Parent Handbook

2021-2022

St. James

Play • Learn • Grow

Learning Center

A ministry of St. James United Methodist Church

321 Pleasant Valley Drive

Little Rock, AR 72212

501-217-6740

www.StJamesLR.org

Welcome to the Learning Center! We are so excited to have your children here each day! Please feel free to contact me at anytime with questions, concerns, or especially JOYS you are experiencing in the Learning Center. I love to hear the great things and am here to help work through any questions or concerns you have. Here's to a great year!

All the best, Ashley Minchew, Learning Center Director

501-217-6740, Ashley@StJamesLR.org

Rebecca Clement
Site Supervisor

Barbara Schirack
Accounting Associate

Welcome!

Welcome to St. James Learning Center, an accredited early childhood program sponsored by St. James United Methodist Church as a service to church members and the surrounding community. This handbook explains the philosophy, purpose, organization, policies, and operational procedures of St. James Learning Center. We encourage parents to observe, make suggestions, and become involved in our program. Thank you for sharing your children with us.

Philosophy

The purpose of St. James UMC Learning Center is to minister to children through quality early childhood education while nurturing Christian values and equipping children with skills for social, emotional, intellectual, physical, and spiritual development. St. James UMC Learning Center is a Christian-oriented, but not denominationally sectarian, program. The Learning Center admits children of all races and nationalities and does not discriminate on the basis of race in administration of its educational and admission policies. Under the leadership of qualified teachers, our classes meet the needs of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers through daily routines that include guided play activities, creative art, music, outdoor play, conversations, story time, and dramatic play.

Program Goals:

Provide for children's social development by:

- Helping children learn to get along with other children and 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
- Creating basic readiness for school experiences through varied learning activities
- Offering age appropriate field trips
- Supporting infants and toddlers 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 movement and large muscle development

Provide for children's spiritual development by:

- Teaching that each child 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
- Providing Chapel for preschool children and Early Christian Awareness for infants and toddlers

St. James Learning Center

Parent Handbook Addendum for COVID-19

Due to COVID-19 the Learning Center is making the following amendments/changes to the Parent Handbook. These changes are being made with most current information available, careful thought, prayer, and support of our families and employees. The Learning Center and St. James United Methodist Church reserves the right to change these guidelines at any time in order to accommodate changes either recommended or required by various Arkansas State Agencies, CDC, and The Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church or from the St. James leadership.

General Information:

1. The first day of the 2021/2022 school year session will be August 16, 2021.

2. Parent Orientation was a Zoom meeting held on Thursday, August 12 at 12:00 pm for new families to St. James UMC Learning Center.

3. Meet the Teachers was scheduled for Friday, August 13. If you were unable to attend you can visit with your child's teacher on Monday, August 16.

4. All staff and parents that enter the Learning Center must wear a mask.

5. Parents are allowed to drop off and pick up their children inside the building.

6. School parties will be modified to meet the most recent COVID guidelines at the time of the party.

7. All new staff will be required to get the COVID 19 vaccine before starting employment.

School Closures:

In general, the Learning Center follows the same closure pattern as LRSD. This will remain the case for closures relating to weather. Closures relating to COVID-19 will be determined by Learning Center Administrative Committee or the leadership of St. James UMC. Events that constitute closing of the center may include but are not limited to:

- Inability to provide quality care and/or meet licensing standards for student/adult ratios due to COVID -19 exposure
- Multiple classrooms/families with known exposure or testing positive for COVID-19.
- Directives from St. James Church Leadership, the Bishop of the Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church, guidance from various Arkansas Government agencies.

Tuition Expectations

In the event that the school must close the following expectations for tuition payment go into effect:

1. Closure is for two weeks or less, full tuition for the month is expected. No prorate of the tuition. For example: School closes on the 2nd of the month and is closed until 16th of the month – full tuition will be billed and paid.

2. In the event the school must be closed for more than two weeks, the Administrative Committee of the program will have a called meeting to discuss tuition payment options. The decision will be communicated to families in a timely manner. Please know that the Learning Center is aware of the financial strain this pandemic has placed on everyone. The committee will work towards an equitable solution for families and our employees. Please remember that as employees of St. James United Methodist Church, Learning Center staff does not qualify for unemployment benefits in the state of Arkansas.

