRP; see pg 32) use the MSU Thematic Approach curriculum, which draws heavily from the developmentally appropriate curriculum of Kostelnik, et al. (2010), as the basis for instruction in their classrooms. This curriculum was developed at Michigan State University, over a period of years, by teachers and faculty in the Department of Family and Child Ecology (now Human Development and Family Studies). It has achieved national recognition.

The curriculum is divided into six domains, which are:

1. Aesthetic Development
2. Affective Development
3. Cognitive Development
4. Language/Communication Development
5. Physical Development
6. Social Development

Teachers plan in the process areas of Construction and Pretend Play.

Looked at individually, the first six domains represent major facets of child development, the latter two, processes by which these facets are integrated. Taken together, the entire array represents the whole child.

Every week, teachers plan a variety of activities and experiences corresponding to all eight domains. Although we realize that no one facet of development can be isolated from the rest, we believe that purposeful planning for each domain results in a more comprehensive approach to instruction. Moreover, we can achieve a consistency in application from classroom to classroom that contributes to the positive growth of children as they move through the program. Simultaneously, classroom individuality is maintained because each teacher brings his/her own special emphasis and understanding of development to its implementation. Thus while we all share common goals, application of the curriculum is personalized and tailored to meet the needs of individual classes at Noah's Ark Children's Center.

The curriculum also meets or exceeds the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) quality curricular standards and the State of Michigan Preschool and Infant/Toddler Quality Standards (2013).

The curriculum used at Noah's Ark Children's Center is described in more detail in the following pages. Each domain is presented individually and includes a developmental focus, a purpose, and a list of goals. The purpose defines those facets of development covered within that domain. The purpose is a global statement that refers to the long-range purpose of the domain.

Kostelnik, M., Soderman, A. and Whiren, A., (2010) Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson

Curricular Domain: Aesthetic Development

Planning activities in the arts is easier when teachers consider specific goals. The National Standards for Arts Education, published by CNAEA (1994), along with the Music Education Standards from the Music Educators National Conference (MENC; 1994), provide a set of useful goals for teachers to use.

Purpose

For children to become aware of beauty in nature and art, to appreciate and participate in creative arts to achieve personally meaningful ends.

Goals

As children progress toward the goal, they will:

1. Become aware of beauty in nature.
2. Experience various art forms (music, dance, drama, and visual art.)
3. Become familiar with different types of each art form (e.g., types of dance such as ballet, tap, folk, and square.)
4. Use a variety of materials, tools, techniques, and processes in the arts (visual art, music, dance, and drama.)
5. Recognize and respond to basic elements of art (e.g., line, color, shape, texture, composition, pattern.)
6. Recognize and respond to basic elements of music (e.g., beat, pitch, melody, rhythm, dynamics, tempo, mood.)
7. Talk about aesthetic experiences.
8. Participate with others to create music, dance, and visual art as means of communication.
9. Recognize that music, dance, drama, and visual arts produce means of communication.
10. Recognize themselves as artists.
11. Participate in aesthetic criticism, describe, analyze, interpret, and judge.
12. Contribute to the aesthetic environment.
13. Begin to recognize the arts as a lifelong pursuit.
14. Begin to appreciate the arts in relation to history and culture.
15. Begin to make connections between the arts and other curriculum areas.

Curricular Domain: Affective Development

Developmental Focus

- Trust
- Autonomy
- Initiative
- Industry
- Self-concept
- Self esteem

Goals

For children to see themselves as lovable, valuable, and competent. The following objectives give children the opportunities to:

1. Learn that school is safe, supportive, predictable, interesting and enjoyable.
2. Demonstrate that they have a feeling of belonging in the school environment.
3. Engage in affectionate relationships beyond the family.
4. Identify the characteristics and qualities that make each of them unique.
5. Identify their own emotions.
6. Explore similarities and differences among people to gain personal insight.
7. Demonstrate growing ability to care for themselves and meet their own needs.
8. Independently begin and pursue a task and control their own behavior without external reminders.
9. Make choices and experience the consequences of personal decisions.
10. Gain experience and demonstrate independence in using age-appropriate materials and tools (writing implements, cutting tools, measuring instruments, the computer, tape recorder, keyboard, etc.).

