

St. James United Methodist Church

Kids LIFE PARENT HANDBOOK

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Welcome to St. James Kids LIFE, the school-aged ministry sponsored by St. James United Methodist Church as a service to church members and the surrounding community. We are located in the St. James Christian Life Center, across the street from the main St. James church campus. This handbook explains the philosophy, purpose, organization, policies, and operational procedures of St. James Kids LIFE. We encourage parents to observe, make suggestions, and become involved in our program. Thank you for sharing your children with us!

Philosophy

St. James Kids LIFE is open year-round for after-school and full-time summer care, and emphasizes fun in a Christian atmosphere. Their themes enhance value clarification, moral judgments, and self-esteem. In a home-like atmosphere, children have the opportunity to learn, experience and practice Christian principles in a safe environment. Kids LIFE admits children of all races and nationalities and does not discriminate on the basis of race in the administration of their educational and admissions policies.

Under the leadership of qualified teachers, our classes facilitate learning and creativity based on the children's individual interests. Frequent, age-appropriate field trips into the community give children exposure to a wide variety of fun, educational locations and sites.

Program Goals

Provide for children's social development by:

- Helping children learn to get along with other children & adults.
- Encouraging habits of courtesy, respect, kindness, and friendliness.
- Providing equipment and materials which encourage children to play together.

Provide for children's emotional development by:

- Accepting children and their feelings.
- Offering opportunities for children to make choices.
- Helping children see themselves as persons of worth.
- Showing them how to release feelings in an acceptable way.
- Developing trusting and caring relationships.

Provide for children's intellectual development by:

- Enriching the child's background and cultural activities.
- Encourage readiness for continuing school experiences through varied learning activities.
- Offering age appropriate field trips.
- Supporting school-age children as they acquire new skills.

Provide for children's physical development by:

- Providing nutritious snacks.
- Planning for rest and quiet time.
- Protecting their health and safety.
- Providing indoor and outdoor areas which encourage active play.

Provide for children's spiritual development by:

- Teaching that each person is a child of God and therefore worthy of love, acceptance and support.
- Modeling Christian attitudes and values.
- Fostering an environment of love and appreciation.

Discipline Policy

St. James Kids LIFE is committed to an approach of directing children toward positive acceptable behavior in a well-planned, interesting learning environment. Acceptable or desired behavior will be reinforced with praise. Efforts will be made to correct inappropriate behavior **with a verbal warning first**. Staff will monitor child-developed rules and consequences and move children toward positive self-discipline. Should unacceptable behavior occur, the time out policy will be enforced for **kindergarten – 2nd grade**. The child will spend one minute per year of age away from the group, in an area specified by the teacher and not associated with eating or rest room facilities. **We do not feel time out for 3rd-5th graders is effective so they will have loss of play/recreation privilege**. If undesired behavior continues, the child will be given a Yellow Slip documentation by the teacher in charge which will be sent home to parents and also kept in the child's file. After two documentations, a conference will be held with the child, parents, teacher, and director. Two additional documentations will deem another conference and a two day suspension from Kids LIFE, **which will begin immediately upon infraction (no refunds are given for days missed due to suspension)**. **Parents will be called and the child must be picked up immediately**. Two more (with a total of 6 documentations) will result in permanent dismissal of the child from the program. Since summer is only 8-9 weeks, the number of Yellow Slip documentations goes from 2/4/6 to 1/2/3.

**Unacceptable behavior is intentional and/or repeated behavior that blatantly disrespects people or St. James property. Corporal punishment will not be administered at St. James Kids LIFE. However, if undesirable behavior continues after all previous steps have been carried out, dismissal of the child may occur (see severe clause below).

SEVERE CLAUSE: Immediate expulsion from Kids LIFE may occur at any time a student threatens violence, is involved in fighting, causes physical injury, bullies other children, is severely disruptive and endangers the safety of others, or any other behavior considered inappropriate in a church-sponsored ministry. Additional behaviors include but are not limited to aggression, rude and defiant behavior, temper tantrums, and biting. The student will be immediately suspended and possibly expelled pending parent conference. The above mentioned examples WILL NOT BE TOLERATED. In extreme circumstances, it may be necessary to inform DHS.

