

*Policies
&
Procedures
Handbook*

Revised 4-18-17

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Mission Statement

Our mission is to prepare, equip, and empower children to succeed academically, socially, and independently in order to reach their full potential and live a life that is pleasing to God by sharing the love of Christ with others.

Purpose and Philosophy

We strive to provide a warm, caring, Christian environment in which children can feel safe while developing intellectually, emotionally, and socially. We want each child to grow to his/her full potential by acknowledging and accepting his/her uniqueness and individuality.

Ascension Children's Learning Center has a primary goal of providing a comfortable, safe, and stimulating environment, to effectively meet the needs of children. The teaching staff strives to build a respectful classroom community while simultaneously meeting individual needs of the children within the group setting.

We are committed to promoting and supporting all aspects of a child's growth in an atmosphere of respect. Your child is an individual who is an integral member of a group and whose uniqueness is acknowledged and appreciated by that group.

The development and training of staff is a continuous process, which includes attending workshops, listening to guest speakers, and frequent discussions. The staff is encouraged to visit other programs and to take classes related to child development.

Center Location

2505 N. Circle Dr
Colorado Springs, Colo 80909
719-447-8658

Hours of Operation

6:30 AM to 6:00 PM
Monday - Friday

Care is provided for most early release days and non-school days. We also provide care for summer break. Additional fees may apply.

Holiday Closures

Ascension Children's Learning Centers will be closed to observe the following holidays:

Memorial Day	Christmas Eve
Independence Day*	Christmas Day
Thanksgiving Day	New Year's Eve
Day After Thanksgiving	New Year's Day
Labor Day	Good Friday

*Independence Day-The 4th of July plus one additional day for bi-yearly cleaning.

Holidays falling on a Saturday will typically be observed on the Friday before the holiday and those falling on a Sunday would be observed that Monday.

Tuition fees are not subject to pro-ration for illness, holidays, or emergency closure of the center. Vacation time may be used during holiday breaks or school closure weeks.

If the hours your child attends change in any way, you are required to notify the center immediately.

Additional closure days will be posted by the Director

Inclement Weather Closures

Due to severe weather conditions, closures may occur. If District 11 is closed due to inclement weather, Ascension Children's Learning Centers will be closed. In the case of a delayed start, we will make every effort to get to the center as early as possible. No refunds will be given. Ascension Children's Learning Center reserves the right to close the site due to inclement weather.

Please tune to local television and radio stations for closures affecting your area.

Excessive Hot Weather

In excessive hot weather, children will remain indoors and will be provided plenty of hydrating liquids, such as water.

Admission Policy

AGES

We accept applications for children ages 2 ½ to 5 for preschool and all-day care and up to 12 years of age for before and after-school care and all day during school breaks. All children attending the Center must be potty trained.

Our definition of potty trained means your child is able to communicate the need to use the restroom facilities, knowledge of how to flush the toilet and wash their hands. All children should be able to wipe themselves after using the restroom. If your child has documented special needs which would require further assistance, the staff will meet with the family to develop a reasonable accommodation plan to assist your child with their toileting/diapering needs.

Enrollment at Ascension Children's Learning Center is open to all without regard to race, color, creed, gender, nationality or religious preference. We strive to maintain a 1:10 or lower staff to child ratio.

FAMILY ORIENTATION

The center Director will provide each family with an orientation which will consist of a center tour, staff introduction and familiarizing the family with our handbook.

ENROLLING CHILDREN with SPECIAL NEEDS

Children with disabilities are welcome in our program under the condition that our 1:10 ratio can be maintained. If a child requires additional assistance, parents will be asked to meet with our staff and determine if the child can best be served in our program. If the child requires a one on one caregiver, then it will be the parent's responsibility to provide an adequate caregiver. In addition, this person would then have to pass all background checks required by Ascension Children's Learning Center.

What to Wear

Children should be comfortably dressed in simple, washable, easy to manage clothing suitable for tumbling, climbing and crawling on the floor. The child will be involved in messy play including painting, markers, playdough, glue, water, sand, etc. Please keep in mind that clothing may become stained. Do not send your child in any "special" outfits. All outdoor clothing, especially boots, mittens, hats and jackets should be labeled with your child's name. We will go outside as often as possible so please dress your child appropriately and take into account the constantly changing Colorado weather. In case of inclement or excessively hot weather, we will

remain inside. We will go outside if it is below 90 degrees and if it is above 32 degrees. Children need to be dressed appropriately for whatever the weather is that day.