- a. Use tools and materials safely and appropriately.
 - b. Complete a task they have begun.
11. Assume responsibility for caring for their personal belongings and classroom materials.
 12. Contribute to maintenance of the classroom (e.g. caring for classroom pets, watering plants).
 - a. Demonstrate increasing awareness of and ability to evaluate their accomplishments, as well as to set new standards and goals.
 - b. Voluntarily attempt experiences they are unsure of/or that are new to them with reasonable confidence and enthusiasm.
 - c. Learn satisfying and effective strategies to express and cope with personal emotions and tensions.
 - d. Learn to accept both positive and negative emotions as a natural part of living.
 - e. Become familiar with the situational circumstances that influence personal emotions.
 - f. Learn how to act deliberately to affect their own emotions.
 13. Understand the concept of possession and ownership.
 14. Value their own gender, family, culture and race.
 - a. Engage in a full range of experiences, not limited to stereotypes related to gender or background.
 15. Increase their knowledge, understanding and appreciation of their own cultural heritage.
 16. Develop cross-gender competencies of various kinds.
 17. Experience the pleasure of work.
 18. Recognize factors that contribute to quality work (e.g., time, care, effort, responsibility, etc.).
 19. Make reasonable attempts to master situations that are difficult for them.
 20. Experience success through evaluation and describing competencies.
 21. Give criticism in a constructive manner.
 22. Learn how to recover from setbacks.
 23. Imagine and speak of future potential for themselves.
 24. Give and accept opinions.
 25. Adapt to the time and routine events associated with coming to school (arrive, participate in daily schedule, and depart).

Curriculum Domain: Cognitive Development

Purpose

The aim of the cognitive domain is for children to acquire, apply, adapt, integrate, and evaluate knowledge as they construct new or expanded concepts.

Goals for Science and Other Cognitive Functions

As children progress, they will:

1. Examine the observable properties of man- made and natural objects, using their multi-sensory abilities to:
2. Determine the relations among objects
 - a. Discriminate similarities and differences among objects
 - b. Develop and refine their attending skills and their ability to ignore irrelevant information
3. Learn and apply the scientific process:
 - a. Observe attentively
 - b. Predict what they think will happen on the basis of a hypothesis
 - c. Guess why certain things happen
 - d. Carry out experiments
 - e. Formulate conclusions
4. Explore firsthand a variety of cause-and effect relationships.
5. Demonstrate an awareness of the interdependence of all things in the world.
6. Develop and refine their reporting skills:
 - a. Develop strategies for remembering
 - b. Connect and combine information in an integrative manner
 - c. Evaluate predictions
 - d. Draw conclusions
 - e. Review or summarize experiences

- f. Generate alternative approaches to problems
 - g. Communicate findings
7. Become aware of their thought processes, building more accurate, complete, and complex concepts with time.
 8. Recognize that knowledge and data come in many forms and can be organized and displayed in diverse ways.
 9. Acquire knowledge related to technology:
 - a. Differentiate between natural and man-made objects
 - b. Become aware of tools and techniques that have been created to solve human problems
 - c. Understand how tools aid observation, measurement, and investigations
 - d. Become more competent in using hardware and software
 10. Acquire scientific knowledge related to the life sciences:
 - a. Characteristics of living plants and animals
 - b. Life cycles and processes
 - c. Basic needs, habitats, and relations
 11. Acquire scientific knowledge related to the physical sciences:
 - a. Changes in matter
 - b. Forces affecting motion, direction, speed, light, heat, and sound
 - c. Physical properties and characteristics of phenomena
 12. Acquire scientific knowledge related to the earth sciences:
 - a. Weather
 - b. Space
 - c. Ecology
 - d. Major features of the earth
 13. Explore a variety of scientific equipment, such as simple machines, magnets.
 14. Use scientific equipment appropriately and safely.
 15. Develop and use an accurate vocabulary related to scientific events, objects, and processes:
 - a. To describe (e.g., soft or hard, high or low, smooth or rough, large and small, fast and slow, sweet or sour, symmetrical, alternating; dissolving, combining, disappearing, changing)
 - b. To name (e.g., solution, liquid or solid, larva, pupa, beetle, petal, stamen, pistil, vein)
 - c. To measure (e.g., weight, length, volume, area, time, standard and nonstandard tools) scientific events, objects, and processes
 16. Participate in recording scientific data.

Goals for Mathematics and Other Cognitive Functions

As children progress, they will:

1. Understand number, ways of representing number, relations among numbers, and number systems:
 - a. Count with understanding and recognize “how many” in sets of objects
 - b. Use multiple models to develop initial understandings of place value and base-10 number system
 - c. Develop understanding of the relative position and magnitude of whole numbers and of ordinal and cardinal numbers and their connections
 - d. Develop a sense of whole numbers and represent and use them in flexible ways
 - e. Connect number words and numerals to the quantities they represent
 - f. Understand and represent commonly used fractions, such as $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{3}$, and $\frac{1}{2}$
2. Understand meanings of operations and how operations relate to one another:
 - a. Understand various meanings of addition and subtraction of whole numbers and the relation between the two operations
 - b. Understand the effects of adding and subtracting whole numbers
 - c. Understand situations that entail multiplication and division, such as equal groups of objects and sharing equally
3. Compute fluently and make reasonable estimates:
 - a. Develop and use strategies for whole-number computations, with a focus on addition and subtraction
 - b. Develop fluency with basic number combinations for addition and subtraction
 - c. Use a variety of methods and tools to compute with, including objects, mental computation, estimation using paper and pencil, and calculators