Organization

Administrative Committee

The St. James Kids LIFE Administrative Committee is compiled with those appointed by the Director and approved by the Senior Pastor. It is responsible for establishing policies for the program. The Administrative Committee is composed of interested persons and others with professional backgrounds in education, finance, and business, offering expertise valuable to Kids LIFE.

Licensing

St. James Kids LIFE will maintain and surpass standards necessary to be licensed as a child care institution in the State of Arkansas. We assume the responsibility of maintaining healthy, safe, and developmentally appropriate conditions for children during the time they spend in our care. Licensing is a form of consumer protection for children and their parents. Children, while in the care of St. James Kids LIFE, are subject to be interviewed by Child Care Licensing, Division of Children and Family Services Special Investigations and law enforcement for investigative purposes and/or for determining compliance with Licensing Requirements.

Staff

The Director of Kids LIFE is responsible to the Kids LIFE Administrative Committee with accountability to the Senior Pastor of St. James Methodist Church. The Director has the responsibility for the overall management of the program, working closely with parents, personnel and church staff to insure that the program meets the needs of the children and families it serves. The Director also coordinates with the appropriate agencies in meeting licensing requirements.

The staff are interviewed and hired by the Director. Through planning and coordinating of daily activities, teachers provide a warm, nurturing Christian environment for the children as they interact with them throughout daily activities. All staff members are required to attend ten (10) hours of workshops and in-service training to meet licensing standards. Staff members are encouraged to be involved in related professional organizations.

Children

Kids LIFE accepts children who are entering Kindergarten through Fifth Grades. Kids LIFE Summer accepts children who have completed Kindergarten through Seventh Grades. *****A class must have a MINIMUM of 10 children enrolled in summer to be open.**

Staff/Child Ratio

The maximum staff/child ratio will be one (1) worker per eighteen (18) children in a large group setting (gym or playground) and one (1) worker per fifteen (15) children in a classroom setting, according to Licensing Standards by the State of Arkansas and Better Beginnings.

Admission

During school-year registration, priority enrollment is given to families enrolled in Kids LIFE during the previous school year, followed by families enrolled in the summer program, and then St. James church members and children moving up from The Learning Center. Open enrollment will begin after priority enrollment has ended. Admission is first come, first served, but the information packets coupled with a non-refundable registration fee must be returned for the application to be accepted.

Information packets will be given to parents prior to the beginning of school. The packets will include: the Parent Handbook, a registration agreement, a family information sheet, and several other forms. All forms are to be completed and returned before school begins. The Parent Handbook includes the policies, operational procedures, philosophy, and organization of Kids LIFE.

Dismissal

The following may be cause for dismissal from Kids LIFE:

- failure to pay fees and/or tuition as described in the payment policy (pg. 10) unless special arrangements have been made with the Director
- consistent late payment of fees and tuition
- consistent discipline problems
- physical or emotional needs which cannot be met by the staff
- consistent failure of parents to honor our policies

Circumstances may arise where the Director of Kids LIFE and parents cannot reach an agreement. In all those instances, the Director has the final discretion.

Policies of Operation

Hours of Operation

Kids LIFE is open after school is out until 6:00 PM and in the summer from 7:30AM-5:30PM.

Days of Operation

Kids LIFE will be closed on all holidays observed by St. James UMC. These include New Year's Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day (and the day after), Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day. In addition, when LIFE All Day days are on the calendar for LRSD closings, Kids LIFE **will be closed** if no more than fifteen (15) children are signed up to attend each day.

Due to inclement weather or other unexpected events, if the Little Rock Public Schools are closed, St. James Kids LIFE will be closed. If LRSD dismiss early for inclement weather, Kids LIFE will not be open.

Notification of Absence

The Director of Kids LIFE ***MUST*** be notified by 2:00 PM if a child does not need to be picked up from school.