Payment Policies

Payment and Collection

- **Fees are due and payable on the Friday before the following week.** Payments may be made weekly, biweekly or monthly.
- Our weekly fees are based on your contracted times.
- All fees must be **paid in advance including an estimated prepayment for school age fees.**
- Fees are delinquent if not made by close of business Monday – thus a \$5.00 late fee will be added for each day payment is late up to 5 days past the Monday due date. Ex: The fee for the week of 1/18-22/16 would be due the 15th of January but no later than the 18th at 6:00 PM. School age fees are due by 6:00 PM each Monday.
- Failure on the part of the parent to keep fee payments current will lead to a late fee of \$5 per day being added for up to 5 days. If the account is not brought current or a suitable payment arrangement has not been made by the end of business the 5th day, than child care services will be terminated until the account is brought current and all fees have been paid.
- CCAP Parent Shares are due by the 1st of each month, a grace period of 5 days has been granted to all CCAP recipients. Beginning March 1, 2016 any CCAP Parent Share not paid by the 5th business day of the month will be subjected to child care services being terminated.
- Delinquent accounts of over 30 days will be sent to collections.
- All fees are payable by debit/credit card at the check in kiosk or by personal check/ money order made payable to Ascension Children's Learning Center
- Receipts will be given upon request
- Fees are not refundable if your child is absent.
- Tuition fees are not subject to pro-ration for illness, holidays, school breaks or emergency closure of the center.
- If for any reason a check is returned, a \$35.00 charge will be added to your account. Child care services will be suspended immediately until the original amount plus the \$35.00 NSF check fee is paid in full and the balance is again at \$0.00. You will also be required to make payment in the form of cash or cashier's check/money order. We will no longer be able to take personal checks from the household. Failure to make proper payment on returned checks will result in immediate collections.

Suspension and Termination Due to Unpaid Accounts

Ascension Children's Learning Center takes suspending or terminating care for a family seriously. We are a business and cannot allow families to incur a large balance. All families will be contacted about non-payment and then suspended for non-payment. Families may not return

until past due amounts are paid IN FULL. You will be given an adequate amount of time to contact us and pay off your balance. If you do not, the account will be sent to collections. We accept money orders, checks, and cash. We may not have change at the center, so please bring exact amounts. Checks are to be made payable to: Ascension Children's Learning Center

Terminating Services

Ascension Children's Learning Center requires a two week notice if you decide to discontinue service. Please submit the request in writing. Failure to notify the center may result in continued financial obligation.

Ascension Children's Learning Center reserves the right to terminate its relationship with a family. A child may be excluded for the following reason(s):

1. Failure of a parent/guardian to cooperate with the staff or policies of the Center
2. Behavior by the parent/guardian or child that jeopardizes or appears to jeopardize the safety of other children, the staff, or him/herself
3. The Director determines that the Center is unable to meet a specific child's needs. In such cases, the parents and the Director will meet to discuss the problem and possible schools or centers open to the child.
4. Failure to pay or make arrangements with the Director to have a payment plan.

Steps for removal:

1. If a child has received behavior reports on a regular basis, the Director will require and schedule a conference with the family, teacher, and/or the Director.
2. If the matter is not resolved and a second conference is needed, the Director may contact the Child Care Response Team. The family must be willing to allow the CCRT to observe the child in the classroom as a requirement to continue attending the Center.
3. If all attempts to reconcile have been exhausted, the family will be asked to leave.

Subsidized Child Care

CCCAP

We accept subsidy from the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP). Enrollment forms and eligibility determination can be obtained from the Department of Human Services. If you are currently authorized, please contact your case worker with our information and license number.

Late Pickup

It is important that each child be picked up by 6:00 pm sharp when the center closes. If you are going to be late, please call the center. It may be possible to arrange for a friend, neighbor, or relative to pick up your child/children.

Children not picked up by 6:45pm will be referred to the Colorado Springs Police Department as well as the Department of Human Services.

Late Pickup Fee

Fees are charged, as follows, to both subsidized and non-subsidized families. Late fees are for services outside the contracted hours. The late pickup fee is charged per child.

Late Fee Schedule for Subsidized and Non-Subsidized Families:

Number of Minutes Late	Charge
1 minute to 15 minutes late	\$20.00 Per Child
16 minutes to 60 minutes late	\$1.00/per minute per child in addition to the \$20 fee above

Vacation Time

We will allow two weeks of vacation time each calendar year per enrolled child. We require written notification of your time out at least one week prior to use. Without notification, we will require you to pay your regular fee to hold your child's space. Vacation time may be used during holiday break closures and/or school closures such as Spring Break.

Children only enrolled for the summer will be allotted 1 week of vacation per summer period.

Bereavement/Funeral Time

When an absence is due to the loss of an immediate family member (mother, father, sister, brother, grandparent) we will allow a one-week bereavement credit. Upon confirmation of the loss, your account will be credited for the week of the absence.