4. Recognize, describe, and extend patterns:
 - a. By a single property or function
 - b. Regrouping by a different criteria, creating subclasses and supraclasses
5. Sort, classify, and order objects by size, number, and other properties.
6. Represent and analyze mathematical structures, using algebraic symbols:
 - a. Illustrate operations such as commutatively, using specific numbers (e.g., $3+4=4+3=4+1+1+1$)
 - b. Use concrete, pictorial, and oral representations to develop an understanding of invented and conventional symbolic notations
7. Add and subtract whole numbers, using objects, pictures, and symbols.
8. Describe change in various contexts (e.g., qualitative change, such as a students' growing taller (or change, such as a student growing 2 inches in 1 year).
9. Analyze characteristics and properties of two- and three-dimensional geometric shapes:
 - a. Recognize, name, build, draw, compare, and sort two- and three- dimensional shapes
 - b. Describe attributes and parts of two- and three- dimensional shapes
 - c. Investigate and predict the results of putting together and taking apart two- and three- dimensional shape
10. Specify locations and describe spatial relations
 - a. Describe, name, and interpret relative positions in space
 - b. Describe, name, and interpret direction and distance
 - c. Find and make locations on maps
11. Recognize symmetrical shapes in a variety of positions.
12. Use visualization, spatial reasoning, and geometric modeling:
 - a. Create mental images of geometric shapes
 - b. Recognize and represent shapes from different perspectives
 - c. Relate ideas in geometry to ideas in number and measurement
 - d. Recognize geometric shapes and structures in the environment and specify their location
13. Understand measurable attributes of objects and the units, systems, and processes of measurement
 - a. Recognize the attributes of length, volume, weight, area, and time
 - b. Compare and order objects according to these attributes
 - c. Understand how to measure, using nonstandard and standard units
 - d. Select an appropriate unit and tool for the attribute being measured
14. Apply appropriate techniques, tools, and formulas to determine measurements:
 - a. Measure with multiple copies of units of the same size, such as paper clips laid end to end
 - b. Use repetition of a single unit to measure something larger than the unit, for instance, measuring the length of a room with a single meter stick
 - c. Use tools to measure
 - d. Develop common referents for measures so that comparisons and estimates can be made
15. Formulate and ask questions using data:
 - a. Pose questions and gather data about themselves and their surroundings
 - b. Sort and classify objects according to their attributes and organize data about the object
 - c. Represent data by using concrete objects, pictures, and graphs
16. Select and use appropriate statistical methods to analyze data.
17. Develop and evaluate inferences and predictions that are based on data.
18. Understand and apply basic concepts of probability.

Curricular Domain: Language/Communication Development

Purpose

For children to communicate their ideas and feelings and to accurately interpret the communications they receive.

Goals: Listening and Viewing

As children progress, they will:

1. Participate in experiences that help them interpret unspoken messages, including tone of voice, facial expression, and body language.
 - a. Identify sounds in their environment.
 - b. Listen for pleasure.
2. Demonstrate courteous listening behaviors by:
 - a. Looking at the speaker
 - b. Sitting relatively still
 - c. Waiting for a turn to speak
 - d. Responding to oral cues
3. Increase their receptive vocabulary.
4. Develop their understanding of contemporary media (e.g., television, videos, CDs, DVDs, and computer technology); discriminate which aspects are likely true and which are fantasy.
5. Demonstrate auditory memory by repeating in correct detail and sequence the messages they hear.
6. Demonstrate auditory comprehension and critical listening skills by:
 - a. Retelling, in their own words, the messages or stories they hear
 - b. Responding to oral language with relevant comments or questions
 - c. Orally linking personal experiences to what have heard
 - d. Responding accurately to single and multi-step directions
7. Create sounds by singing, music making, incorporating rhythm, volume, and pitch.
8. Articulate their intents, emotions, and desires.
9. Describe events from the past, present, and future.
10. Ask and answer questions.
11. Tell stories about pictures.
12. Create and describe imaginative situations.
13. Present conclusions based on the investigation of an issue or a problem.
14. Use appropriate body language (eye contact, body position, and gestures) to alert a listener to their intent and to convey emotion.
15. Increase their expressive vocabulary.
16. Use increasingly complex sentence structure:
 - a. Conditional statements (if... then
 - b. Causal statements (...because...or when...)
 - c. Prepositions, adverbs, adjectives
17. Participate in conversations with peers and adults.
18. Demonstrate self-confidence and poise during group speaking and creative dramatics activities.
19. Dictate stories.
20. Connect letter sounds to graphemes.
21. Generate graphemes.
22. Recognize that they can convey messages to others through written symbols (drawing and writing).
23. Understand that there is a system, pattern, and organization for print.
24. Put their thoughts on paper, first through simple pictures and then incorporating print into their drawings.
25. Use their own contemporary versions of writing, working gradually toward conventional spelling, punctuation, and format.
26. Expand their writing vocabulary.
27. Select topics to write about.
28. Learn to organize their ideas in a logical sequence.
29. Begin to use writing strategies such as mapping, webbing, and clustering to organize and plan writing.
30. Express their ideas in complete thoughts.
31. Improve their ability to evaluate and edit their writing, preparing rough and final drafts.
32. Use reference materials, including electronic sources, to help them improve their writing.
33. Use the writing process to create original story poems and informational pieces.
34. Use word-processing programs on the computers.
35. Recognize graphemes-the letters of the alphabet.
36. Recognize they can get meaning from print.
37. Enjoy shared reading experiences with a variety of texts.