Arrival and Pick-up Procedures

Licensing by the State of Arkansas **REQUIRES** that each child be signed in and out each day that they are present. There is a clipboard with each child's name and a place to sign in (by a KL staff member during school year) and out by a parent. A written note of permission is needed if a child is to be picked up by **anyone** other than parent, guardian, or authorized persons. This includes other school parents, friends, and relatives not listed on your child's data sheet. A written note is needed if a child is to go home with another child from Kids LIFE.

Fees and Tuition

The Kids LIFE Administrative Committee reserves the right to increase, amend, or alter tuition and other charges described in the Parent Handbook as necessary to provide for the continued financial stability of Kids LIFE.

1. Payment Policy

Accounts are considered past due after the 10th of each month. If payment has not been made after 30 days, a letter from the Director and a billing statement will be mailed. If there has been no response to the Director's letter after 7 days, the Kids LIFE Administrative Committee will send a request for payment schedule, a copy of the billing statement, and a copy of the past due policy. Failure to respond to the Kids LIFE request within 7 days will result in dismissal of the child from the center. Families will receive a plan for collection of the past due amount at dismissal.

2. Registration Fee

A non-refundable registration fee of \$50 will accompany the registration form. This insures your child's enrollment in our program.

3. Tuition

During the school year, tuition is paid in advance on a monthly basis, and is due by the 10th of each month. Payment will be considered late after the 10th of each month and a late fee of \$10.00 will be charged. **Monthly tuition remains the same regardless of scheduled school holidays or school days in the month.** A \$40 NSF fee will be charged on all insufficient funds. Summer tuition is paid on a weekly basis, due by the Tuesday of

the current week before a late fee is applied. If your child is coming on a daily basis, payment is due in advance by the morning of the day the child is attending.

THERE WILL BE NO REFUND FOR PARTIAL ATTENDANCE DUE TO WITHDRAWING A CHILD FROM KIDS LIFE.

Late Pick-Up Charges

There will be an additional charge of \$1.00 per minute per child for late arrivals after 6:00 PM. At the second late pick-up, \$5.00 per minute will be charged. At the third late pick-up, \$10.00 a minute will be charged and a conference with the school Director will be called. Records of when each child is picked up will be kept. The school clock shall be the official time.

Withdrawing a Child

Two weeks written notice is required prior to withdrawing a child from Kids LIFE.

******TUITION FOR THE MONTH OF DEPARTURE WILL NOT BE REFUNDED OR PRO-RATED FOR PARTIAL ATTENDANCE.**

Health

Illness at Home

In the interest of all our children, each child should be well before coming to St. James. Children should be able to participate in all regular activities scheduled for the day. **A CHILD, WHO IS NOT FEELING WELL, FOR ANY REASON, SHOULD REMAIN AT HOME.** A child may not attend with any of the symptoms listed below:

1. **Diarrhea (three or more watery stools) during the previous 24 hours.**
2. **Vomiting during the previous 24 hours.**
3. **Fever of more than 100 orally (without fever reducing medication) during the previous 24 hours.**
4. **Other conditions such as red eyes, discolored nasal discharge and rashes should be examined by a physician.**
5. **Listless or lethargic behavior.**

Before returning to St. James, your child should be **symptom free (without medication) for 24 hours.** In some cases, it may be necessary to consult your physician. If your child has a communicable disease, please notify us immediately.

Illness at St. James

Any child, who becomes ill or unable to participate in our daily activities, shall be isolated and supervised. Parents will be notified and requested to pick-up the child. Should we be unable to reach parents or guardians, emergency persons listed on the child's records will be called. In addition, if a child becomes ill while at school, he or she should not come to St. James Kids LIFE.

Medication

Prescription medication (**in original prescription containers which includes the child's name and dosage**) will be administered by the Director or Designee with written permission on a form provided by Social Services and used by St. James UMC EWM. The completed form and the medication are to be given to the Director.

The medication will remain in the locked area of the Director's office. Any medication to be given long term must be accompanied by a doctor's statement. Over the counter or expired medication **WILL NOT** be given.

Emergency Medical Care

Should the Director and teacher determine that your child requires emergency medical care, parents will be called immediately. In a life threatening situation, an emergency medical service will be called, and the child will be transported to the nearest emergency medical facility. Medical records containing parental emergency medical treatment release will accompany the child.