Sign in and out

A parent or authorized adult over the age of 18 is required by state regulations to use daily sign in and sign out. We provide licensed Child Care and are required to keep accurate records for each child's attendance.

We require each family signs the child(ren) in and out when the child arrives and departs using the Keypad located in the entry. Always accompany your child into the center and sign him/her in. Parent/guardian must sign the child out when they pick up their child as well.

Parents/families must inform a staff member when the child arrives or departs from the Center. Please inform other persons dropping off or picking up your child of these procedures. The Children's Learning Center is not responsible for any child not properly signed in.

CCCAP families will also be **required** to record their child's attendance through the use of the Childcare Automated Tracking System.

By signing your child in, you are granting permission for our licensed providers to care to the best of their ability for your child(ren).

Release of Children

Only parents or persons over 18 years of age with written authorization from parents will be allowed to take a child from the center. In emergency situations, the parent may give verbal authorization to center care-givers. This person will need to present a valid photo ID and to sign the child out.

If a parent or authorized person comes to pick up a child and is visibly under the influence of drugs or alcohol, we will not release the child to this person. If the individual is not a parent, we will attempt to contact the parent. If the individual is a parent, we will offer to call a cab at the parent's expense.

After-School Activities

If your child attends after-school activities, the center must be provided with accurate information about the activity so that we can ensure pick up following the activity.

Television and Video Viewing

Children benefit most from hands on activities and active play. Video viewing can be used in conjunction with the curriculum and to expand learning concepts and activities on a limited basis. Videos will need to be rated G or PG and parents will need to sign a consent form which is included in the enrollment packet.

Attendance and Absences Policy

It is vital that you contact us if your child is absent. We expect your child to arrive on the days that you have contracted for care. Please notify us as soon as possible if your child will not be in attendance on a scheduled day.

Emergency Card: It is important to keep your emergency card up-to-date. Directors and Group Leaders will release a child only to the parent or someone authorized by the parent with proper identification, 18 years old or older as indicated on the emergency card. Please notify the Director if someone not listed on the emergency card is picking up your child.

Please notify the program if your child is going to be absent three or more days because of illness.

Parents will be notified if a child is ill or injured at child care.

Illness Policy

In order for your child to get the most out of his/her school day, he/she needs to be in good health. Do not bring your child if he/she cannot participate fully in the indoor and outdoor programs. Please do not send your child if he/she has a fever or is vomiting. If your child shows signs of illness or injury, staff will contact the parent/guardian or emergency contacts to alert them to the injury or symptoms of illness. If symptoms are deemed serious, it is expected that you will arrange for your child to be picked up within one hour of the original phone call.

Staff will make every effort to comfort your child by providing a soft, secluded area for your child to rest. In case of emergency, 911 will be called. If transportation or medical costs incur, the parent/guardian will be held responsible for all financial fees.

It is important that the persons listed as your emergency contact will be available to come for your child in case of illness or an accident. Please keep these numbers up to date in your registration packet.

Communicable Diseases

Children will not be admitted to the program without physician approval if they have a communicable disease. If a child is found to have lice, they will not be admitted until all nits are gone. Children with pink eye are required to be on medication and wear an eye covering before they will be admitted.

Staff will be excluded if they have a communicable or infectious disease or parasite.

The day a communicable illness or parasite is discovered in our facility, we will inform parent in writing by:

- Posting a sign on the door

- Providing a written information sheet on the specific illness

Facility staff will insure that the name of an ill child or staff person remain confidential

Accident Policy

The Center maintains a file for each child that contains emergency medical information. If your child has an accident at school, we will make every effort to contact the parent. If we cannot contact a parent or individual on the Emergency Authorization form, we will follow the procedures as outlined on the written Authorization form. The Center will inform parents of minor injuries (more than a scrape on the knee) at school through a written accident report.

Medication Administration

Our center will administer medication to a child only after receiving a completed medication release form from the parent/guardian. For each child receiving medication at the center the release form will include:

- The name of the medication
- The dosage
- The route of administration
- The times and dates to be administered
- The illness or condition being treated
- The parent/guardian signature
- The physician's signature

The medication form will be checked for completion by the Director. The prescription label does not serve as the doctor's orders.

DO NOT send medication with your child. Please give the medication directly to the Director. Medication is stored and locked in a secure box.

Our center will only have medication administered to children by a trained, designated caregiver. This caregiver will be trained to:

- Check the label and confirm the name of the child
- Read the directions regarding administration of medication
- Properly document administration of medication – We will maintain medication records for six weeks that include:
 - Times, dates, and dosages of the medication given
 - The signature or initials of the caregiver who administered the medication
 - Any errors in administration or adverse reactions

The Director or designee will report any adverse reactions to a medication or error in administration to the parent/legal guardian. This will be reported immediately upon recognizing the error or reaction. Medications stored in refrigerators will be in a covered container with a tight-fitting lid.