38. Practice reading-like behavior, moving from “pretend” reading to attempting to match the flow in their language with book illustrations and with print.
39. Increase their receptive and expressive reading vocabularies.
40. Respond to written symbols in the environment (e.g., their name and others’ names, signs, advertisements, labels).
41. Predict, on the basis of the information in the story.
42. Develop an understanding of story elements and structure:
 - a. Story sequence (first, next, last, beginning, middle, end; before, after)
 - b. Main ideas both at the literal level and at the differential level
 - c. Characters and character development setting
 - d. Plot development, cause and effect, problems and solutions, and logical conclusions
43. Tell or dramatize their versions of stories to show comprehension of what they have read.
44. Create new endings for stories, drawing on logical elements of the original stories.
45. Read familiar or memorized nursery rhymes, songs, poems, and plays.
46. Distinguish between real and make-believe, fact and opinion, in written materials.
47. Read their own writing.
48. Expand their phonological awareness:
 - a. Recognize and generate rhymes and rhyming words
 - b. Segment words into sounds, syllables, or beats
 - c. Blend or stretch sounds into words
 - d. Manipulate sounds to create new words
49. Expand their alphabetic knowledge:
 - a. Identify uppercase and lowercase letters
 - b. Increase concepts about letter-sound relations
 - c. Identify vowel patterns
50. Develop a sight vocabulary.
51. Increase their word-decoding skills.
52. Read independently:
 - a. Construct meaning from birth narrative text and expository text
 - b. Use decoding strategies (e.g., picture cues, context clues, phonic analysis, and syntax) to predict what makes sense
53. Interaction reading out-loud.
54. Develop general concepts of print:
 - a. Books are read from front to back
 - b. Books have identifiable parts: front/back, cover, table of contents, index, chapters, dedications, and pages
 - c. Books are written by authors and sometimes have illustrators
 - d. Letters have names and sounds
 - e. Letters are different from words
 - f. We read the words, not the pictures
 - g. Print is organized from left to right and from top to bottom and the order of print is relevant
 - h. Letters are used to write words, letters stand for the sounds we say, letters can be used more than once to make words
 - i. Words are things that we read
 - j. Spaces are used between words
 - k. Punctuation is used to inform the reader
55. Apply, to their lives and others’ lives, knowledge, ideas, and issues drawn from the texts
56. Become familiar with libraries as interesting places to find books and other materials for entertainment and information.
57. Evaluate their developing literacy skills, identifying their strengths and needs.
58. Use information gained from reading to:
 - a. Compare and contrast
 - b. Analyze
 - c. Infer
 - d. Express ideas
 - e. Solve problems

Curricular Domain: Physical Development

Purpose

For children to develop confidence and competence in the control and movement of their bodies and to develop the attitudes, knowledge skills, and practices that lead to maintaining, respecting, and protecting their bodies.