3. Tuition obligation in the event of withdrawing a child is addressed in the parent handbook on page 6. This policy remains in effect. If a family is experiencing hardship due to loss of job and cannot pay the tuition, please contact the Director and the Administrative Committee will make decisions on payment on a case-by-case basis.

4. There will be no prorating of tuition for absences due to COVID-19.

What If….

The Learning Center welcomed students back on June 2. We have been fortunate in that no students have been diagnosed with COVID-19. Our staff has also tested negative for COVID-19. There was one staff member who self-quarantined out of precaution. It is our prayer that this continues.

If a staff member or student has direct exposure to COVID-19 the following precautions will be followed:

- Person exposed will not be allowed back in the facility until a 14 day quarantine is completed.
- Families in the classroom of the individual exposed will be contacted and notified of the exposure.
- Classroom will be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized prior to anyone entering the room again.
- Return to work/school note will need to be provided. This should include a negative test result report.

If someone has secondary contact with COVID-19, they are to report the exposure to the Director or Site Supervisor immediately. Department of Health will be contacted for guidance. The Center will follow the recommendations of the Department of Health in regards to quarantine and notifications.

Classroom Schedules and Activities

To aid in keeping our children, families, and employees as safe as possible, the Center has made the following adjustments:

1. Classes will go to the gym or playground one class at time. Area will be cleaned prior to the next class visiting the specified area.

2. Classes will not intermingle nor do projects together.

3. Students will experience social distancing as they travel through the hallways to designated spaces (music, chapel, playground, etc.). Every attempt will be made to keep classes as separated as possible.

4. Chapel will be offered. The schedule for chapel is still being developed. Social distancing between classes will be enforced.

5. There will be no field trips this fall.

Organization

Administrative Committee

The St. James Learning Center Administrative Committee is composed of nine people who are nominated by the Nomination Committee of the church and elected by the Church Conference each year. These persons are from a variety of backgrounds in education, medicine, law, and business, offering valuable expertise to The Learning Center. The administrative Committee is responsible for assisting the Director on broad oversight, planning, evaluation, and direction of the center. All personnel issues are administered through the Director. When necessary the Executive Director of Ministries, Senior Pastor, and Staff Parish Relations Committee may also become involved.

Licensing

St. James UMC Learning Center 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.

Accreditation

St. James UMC Learning Center is accredited by Better Beginnings. Better Beginnings carefully considered all aspects of our program including curriculum, health and safety, staff qualifications and physical environment. The greatest emphasis is on children's relationships with staff and how the program helps each child grow and learn intellectually, physically, socially and emotionally.

St. James Learning Center has achieved quality approval status for a developmentally appropriate program from the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education in the State of Arkansas as well as a **three star rating for Better Beginnings**. The three star rating is the highest rating achievable.

Admission

Admissions Policy

St James Learning Center welcomes all children and admits students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in administration of our education policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs and other school-administered programs.

St. James UMC Learning Center will register children in January for the following fall term and March for the following summer term. Children must be the age of the desired class assignment by August 1. Children currently enrolled in The Learning Center, church members, and siblings of enrolled children will have a priority enrollment period. Enrollment will then open to the community. A **Non-refundable** registration fee will accompany the registration form to insure the child's place in the program.

Information packets will be given to parents prior to the beginning of school. The packets will include: the Parent Handbook, an enrollment agreement, a student data sheet, family information sheets, photo release, sunscreen waiver, and the discipline policy form. All forms are to be completed and returned before school begins. On the child data sheet, families will provide current medical information including: pediatrician / physician contact information, health conditions, and developmental needs along with a current immunizations record. Parents will also provide current contact information for any persons authorized to pick up their children. This information will be kept on file in the Learning Center office.

Parents should update contact information in the Learning Center office whenever there are changes. Access to children's files is limited to the child's parents/guardians, teachers, administrators, and child care licensing, upon request.

Please note that all families must have their accounts paid in full before re-enrollment into the program will be granted.