Emergency medications are immediately available in the classroom. They are kept in a secure location available to the medication administration trained staffed. These medications are kept out of reach of the children.

For over the counter and prescription medications, they must:

- Be in the original or pharmacy container
- Have the original label
- Include the child's name
- Have a child proof cap
- Have instructions for administration

The director will return any unused or out-of-date medications to the parent/guardian. (*You may wish to have the pharmacist use two containers for medicine so that one may be left at school.*)

We are unable to administer aspirin, aspirin free tablets, cough lozenges or medical ointments unless a doctor prescribes them in writing. Permission forms are available from the Director.

Allergies and Allergic Reactions

If your child has an allergy or an allergic reaction to any food or drug, please make certain the child care center is kept informed. To help protect children from reactions to foods brought in for celebrations, i.e. birthdays, all foods need to be commercially prepared per Health Dept regulations.

A list of children and their allergies will be maintained and kept confidential.

Daily Schedule

In meeting our goal, we have designed a program that is both consistent and flexible. Having a predictable routine helps your child feel secure and increases his or her confidence.

Each day includes both teacher-organized and child-initiated activities, indoor and outdoor activities, active and quiet periods, group and individual play.

Specific daily schedules are posted.

Training and Orientation of Caregivers

All staff members will be 18 years or older and meet Ascension Children's Learning Center qualifications.

Orientation for each staff includes:

- A job description
- An introduction and orientation to the children, which includes special conditions such as allergies and medical conditions of any child
- Procedures for releasing children to parents or guardians
- Center policies and procedures
- Reporting requirements for witnessing or suspicion of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of children and how to make a report
- Employees will be required to read the Policies and Procedure Handbook for our families.
- All caregivers are required to have a minimum of 15 hours of documented in-service training each year. At least 10 hours must be in person training. Other hours of training may be obtained independently through reading materials or videos.

The following in-service training topics must be addressed annually:

- Universal Precautions which includes information on proper hand washing, OSHA requirements, and sanitation techniques
- Proper procedures in administration of medications
- Recognizing early signs of illness and determining when there is a need for exclusion from the facility.

- Accident prevention and safety principles
- Reporting requirements for abuse, neglect, and exploitation
- Positive guidance for management of children
- CPR/First Aid

The Director and the staff are responsible for knowing the current rules and regulations and adhering to them at all times.

Additional training opportunities available through outside agencies, videos, reading materials and other sources may be made available through the Department of Human Services.

Supervision and Protection of Children

We ensure that all children are adequately supervised. Our supervision includes maintaining minimum child to caregiver ratios. We strive to always maintain a lower ratio than is required by the Colorado Department of Human Services Division of Child Care's Rules Regulating Child Care Centers of 1:10 for Preschool and 1:15 for School age children. Enrollment in our preschool class is limited to 25 children per morning. This allows for a lower staff to child ratio and helps to ensure a more individualized education experience for your child. Our staff schedule is designed to ensure that enough staff are present throughout the day to maintain a ratio of 1:8 or less. The schedule is set up so that staff stagger in and stagger out which allows for coverage for student pick up, drop off, staff breaks, and staff call offs. The Director will ensure that ratios are adjusted to maintain a high level of supervision.

We use a 1/2-hour tracking system and our Procure attendance to match names to faces to ensure that the children are accounted for throughout the day.

When children are in a large group, such as outside on the playground, during off-site activities, on a field trip, or participating in a special mixed group activity, supervision and protection will be maintained.

Lost Child

As a center, every step will be made to ensure the safety of every child – Hence, the importance of daily sign in and out and headcounts. Although, we do recognize that no matter how careful we are an accident may still occur.

Staff should never leave the children unattended. Children should be in view at all times. Children going to the bathroom or any part of the building must be supervised.

The Director or a delegated substitute must have a means for determining at all times who is present at the center.

If it is determined a child is missing the following steps will take place:

- Staff will check the bathroom
- Staff will check around the immediate area where child was last seen

- Staff will check all rooms where the child would typically go and other rooms of use in the center.

If the child is not found after a 15-minute search we will contact Emergency Personnel, the child's family and file a lost child report.