Goals

As children progress they will:

1. Gain confidence in using their bodies.
2. Identify body parts by name and location.
3. Develop spatial awareness (understanding of personal and general space, direction, and spatial relations).
4. Develop temporal awareness (awareness of speed, timing, duration, and rhythm).
5. Improve total sensory awareness and integrate sensory information to solve movement problems.
6. Distinguish the foreground from the background visually and auditory.
7. Engage in a variety of activities that require static and dynamic balance.
8. Engage in a variety of activities that require coordinated movements with large- and small-muscle systems.
9. Sustain vigorous motor activity with time to develop endurance.
10. Engage in activities to develop muscular strength in all parts of the body (climbing, hanging, etc.).
11. Engage in a variety of activities that require flexibility, agility, and stretching.
12. Move the major joints of the arms, legs, and trunk through a full range of motion.
13. Use their whole bodies in appropriate activities to strengthen muscle and muscle groups.
14. Demonstrate appropriate form in the fundamental motor skills such as jumping, hopping, running, skipping, leaping, galloping, sliding, and climbing.
15. Demonstrate appropriate form in the control of objects: throwing, catching, kicking, and striking.
16. Demonstrate competence in non-locomotor skills in bending, twisting, pushing, pulling, swinging, etc.
17. Demonstrate good posture while walking, sitting, or standing.
18. Demonstrate, imitate, or create movement in the response to selected rhythms.
19. Demonstrate locomotor skills in time to rhythmic patterns using a variety of movement concepts.
20. Demonstrate control of speed, direction, and force of movement through space.
21. Coordinate wrist, hand, finger, thumb, and eye-hand movements.
22. Control the movement of their bodies in relation to objects.
23. Coordinate skillfully, including implements for eating, writing, dressing, and playing.
24. Develop a positive attitude toward their bodies; appreciate their competence and that of others.
25. Learn practices that keep their bodies and their environments clean and sanitary.
26. Acquire attitudes, knowledge, and skills about physical activity that predispose them to maintaining physically fit lifestyles.
27. Learn and practice sound nutritional habits and healthy, polite eating behaviors
28. Demonstrate self-help skills such as nose blowing, hand washing, using the toilet independently, tooth brushing, and grooming and other behaviors that reduce health risks to themselves or others.
29. Learn and practice appropriate safety procedures for school, playgrounds, home, and the neighborhood.
30. Discriminate good and poor health, nutrition, and safety practices.
31. Learn how to apply health, nutritional, and safety knowledge when making choices in daily life.

Curricular Domain: Social Development

Purpose

For children to develop social awareness and social competence in a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world.

Goals

As children progress they will:

1. Develop play skills
 - a. Initiate play
 - b. Join a group at play
 - c. Make suggestions
 - d. Take suggestions
 - e. Recognize ways to deal with unpleasant social situations and the emotions associated

with these situations

- f. Learn to play productively alone
2. Develop peer friendship relationship skills which initiate, maintain, and terminate interactions and develop relationships constructively.
3. Become aware of other people's opinions, viewpoints, and attitudes
4. Learn how to negotiate conflicts in peaceful ways by compromising, bargaining, talking, and working through difficult situations.
5. Develop empathy for others (recognize others' emotions, respect others' emotional responses).
6. Perceive adults as sources of gratification, approval, and modeling.
7. Learn how to conform to reasonable limits set on behavior, play space, use of materials, or the types of activities in which they are involved.
8. Identify the reasons for classroom rules.
 - a. Distinguish acceptable from unacceptable classroom behavior.
 - b. Use their knowledge of appropriate behavior in one circumstance to determine appropriate conduct in another.
9. Begin to develop skills related to self-control, resistance to temptation, delay of gratification, and how to carry out positive social actions.
10. Learn how to cooperate (work with others toward a common goal).
11. Learn how to be helpful (share information or materials, give physical assistance, offer emotional support).
12. Recognize their own and others' cultural values and practices.
13. Develop some understanding and respect for the similarities and differences among people.
14. Learn approved behaviors related to social and ethnic customs (e.g., manners and other respectful behaviors).
15. Acquire rudimentary ideas of how goods and services are produced, exchanged, and consumed.
16. Recognize their place in the physical environment and how they and others orient themselves.
17. Develop a sense of responsibility for the environment.
18. Develop an understanding of time, continuity, and change in relation to past and present events.
19. Understand and act on democratic principles and practices.
20. Develop awareness of and concern for the rights and well-being of others.
21. Become aware of how people live together in families, neighborhoods, and communities.
22. Develop positive attitudes about belonging to a group beyond the family.
23. Develop skills related to social studies content, such as collecting and analyzing data, mapping, and making decisions.
24. Acquire social studies vocabulary and facts.

Construction Development

Developmental Focus

- Iconic representation

Goal

For children to translate mental images into tangible products, that represent their own interpretation of an object or event.

Mediating Objectives:

The following objectives lead to the ultimate goal:

Children have opportunities to:

1. Engage in a wide range of experiences from which to draw their interpretations.
2. Interpret events and reconstruct them in tangible ways.
3. Use diverse approaches to represent objects or events.
 - a. Represent a single object or event using different materials or techniques.
 - b. Represent different objects and events using one material or technique.
 - c. Collaborate with classmates to construct a representative object.