The Parent Handbook includes the policies, operational procedures, philosophy, and organization of The Learning Center. Parents are asked to sign and return the enrollment agreement which states they have read the Handbook and are in agreement with the policies and procedures of The Learning Center. This original agreement will remain in the student's file.

Dismissal

The following may be cause for a child's dismissal from The Learning Center:

- failure to pay fees and/or tuition as described in the payment policy (pg. 7) 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 the Learning Center and parents can not reach an agreement. In all these instances, the Director has the final discretion.

Hours of Operation

The Learning Center will open at 7:30AM. Children must be walked in and signed-in by parent/guardian.

Days of Operation

6 weeks-12 months:	Monday through Friday
12-18 months:	Monday through Friday
18 to 24 months:	Monday through Friday
Two year olds:	Monday through Friday
Three year olds:	Monday/Wednesday/Friday Monday through Friday
Four year olds:	Monday/Wednesday/Friday Monday through Friday

Optional Student Hours (see addendum for COVID –19 update)

Students may arrive as early as 7:30 AM. Teaching begins after 8:00 AM. Students have the option of being picked up by 3:00 or 5:30 PM each day. Parents must state their preference at registration and will be charged according to preference stated. Students may be picked up earlier, but no refunds will be provided.

Drop-ins may be allowed if approved by the Director and space is allowed. Drop-in status is reserved only for currently enrolled students. The family will be billed for drop-ins at the rate approved by the Administrative Committee.

Office Hours

The Learning Center office will be staffed from 7:30 AM-5:30 PM on days that the school is in operation.

Weather Related Closings

The intent is that The Learning Center will be closed due to inclement weather if the Little Rock School District is closed. When the Little Rock School District schedules a later opening, The Learning Center will open at the same time. When the Little Rock School District announces an early dismissal due to inclement weather, we will close The Learning Center. Please check social media for information as well. Parents are requested to pick-up children from The Learning Center as soon as possible. When Little Rock School District schools are not in session, parents should check social media and email for announcements of weather related closings or call the Learning Center 217-6740. Tuition will not be pro-rated for days missed due to inclement weather.

School Holidays and Closing

The Learning Center Administrative Committee will approve a school calendar in the summer of each year for the school term beginning in the fall. In general, the Learning Center will follow LRSD closings for holidays and seasonal breaks. Tuition is levelized throughout the year. Tuition will not be pro-rated nor refunded for months that contain holidays. See calendar on page 22 for scheduled closings.

If the Little Rock School District is closed to students, then St. James Learning Center will also be closed.

Arrival and Pick-up Procedures - (see addendum for COVID update)

Parents shall accompany children to their classrooms upon arriving. Parents shall go to the classroom at dismissal time as well. Parents should park in the parking lot, not in the covered driveway.

Parents of 2's, 3's, and 4's are encouraged to use Entrance #3, and parents of 0-24 month children are encouraged to use Entrance #5. A private door code will be given out prior to each new school session.

To ensure children's safety in the busy church parking lot, parents should either hold their children's hands or, if necessary, carry them.

We ask that all children be signed in and out each day . Signing children in and out is very important to ensure that each child present is accounted for, especially in the event of a transition to another teacher or in an emergency situation.

A written note of permission is needed if a child is to be picked up by anyone other than a parent, guardian, or authorized person. 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 The Learning Center.

Withdrawing a Child

Two weeks written notice is required prior to withdrawing a child from The Learning Center. TUITION FOR THE MONTH OF DEPARTURE WILL NOT BE REFUNDED OR PRO-RATED FOR PARTIAL ATTENDANCE. Withdrawing a child in the summer is not permitted. **When a child is registered to attend in the summer, all tuition charges for June, July, and August will be billed to the family**.

Fees and Tuition

The Learning Center 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 the facility. The Learning Center will not refund tuition, fees or extended day tuition, registration or building/supply fees.