Guidance and Discipline

Discipline will be approached in a positive, consistent way. Discipline is a positive force in a child's life. It is not something children are fearful of. When the child begins attending, the staff create an atmosphere of positive discipline and independence in the classroom. The discipline techniques used are Love and Logic, which encourages the children to solve their problems independently with little or no help from the teachers. Rules, expectations and limitations are simple and understandable. Employees strive to model, teach, and encourage good communication skills, problem solving skills and positive interactions. Gradually, children learn to regulate their own behavior, learn how to problem solve and learn to create a compromise. Eventually the children achieve the goal of self-discipline. No harsh discipline methods may ever be used such as hitting, belittling, or any other punitive discipline. When a child displays inappropriate behavior, the situation will be discussed with the child and the child will be instructed on how to appropriately handle similar situations. Brief separation is sometimes necessary to relieve undesirable situations. In cases of extreme behavioral issues, or where a child who has been identified with special needs has behavior issues, parents will be partnered with to develop a behavior support plan. Information may be given to the family about programs and services available to assist them and their child. It is expected that parents support our staff and work as partners to maintain consistency of behavioral expectations. Frequent acts of misconduct may result in suspension or expulsion from the Children's Learning Center.

The center uses discipline to encourage the child's self-control and reduce risk of injury and any adverse health effects to themselves or others. The center will use the following positive discipline measures for children:

- Positive reinforcement, redirection, and praise

The following rules help caregivers, parents, and children understand the expected conduct at our centers:

- Keep hands and feet to oneself
- Follow the directions of adults
- Use equipment properly
- Treat others with respect
- Use appropriate language
- Settle disagreements by discussing them

Discipline measures will **not** include any of the following:

- Corporal punishment-including hitting, shaking, biting, pinching, or spanking

- Forced physical exercise to eliminate behaviors or use of punitive work assignments
- Use of abusive, demeaning or profane language
- Forcing or withholding of food, water, rest, or toileting
- Punishment by peers or use of group punishment for individual behaviors

Parent Communication, Involvement and Participation

Parents may visit or participate in our program at anytime. We would like to invite parents to share their skills/talents with the children. We also want to encourage parents to talk to our staff on a daily basis. Parent/Family conferences are held 3 times per year to allow the staff to inform preschool families of how their child is doing in the classroom. Conferences with the Director may be requested at any time. In an effort to keep parents well informed, newsletters and notices may be sent home with the children on a regular basis. The parent information board located in the lobby may have information for all family members. Important schedule changes, forms requiring signatures for events and announcements are posted. Please review the parent board regularly.

Our center honors languages of all cultures and want to be able to use a child's home language when possible. When an interpreter is needed, we will seek assistance of an interpreter. Often a member of the family may be available to assist with translation. In addition, when needed we will look for ways including Google translator, to translate documents to a family's home language. In our family resource center and lending library there are materials available in languages other than English which are available to our families.

Your participation in Ascension Children's Learning Center is important because it makes us partners in the care of your child. We want to work with you to provide opportunities which match your child's own pace and style. We look forward to getting to know each family. Since children are often with us for several hours, we see ourselves as a meaningful part of your children's lives. It helps us to know about family changes, such as a grandparent's visit or a new baby. We will also share our concerns with you.

You are welcome to become a family representative on the Ascension Children's Learning Center's Cabinet. Please see the Director for more information about available cabinet member openings.

You are your child's most influential teacher.

Preschool Transition Policy and Procedure

Within 30 days of enrollment each child will be assessed using our Kindergarten Ready Assessment Tool which will be followed by a Family/Teacher Conference. The information gained through this assessment will assist the staff and family with knowing where the child is in their learning. Assessments are completed 3 times per year, the schedule is as follows:

Fall-September 1st through November 30th

Winter -December 1st through February 28th (29th)

Spring- March 1st through May 31st

From the assessment information, the staff can then develop a plan is to get the child ready for Kindergarten. The plan may change as the child progresses throughout the year.

The staff will note if there are any areas of concern such as delays in speech or a cognitive delay that may need to be further assessed. If an area is determined to be of concern, a referral will be given to the family to seek out an assessment from an outside agency such as Head Start, CPP, Aspen Pointe, the Child Development Center, etc. This will assist the family with getting additional services for their child. Following further assessment from an outside agency, staff from the outside agency, the family members and the center staff may work together to develop an IEP (Individual Education Plan) for the child and come up with strategies for preparing the child for Kindergarten.

As the school year proceeds, the staff will be talking to the children and the child's family about going to Kindergarten. They will work with the children on skills that will be needed for this next step. Each May prior to the end of the school year, the children who will be going to Kindergarten in the fall will have a field trip to the local school. We try to schedule a time when the children can meet with the Kindergarten teachers and we invite the children's family members to go on the field trip. The children learn about crossing the street, how they will get into the school, have a tour of the school and learn where their classrooms are located. This helps to make the school a familiar environment and to ease fears of transition into Kindergarten. In addition to this field trip, those children who remain with us through the summer will take field trips to the school. They will have time to play on the playground, walk around the school and are shown where the Kindergarten classrooms are.