In construction activities, children create models or pictures that represent their internal vision of an object or event. In this way, construction is a concrete way in which children symbolize the world. It is a highly cognitive process. Yet, for

children to build out of real materials the models or pictures that originate in their minds, they must draw on other abilities as well—

- Creativity, imagination, aesthetic appreciation
- Fine motor, gross motor and perceptual skills
- Planning strategies, language, and often social interaction techniques.

Thus, as children construct something out of paper and paste, clay or blocks, they coordinate all aspects of the self. It is this synthesizing characteristic that explains the importance of construction within our program.

Pretend Play

Developmental Focus:

- Imitation
- Role playing
- Symbolic play
- Dramatization

Goal:

For children to suspend the laws of reality in order to carry out a play theme over time.

Mediating Objectives:

The following objectives lead to the ultimate goal.

Children have opportunities to:

1. Display in their play behaviors what they have seen or experienced.
2. Use their bodies to represent real or imaginary objects or events.
3. Assign symbolic meaning to real or imaginary objects using language or gestures.
4. Take on the role attributes of beings or objects and act out interpretations of those roles.
5. Create play themes.
6. Experiment with a variety of objects, roles, (leader, follower, mediator) and characterizations (animals, mother, astronaut, etc.).
7. React to and interact with other children in make-believe situations.
8. Dramatize familiar stories, songs and poems.
9. Integrate construction into pretend play episodes.

Children engage in many forms of pretend play and each affords them chances to talk, listen, interact socially, express emotions, explore attitudes, manipulate objects, practice creative thinking, experiment with problem solving, use their imagination and assimilate a variety of role behaviors. Moreover, pretending is one of the purest forms of symbolic thought available to young children. Its use permits them to symbolize objects and events using words, actions, situations and materials. Thus, in pretend play, children draw on all aspects of the self to create their own interpretations of the world. Because pretend play is such an integrative means for children to gain concepts and skills, it is an essential part of our program.

Classroom Goals

Children's development will occur naturally as children are given opportunities to experience:

- Social and emotional growth
- A positive self-identity
- Communication to expand language development and promote reading and writing
- Using their senses to think, reason, question, and experiment while enjoying math & science activities
- Physical development of gross and fine motor skills
- Creativity through art, music, and dramatic play opportunities
Including weekly Music class
- Exploring their community through hands-on experiences

- Technology through limited use of videos, radio (including streaming platforms), and computers/tablets

Children's spiritual awareness is developed through the following Faith Initiative Goals:

- Emphasizing Christian holidays (we are open to other holidays if we have children currently enrolled who celebrate them)
- Reciting posted mealtime prayers
- Posters and other appropriate Christian wall hangings/decorations
- Participation in special opportunities in the life of the church, including NACC Sunday
- Incorporate aspects of the Bible and Christianity in the Preschool and PreK classrooms
- Chapel twice a month with the Pastor

In each of Noah's Ark classrooms, the curriculum for all areas of learning is developed to support its philosophy for all children in general, as well as each child specifically. The Center encourages an appreciation of the uniqueness of each child and the importance of fostering positive self-esteem throughout all aspects of the child's development. This awareness of self as a positive begins in the infant room and is nurtured and expanded as the child progresses through the age groups of the Center.

It is our goal that a child who has been in the Noah's Ark program from infancy through school age, will leave the Center with pro-social skills, self-control, the ability to make decisions and solve problems appropriately, and most important, with social and spiritual awareness and self-respect for the ideas and beliefs of others. This will provide the foundation for the child to build upon in becoming a positive contributing member of society who is ready to face the world with courage, creativity, and kindness.

Individual portfolios begin in child's starting classroom and continue throughout all future classrooms through PreK. These contain their drawings, writings and photos of their development, involvement, and participation in different activities. Children receive these portfolios either at PreK graduation or when they withdraw from the program, whichever comes first, as long as their tuition balance is paid in full.

Little Lambs and Precious Penguins (Infants)

Children from 2 weeks to approximately 13-15 months of age are included in the Infant Program. This program is designed to be flexible and responsive to the needs and demands of each child, and to provide the most freedom for him/her to choose activities. Every effort will be made to adhere to the sleeping and eating schedule established by the child and his/her parents, but must meet licensing and USDA food requirements.

Infant care must follow guidelines of Safe Sleep, a State of Michigan requirement, that they must be placed on their back to sleep in an empty crib. When infants are awake, childcare providers may hold and comfort them or get on the floor to play with them. Language stimulation, by using lots of reflective statements, allows the infant to become aware of what he/she is doing. Caregivers offer the children toys and activities to foster their individual development, and encourage them to attain physical and social milestones. The daily schedule for each child includes varied activities, which differ from day to day. Activities may include one-on-one interaction with a caregiver, small group experiences with other children and time to watch "what's going on" or to concentrate on a toy. Infants enjoy their outside environment through daily walks and/or playing in the grass.