If a child sustains an injury that does not require immediate medical attention, according to the Director and teacher, we will notify parents. If parents cannot be reached, we will attend to the injury and continue to try to notify parents. Cuts and abrasions will be washed with soap and water and bandaged.

Parent Communication

Please notify the Director with any changes in information concerning your child (change of address, telephone numbers, emergency numbers, etc.).

Parents are welcome anytime during our hours of operation. Should parents suspect licensing violations, they should file a written report with Child Care Licensing and the Director of Kids LIFE. The Kids LIFE Director will provide an appropriate form to file the report. Licensing compliance forms are available for review upon request.

Telephone Calls

All calls must go through the Director's office. It is our policy not to interrupt the staff or call a child to the telephone. Messages will be delivered by the Director or Designee.

Toys

PLEASE LEAVE ALL TOYS AT HOME. Many times special toys from home get lost or broken causing hurt feelings, or create problems being shared.

Clothing

Please allow your child to wear comfortable, washable play clothes and shoes for school. This gives him/her the freedom to participate in activities without the fear of ruining good or special clothes. Proper clothing such as long pants, sweaters, coats, mittens, caps and **sturdy shoes** will be needed for outside play during winter months.

Permission to Photograph

Children enrolled in Kids LIFE may be photographed for educational or promotional material. Exceptions to the photography policy may be made if parents submit a written request to the office.

Snacks

During the school year, snacks will be served in the afternoon. During summer, snacks will be provided in the morning and in the afternoon. Please be sure your child's medical history indicates **any** food allergies.

Snacks are planned with fresh ingredients, low sugar content, nutrition, and variety in mind. Water is served the majority of days; fruit juices and lemonade may be served for drink occasionally.

Lunches

Lunches are not provided to children during summer and LIFE All Days (unless specifically stated on calendars that lunch is provided). St. James Kids LIFE has been granted alternative compliance with Social Services concerning lunches, requiring children to bring lunches from home. Kids LIFE will provide milk at lunch time. Our licensing requirements are such that we are responsible for working with parents to insure that lunches brought from home meet 1/3 the minimum daily nutritional requirements. Lunches must contain foods from each of the 4 basic food groups (bread or grain, meat or meat substitute, fruit and vegetable, and milk). Failure by the family to comply with this requirement may be grounds for dismissal from the program.

We appreciate your cooperation in striving to provide proper nutrition to promote maximum physical and mental development.

SPECIAL NOTES

Birthdays

Birthdays are special and can be celebrated at afternoon snack time. You may send party cookies/cupcakes or some other food your child enjoys (not homemade). **No favors, gifts, or balloons** please. Please notify the teacher and Director in order to schedule special treats. **Please do not send party invitations to school.**

Please do not send money with your child.

Each field trip will be the financial responsibility of Kids LIFE, and children will not be permitted to shop or purchase food that is not included in our field trip.

Please check the field trip calendar daily.

Special items to bring or wear, that are needed for various days, are included on the calendar.

Sunscreen

Sunscreen to all children for outdoor/water play unless a written request is made by the parent or guardian.

Parent/Guardian/Guest Conduct:

1. Smoking is prohibited on the premises of St. James UMC. You are asked to extinguish cigarettes, cigars, etc. prior to arriving on St. James UMC Campus.
2. Physical punishment of a child is not allowed at Kids LIFE, even by parents/guardians. If you feel your child needs to be disciplined, please do so after leaving Kids LIFE.
3. Parents are permitted to address behavior problems with their children only. No parent is permitted to confront another child or parent concerning a problem or conduct.
4. All children will be treated with respect. You are a role model for the children, and at Kids LIFE we strive to be like Jesus in our words and actions.
5. Parents will treat all staff members with respect.
6. Please limit cell phone use in the building. Your child needs your undivided attention to ensure their safety and self-worth.
7. Parents/guardians/guests exhibiting aggressive behavior, verbal profanity, or any other forms of inappropriate conduct at Kids LIFE will be asked to leave the premises and may not be allowed to return. If further conflict continues, it could result in the immediate dismissal of your child from Kids LIFE. Accounts will be paid in full or legal action will be taken.