Each April the school has Kindergarten registration day. This gives the families an opportunity to begin the process of getting their child into Kindergarten. In addition, the school will normally host an open house or other activities prior to the start of school. Families can get together and have an opportunity to get to know each other, the classroom staff and their child's classmates. We encourage our families to attend these events.

In addition to the opportunities offered by the school, when a child has an IEP, the staff will help schedule a meeting with the Kindergarten staff, other school support staff, the family and the child so that any concerns about the transition can be discussed and plans can be put into place to address these concerns.

By the time the 1st day of school comes, the children should know about the school, which friends will be in their class, they will have met the teachers and be excited for their next adventure!

Primary Caregiving and Continuity of Care

Here at Ascension Children's Learning Center we often refer to the center as a "one room school house." Our center is unique because the children in our care are in a mixed age group of 2 ½ years to 5 years of age for our Preschool. They remain with the same children and the same caregiver throughout the time that they are enrolled in our center. Often these children go on to elementary school together and become part of the school age group of children who often stay with us until they are 13 years of age!

The preschool children in our center are placed into one of 3 groups that are determined by their age and abilities. Each group consist of 7-8 children with their primary caregiver. Throughout the preschool portion of the day, the children remain with their primary caregiver. Their caregiver develops a special relationship of mutual trust and respect with the children in their group. While the primary caregiver is often who works with the group of children throughout their morning, this does not mean that other staff aren't involved with the children. All the staff develop warm relationships with the children and have caring interactions with them while they explore the learning environment. A primary caregiver works with other staff to ensure a positive child care experience for the children in their group. The primary caregiver is who will complete the Fall, Winter and Spring assessment for each of the children in their group and meet with the child's parent following each assessment period.

Continuity of care describes a care setting in which children stay with the same caregiver for more than one year. This concept is different from what typically takes place in many centers across the United States, where children transition to a new classroom with new teachers when they reach new milestones like walking, toilet training or even when they turn a different age. When children stay with the same trusted person and receive consistent loving care, they develop a schema that they are taken care of, therefore they are loved. Children who develop trust in their world can turn their attention to new discoveries in physical, cognitive, social-emotional, and language and literacy development and really thrive in their learning environment.

Keeping children and caregivers together throughout their early years has several benefits. Close relationships between children and their primary caregivers can help a child to flourish. The child, who says goodbye to the ones she loves every morning when they leave her at the center, does not have to say goodbye to the person who has helped her to adjust to life in child care. We are happy to be able to offer Continuity of care provided through Primary caregiving here at Ascension Children's Learning Center.

Community Service Referrals

There are times when a family or child may need assistance or a referral for a community service. Please feel free to check with the Director or a staff member for our Community Based Resource list for services. We will be able to give you information about development screenings; medical screenings such as for hearing, vision and dental; resources for health or mental health needs; information for obtaining medical insurance and a medical home; local food banks; financial assistance; child care assistance, etc. In addition, a family can find information about a number of community services by contacting Colorado 211.

Parent and Children's Rights

Your Rights as a Child in the Program

As a child in our program you have the right to be treated in a non-discriminatory manner and have the freedom to express and practice religious and spiritual beliefs. We encourage you to bring your questions and concerns about our program first to your teacher and if you need further assistance, to the Director.

Your Rights as a Parent in the Children's Program

As a parent concerned with your child's well-being and education, we encourage you to bring your questions and concerns about our program first to the teacher whenever they occur. If any issue is still unresolved, you may request a meeting with the Director. You also have the right to visit the center at anytime. We are trying to build a partnership with you and therefore encourage you to be in close and frequent communication with us.

Lending Library

Our center has a lending library with materials available to our families to check out for use at home. Please enjoy these materials and return them when you are finished with them.

Personal Belongings and Money

Each child has an assigned cubby and a folder for artwork, treasures, etc. Please check your child's cubby and folder daily. Money is not allowed at school, and we discourage children from bringing toys from home. Children may bring books to read if they are not required to nap. Mats/cots for naptime will be provided by the Center and your child may bring a special stuffed animal for naptime. Additionally, please send a change of clothes (in case of accidents or spills) in a zip-locked bag, labeled with your child's name.

The center will not be held liable for any lost, stolen, or damaged items.

Transportation and Field Trips

We like to offer various extracurricular activities for children to participate. The activities are planned and presented to parents. Parents are required to give written permission for their child to attend. All staff must carry group lists, emergency contact information and conduct child counts at regular intervals throughout the outing. Please watch for postings for upcoming field trips.