Curious Critters and Bouncing Bears (Toddlers)

Children from approximately 13-32 months of age are included in the Toddler Program. This program provides an increased amount of structure over the Infant Program to gradually familiarize children with the concept of schedule and routine.

Toddlers are encouraged to explore individual creativity in independent play. There is an increase in awareness of their environment and everything in the classroom is pulled from shelves and explored. Outside time now allows for opportunities to explore on the Toddler playground. Daily group activities, as well as small group activities with the caregiver, bring all toddlers together. As toddlers increase in their understanding of language and expression of ideas, caregivers model and teach new behaviors and concepts. Self help and social skill development is predominate.

Infant and Toddler Activities

The activities presented to children enrolled allow them to gain skills and feel success. Children learn continually. As a child masters one concept and is ready for more complexity, his/her activities are progressively extended.

Activities for infants and toddlers are planned in the following areas in accordance with our curriculum:

- **Gross Motor Activities:**
Reflex grasping, crawling after objects, throwing, walking, climbing, jumping, creative movement and building with blocks.
- **Fine Motor Activities:**
Rolling, pushing, pulling, hand-to-eye coordination, manipulation of small objects, stringing objects, drawing and painting.
- **Sensory Activities:**
Looking, listening, visual and auditory tracking, making sounds, mirror play, exploring with touch and smell, and stimulation with texture and temperature, such as water and sand play and play dough
- **Language/Literacy Activities:**
Vocalization, pointing to named objects, naming objects, shapes and colors, listening to stories, songs, rhymes, speech development, labeling objects and events, and opportunities to express self as well as listen to others. All children must be read to at least 30 minutes per day.
- **Social Skills and Emotional Development Activities:**
Recognition of self and others, development of a positive self-concept, development of attachments to other people, development of self-help, such as feeding and toileting, learning about social roles and concepts through stories, and developing communication skills through caregiver role-modeling

Licensing requires that a thorough record of each child's daily activity, including information on sleeping, eating and physical functions be maintained. We do this with the ProCare app.

Peppy Puppies and Busy Bees (Preschool)

The Peppy Puppy room is our transition preschool classroom. Children do not have to be potty trained but must be 30 months old. When children are beginning to stay dry and able to use the

toilet; staff will encourage parents to switch to underwear. Busy Bees children *must* be potty trained and 3 years old.

All these children are exploring independence and self-image. Planned activities and experiences are designed to continue developmental stimulation in all areas of the curriculum. Experiences are gained through play opportunities (construction and pretend play), which is how children learn best. The daily schedule is structured to allow children to engage in activities appropriate to the preschool experience.

We recommend attending these classrooms *at least* three days a week in order for children to get the most out of our Preschool curriculum.

Playful Parrots GSRP & Learning Lions (PreK)

Children who are turning four years of age by September 1 (exceptions made through December 1 if space allows) are included in the PreK Program. These classes are designed to help children prepare for Kindergarten while maintaining developmentally appropriate practices. Childcare is offered before/after program hours and on Fridays. Program time is 8:30 am to 3:30 pm Monday through Thursday; summer programming is also available. PreK children must be fully potty trained unless they have a physician signed note saying they have a diagnosed disability and/or developmental delay. Bathrooms are at the opposite end of the hallway and do not support potty training.

The Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) preschool uses a High Scope Curriculum model which is research-based and child-focused. The High Scope Curriculum uses a carefully designed process called "*active participatory learning*" to achieve powerful, positive outcomes. Active learning means students have direct, hands-on experiences with people, objects, events and ideas. Children's interests and choices are at the heart of High Scope programs. They construct their own knowledge through interactions with the world and the people around them. Children take the first step in the learning process by making choices and following through on their plans and decisions. Teachers, caregivers, and parents offer physical, emotional, and intellectual support. In active learning settings, adults expand children's thinking with diverse materials and nurturing interactions.

One of the unique features is the daily *plan-do-review* sequence. Research shows that planning and reviewing are the two components of the program day most positively and significantly associated with children's scores on measures of developmental progress.

The second unique feature is the *curriculum content*, the social, intellectual, and physical building blocks that are essential to young children's optimal growth. Content areas are organized in eight main categories that correspond to state and national learning standards. The categories are:

1. approaches to learning
2. social and emotional development
3. physical development and health
4. language, literacy, and communication
5. mathematics
6. creative arts
7. science and technology
8. social studies

High Scope Goals for young children are:

- To learn through active involvement with people, materials, events ideas.
- To become independent, responsible, and confident -- ready for school and ready for life.
- To learn to plan many of their own activities, carry them out, and talk with others about what they have done and what they have learned.
- To gain knowledge and skills in important academic, social, and physical areas.