Payment Policy

Accounts are considered past due after the 10th of each month. If payment is not received by the 10th of the month, email notification of past due amount will be sent to the family. If the account becomes more than 30 days past due, a letter requesting a meeting to arrange payment plan will be sent. If an account is 45 days past due and no attempt has been made to correct the past due amount, a letter will be mailed via certified mail to the family, asking for a meeting with the family to arrange a payment plan. It will include the amount due, days past due, late fees, and suggested payment plan. It will also state that if the account goes past 60 days due, then the child will no longer be enrolled in the center until the account is paid in full.

Tuition Express

All families are required to enroll in Tuition Express, an electronic payment system. The completed enrollment form along with a voided check must be turned in to the Learning Center office by the 1st day of school. Payments are drafted on the 10th of every month. August is the exception and usually drafts on the on the third day of school.

Registration Fee

A $285.00 registration fee must accompany the registration form to insure your child's enrollment in our program. A fall building/supply fee will be billed May 1 and due by 10th of every month. The fee for St. James members is $150. Fee for non-members is $220. **The registration and building/supply fees are non-refundable/non transferable.**

Summer session registration is $150 and payment must accompany the registration form.

Returned payments

Any payment made by check that has been returned by the bank will be charged a $25 fee. Tuition Express payments that have been declined will be charged a $40. 00 NSF fee.

If bank payments have been declined 3 times within the school year, future payments will need to be made by cash only and received by the 10th of the month.

Late Pick-Up Charges

If because of an emergency, you will be late in picking up your child, please call immediately. There will be a charge of $1.00 per minute per child for late pick-up after your child's scheduled time to leave. At the second late pick-up, $5.00 per minute will be charged. The parent will receive an official "late pick-up notice". 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.

2021-2022 Tuition Rates

Classes that meet 7:30-3:00 PM

Option #	Day	Classes/Ages	Monthly Tuition
A	M-F	2 years	$755.00
B	M/W/F	3 & 4 years	$535.00
C	M-F	3 years	$685.00
D	M-F	4 years	$685.00

Classes that meet 7:30-5:30 PM

Option #	Day	Classes/Ages	Monthly Tuition
E	M-F	6 week-6 months	$965.00
F	M-F	6 months-12 months	$965.00
G	M-F	12 -18 months	$915.00
H	M-F	18-24 months	$835.00
J	M-F	2 years	$835.00
K	M-F	3 years	$705.00
M	M-F	4 years	$705.00

Staff

The Director of The Learning Center works in cooperation with the Learning Center Administrative Committee and is supervised by the Executive Director of Ministries of St James United Methodist Church. The Director has 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 Management Team is composed of the Director, Site Supervisor and Curriculum Coordinator, together they work to coordinate with the appropriate agencies in meeting licensing requirements. The Director works within established procedures, but is free to adjust those procedures with the approval of the Executive Director of Ministries, when it is in the best interests of the ministry of the center.

The staff are interviewed and supervised by the Director and Site Supervisor. 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 twenty (25) hours of workshops and in-service training each year to meet accreditation standards. In addition, lead teachers for our 3 and 4 year old classrooms must have at least a bachelors' degree in early childhood education or similar field. Staff members are encouraged to be involved in related professional organizations.

Confidentiality

Teachers and staff are not allowed to discuss matters with parents relating to any child other than their child. Neither are they allowed to discuss matters relating to the work or care provided by any other staff member. All such concerns should be addressed to the Director.

Concerns shared with the Director will be treated with great care and sensitivity, but will not be considered to be confidential, since they may require further research, confirmation, consultation, and action.

Staff/Child Ratio

The **preferred** staff/child ratio is as follows:

6 weeks to 6 months: 1 adult to 5 children
6 to 18 months: 1 adult to 5 children
18 to 24 months: 1 adult to 7 children
Two's: 1 adult to 7 children
Three's: 1 adult to 12 children
Four's: 1 adult to 13 children
After School Care: 1 adult to 14 children

Communications

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, see addendum for COVID-19 update. Children at SJLC may be interviewed by Child Care Licensing, DCFS Special Investigations, and law enforcement officials for investigative purposes and/or for determining compliance with licensing requirements. Should parents suspect licensing violations, they should file a written report with Child Care Licensing and the Director of the Learning Center. The Learning Center 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 a member of the Child Enrichment Management Team.