Safety is especially important when transporting our children. We transport children using our staff vehicle, City Transit or we may contract with an authorized third party. Our staff is trained in vehicle safety and pedestrian safety. All vehicles used for transporting children to and from our center will be currently registered and maintained in a clean and safe condition. A release form signed by the parent or guardian will be on site at our center. No child will be permitted to remain unattended in a vehicle. Children will remain seated while the vehicle is in motion. Keys will be removed from the vehicle at all times when the driver is not in the driver's seat. Smoking is prohibited in the vehicle.

Each vehicle used will:

- Be driven by an adult with a current state driver's license that authorizes the driver to operate the type of vehicle driven.
- Be able to maintain temperatures between 60-90 degrees Fahrenheit
- Be equipped with individual, size-appropriate safety restraints (such as car seats and seat belts) that are appropriate for the vehicle and installed and used correctly.
- Be enclosed
- Be locked during transport

We also take walking field trips to nearby parks or through the neighborhood.

Children may not be dropped off or picked up while on a field trip. This is to ensure the safety of the child.

We transport children to and from Audubon school by walking with them across the street and back before and after school. We follow all rules of the road when we walk and teach the children the importance of the colors of the light, why we wait for the signals, etc. We may also transport children using staff vehicles on occasion. Children will use car seats or seatbelts as mandated by Colorado State Law.

Expectations During Travel

Before the children go on any field trip, vehicle expectations and safety rules will be discussed with the children. The following guidelines are for all staff while in the vehicle:

- **Children's backpacks and bottoms stay in the seat**
- **Children are to face forward at all times**
- **All body parts & belongings remain inside the vehicle**

- **Inside voices or whispers are to be used while in the vehicle**
- **Attendance is taken while children load/unload the vehicle**

Emergencies During a Field Trip

If an emergency occurs while off site, staff will take roll and move the children to a safe location, notify our Director and notify parents. We will alert the bus driver and evacuate children depending on the situation.

Emergency and Disaster Plan

Our center has an emergency and disaster plan which includes procedures for reporting emergencies and evacuating facility. This written plan is at the center and immediately accessible to all staff. Evacuation plans are posted in prominent locations of each room or area of the center. The center holds monthly fire drills which are documented. The center is inspected annually by the local fire department and maintains fire extinguishers with current tags.

Tornado – In case of a tornado, all children and staff will gather in the bathrooms located in the lower level of the building until conditions are known to be safe.

Heavy snow or blizzard – We follow the District 11 School Closure schedule. If District 11 cancels classes due to inclement weather, the Center will be closed as well. If we must close due weather, and District 11 is open, we will run announcements on television and radio. If a storm occurs while children are at the Center, listen to the radio or television for closure notices and instructions. If we need to close early, parents will be notified. If District 11 closes early, we are closed. Your child must be picked up at the school and not the Center.

Fire – In the event of a fire or fire drill, all children and staff will exit the building or playground and walk to the southeast end of the parking lot. Teachers take a head count and call 911.

Evacuation Site: If there is an emergency or disaster which requires us to leave our center, we will evacuate to:

- Audubon Elementary.

The center emergency and disaster plan is as follows:

Emergency telephone numbers:

1. Fire Department: 911
2. Police: 911
3. Police: Non Emergency 444-7000
4. Poison Control: 1-800-222-1222
5. Child Abuse: 444-5700

Steps followed by staff for emergency and disasters:

FIRE

In case of fire the following steps will be taken by staff:

1. Ensure ALL children have exited the building safely
2. Ensure ALL staff members have exited the building safely
3. Call 911

BLIZZARD

In case of a blizzard the following steps will be taken by staff:

1. Children will be kept indoors
2. Director will contact parents to inform them of the conditions

EXCESSIVE HOT WEATHER

In excessive hot weather, children will remain indoors, and be provided plenty of hydrating liquids, such as water.

POWER FAILURE

In case of a power failure the following steps will be taken by staff:

1. Securing children
2. Turn on flashlight with batteries
3. Contact Emergency personnel

If needed the children and staff may be evacuated.

OTHER DISASTERS

Such as toxic spills, water line breaks, gas line breaks, etc... The following steps will be taken by staff if the disaster creates structural damage or if the disaster poses health or safety hazard:

1. Immediately evacuate children

Medical emergency or injury involving a child

- If there is a life threatening injury to a child, the Director will contact emergency personnel before contacting the parents or legal guardian. Parents are responsible for any medical or hospital fees or costs associated with the child's medical treatment that may proceed without further authorization.
- If the parents/legal guardians cannot be reached, the Director will attempt to contact the child's emergency contact person.