Preschoolers in the GSRP classroom are assessed using the COR, a High Scope Curriculum Assessment Tool. This Assessment tool is designed to:

- Look at meaningful educational outcomes
- Gather information in ways that are natural and comfortable for children and adults.
- Provide accurate data that can be used for individual child planning and policy – level decision makings.

The COR Advantage Assessment provides teachers with valuable and practical information to understand and plan for the developmental needs of their students. Because information on children’s progress is gathered in the course of everyday classroom activities; the results can immediately be put to work to strengthen the classroom program. Parents are updated regarding their child’s progress on assessments at parent-teacher conferences and home visits.

Zoo Crew (School Age)

Before/after school, holiday, and snow day care is available to children K-6 grade. Transportation to and from school is offered by the Owosso Public Schools. All school age children though age twelve can enroll in the Summer Program. These programs are designed to meet the special development and recreational needs of this specific age group. Children have the opportunity to go on a variety of field trips and participate in a variety of activities (including art, crafts, sports, and technology).

Attendance

Our Program strongly believes in the importance of regular attendance. Many studies have shown that Preschool and PreK students who attend regularly are more likely than chronically absent preschoolers to be ready for kindergarten and to attend school regularly in later grades. We understand that circumstances arise where your child may not be at school. **If your child is going to be absent, it is very important that you message us on ProCare.** For the safety of your child, if you have not reported his or her absence, program staff will message and/or call you to verify.

Cultural Plan

Noah's Ark will honor each child's culture and diverse needs. All children will be treated with respect by all staff. We believe all children deserve to have a positive early childhood education experience. Families are recognized as an important factor in the acceptance of their own cultural background and needs to be addressed. Parents will be treated with respect and sensitivity.

Staff trainings will be held, if necessary, to inform staff of adaptations necessary to offer opportunities for the child/children and their parents to be involved in activities of the program. Staff training on cultural similarities and differences will be conducted on an on-going basis. In addition, trainings will be held on satisfying the needs of all those enrolled. All staff are required to participate in at least 3 clock hours of diversity related training.

Special Needs Plan

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) makes it unlawful for us to discriminate against individuals with disabilities. We must enroll children according to availability in each of our programs’ classrooms. We will meet with each family allowing us to make the decision together as to what is best for the child. It is expected that we will make reasonable accommodations to meet the needs of the child.

- Noah's Ark will maintain confidentiality in regards to our families’ and staff’s special needs.
- A Special Health Care Plan along with any other emergency information will be filled out and signed by the family and their medical consultant (Emergency Card and Health Plan forms).
- Noah's Ark will consult with necessary agencies in order for children with special needs to participate in the program in all ways possible.

- Parental permission will be granted first and all participants, parents, staff & special support person will be asked to attend a meeting to ensure a supportive environment for the child.
- Staff will attend trainings on any specific accommodations that a child/children in their classroom might need. Suggestions from child's therapist and or healthcare professionals will be implemented in the classroom.
- Children with special care needs will have a written plan care for any emergency situation that may occur. This will be updated annually or when changes occur, as needed.

Guidance/Discipline Philosophy

Positive staff/child relationships contribute to the healthy development of young children. Noah's Ark strives to provide warm, friendly, accepting child care providers who are able to listen receptively to each child, respond appropriately to what the child is saying and feeling, and make their expectations realistic and understandable. COMMUNICATION is the key element.

Discipline is referred to as guidance, in what is called the **conflict resolution technique**. Staff members will use language that supports each child's attempts to begin his/her learning of problem-solving skills. These skills are necessary for the child's successful relationships throughout his/her adulthood. They encourage self-control, self-direction, self-esteem and cooperation within the child.

Noah's Ark Children's Center does not condone or permit corporal punishment of any kind, nor allow any kind of mental, physical or emotional punishment. If a child's behavior is out of control, he/she will be moved to a safe area to prevent him/her from harming him/herself or others. A child will be picked up under his/her arms, never lifting by the arms or hands. The withholding of food, sleep, or outdoor play will never be used as a punishment. All staff members will comply with licensing rules about punishment and discipline.

A great link to an article on how to continue to use positive discipline:

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/family-dynamics/communication-discipline/Pages/How-to-Shape-Manage-Young-Child-Behavior.aspx>

If there is any particular way we can help you or your child, please feel free to contact the office staff. We hope that you and your child will enjoy your participation at:



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January 2023