For any medical emergency or injury involving a child, the following steps will be taken by staff:

- CPR/First Aid will be administered if needed; accident report will be filled out and signed by a legal guardian.

It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to keep their emergency contact and other information updated for the Children's Learning Center so that we may contact you in a timely manner.

Food Service

Our center snack menus were developed using the guidelines of the USDA Child Care Food Program. Children are provided snacks daily each morning and afternoon. Our snacks consist of two of the food groups. Snack menus will be posted and available for parent review. Snacks are to be eaten at the table. Children must wash their hands before they are permitted to eat. **If your child has allergies, please notify staff immediately.** If your child has special food needs, we may ask that you provide and label their snacks and meals.

A nutritious lunch must be provided by the families each day. According to state regulations if the meal from home (this includes food brought in for breakfast and lunch) does not appear to meet current USDA CACFP meal pattern requirements, we are required to provide a supplement to the meal. After 3 incidents of staff supplementing a child's meals, a charge of \$3 per incident will be added to your account.

Food or drink brought from home for an individual child must be clearly labeled with the child's name and be refrigerated, if needed. Food or treats brought in for all of the children for parties or other special occasions must be commercially prepared. Parents or caregivers cannot bring homemade food or treats to the center to share with the children per Health Dept regulations.

All food will be served on:

- Plates
- Paper Plates
- Napkins
- Paper Towels

The Director is responsible for informing all the staff about children's food allergies and sensitivities.

The Director will post a list of children's food allergies and sensitivities in the designated confidential area. The Director is responsible for updating this list to be sure it is current and complete.

We strive to teach the children about nutrition and where food comes from. One way we achieve this is by planting a garden each year and trying foods from our garden. The children discuss which plants they want to grow and the staff begin the planting/growing indoors. Throughout the process the children discuss what is happening to their plants, what they think will happen, what grows underground or what grows above ground, what parts of the plants we eat, etc We also plant some flowers to show that we can grow some things that we don't eat. Throughout the unit, we try different vegetables and fruits so that we know how the things we are growing taste. We have a garden plot along the back of the center which is where the plants are transplanted and complete their growing cycle. The children help weed and water the garden.

During the week that we transplant our plants, we have a garden party. Members of the Church and family members are invited to join us to help us celebrate our garden!

Hand Washing

Caregivers and children will wash and scrub their hands for 20 seconds with liquid soap and warm running water at the following times:

- Upon arrival to the center
- After using the toilet
- Before and after eating
- Upon returning from outdoor playtime
- After wiping noses
- After handling animals
- Before and after food preparation

Caregivers and children will dry their hands with:

- A single use paper towel from a covered dispenser
- An electric hand-drying device

Hand washing procedures will be posted at each designated area and will be followed.

On field trips and when leaving the center for other reasons, caregivers and children will wash their hands by using

- Public Facilities
- Hand Sanitizers
- Baby Wipes

Child Abuse & Neglect

Ascension Children's Learning Center recognizes each child's basic human and legal rights. It is our policy that ALL staff and volunteers treat children with dignity and respect. Physical abuse, verbal abuse, or neglect of any child within or outside the program and facilities is forbidden. ANY staff member or volunteer who has the knowledge of abuse or neglect of any child or has reasonable knowledge of abuse or neglect of a child must report this information to the Director, as well as the El Paso County Department of Human Services. As Child Care professionals we are responsible and can be fined for failing to report signs of possible abuse or neglect. The staff will not discuss any suspicions of abuse or neglect with the family members, nor will we inform families if a call has been made. If you suspect a Child Care provider in being negligent or abusing a child, please notify the Department of Human Services at 444-5700 or 911.

STATE LICENSING

The Colorado Department of Human Services Licenses Ascension Children's Learning Center. The center is bound by its rules and regulations. For complaints, you may contact The Division of Childcare the Department of Human Services, (303) 866-5958. Health and local fire departments inspect our programs. All staff are required to be cleared by the Colorado Central registry. The registry lists anyone convicted of child abuse or neglect. Each staff member is also fingerprinted and cleared through the CBI/FBI for felony charges.

Tobacco, Alcohol, Illegal Substances, Sexually Explicit Materials

The Director will ensure the following are prohibited anywhere on the premises or in the vehicles used by the center, during the hours of operation:

- The use of tobacco
- The use of alcohol
- The use or possession of illegal substances
- The use or possession of sexually explicit materials

Firearms

Firearms and other weapons are not permitted in the Children's Learning Center or anywhere on the premises

Receipt of Family Policies and Procedures Handbook

I have read and understand the policies and procedures outlined in the Family Policies and Procedures Handbook. I understand and agree to abide by these policies.

Child's Name _____ Parent's Name _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Staff Name _____

Staff Signature _____