Permission to Photograph

Children in the Learning Center may be photographed for educational or promotional material. Names will not be used. In the enrollment packet families receive each July will be a form that parents are requested to sign providing permission for photographs to be taken and used.

Daily, Weekly, and Monthly Communications

The Learning Center uses a wide variety of means of communication with parents and families. Each month, look for the Learning Center's electronic newsletter, your monthly statement, as well as a classroom newsletter from your child's teacher. Periodically, parents will receive notes and announcements in a child's cubby or file about events or happenings in the school, classroom or church. Teachers will also keep families informed about their child's day through daily reports, emails, phone calls, conversations, as dependent upon the style/preference of teachers and parents. Parents should feel free to call the Learning Center office with any concerns or questions or simply to check on their child.

Many of our teachers will provide a Shutterfly account where pictures and news about learning topics, the days events, and upcoming events can be found. Your teacher will provide additional information at parent orientation.

PARENT/GUARDIAN/ GUEST CONDUCT

- Parents are asked to extinguish their cigarettes, cigars, etc., prior to exiting the vehicle.
- Physical punishment of a child is not allowed at the center, even by parents/ guardians. If you feel your child needs to be physically disciplined, it cannot take place on St. James property.
- Parents are permitted to address behavior problems with their child only. No parent is permitted to confront another child or parent concerning any problems or conduct.
- All children will be treated with respect. Remember, you are a role model.
- Parents will treat all staff members with respect.
- Please limit cell phone use in the building. Your child needs your undivided attention to ensure their safety and your ability to follow all of our safety precautions.
- Parents, guardians, or guests exhibiting aggressive behavior, verbal profanity, or any other forms of inappropriate conduct on school grounds will be asked to leave the premises and may not be allowed to return to the center. If further conflict continues, it is possible that it can result in an immediate dismissal of your child from our program. Standing accounts shall be paid in full, or legal action will follow.

Health and Safety

Immunizations – Licensing requires that the Learning Center meet a certain immunization schedule. Immunizations must be kept up to date to continue enrollment. Licensing requires that we have a current immunization record for your child on file.

Illness at Home - In the interest of all our children, each child should be well before coming to school. 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 these symptoms:

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 classes, 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 School- 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.

Medication - Prescription medication (in original prescription containers which includes the child's name and dosage) will be administered daily by the Director or her designee with written permission on a form provided by Primary Care Phsycian and used by St. James UMC Learning Center. The completed form and the medication are to be given to the Director. The medication will remain in a locked area of the Learning Center 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.

Attendance

If your child is sick or is going to be out of town, we would appreciate notification at school.

After School Care Attendance

If a child is not attending After School Care, the Learning Center must be notified either by phone or email by 1:00 PM.

Smoking—For the health of all children and staff of the Learning Center, no smoking will be allowed in the church building or on church grounds close to children.

Fire Arms and Weapons—For the safety of all children and staff, no weapons or guns are allowed in the building. Concealed weapons are not allowed on the St. James Campus.

Clothing

Please allow your child to wear comfortable, washable play clothes and shoes for school. No flip flops or crocs please**.** This gives him/her the freedom to participate in activities without the fear of ruining special clothes or sacrificing personal safety.

Proper clothing such as long pants, sweaters, coats, mittens, caps and **sturdy shoes** will be needed for outside play during winter months. PLEASE LABEL ALL ARTICLES OF CLOTHING CLEARLY WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME.

One of the goals of teaching is to encourage independence. Please dress your child with fastenings they can manage themselves.

Please send two complete, labeled change of clothes to be left at school. This should include shirt, shorts or pants, underwear, and socks. Please send these items in a **large** plastic zip-lock bag. If your child is in diapers, please send six (6) disposable diapers to school per day.

Toilet Training

If your child is in the process of mastering toileting skills, please let us know. It would be helpful for us to know what words he/she uses, or how often he/she goes.

It is our policy to see that children go to the bathroom at regular intervals. Children are not to be scolded or shamed for wetting or soiling their pants. **There are no diaper changing areas in our three and four year old classrooms. Children are not assigned to the 3's or 4's classes who are not toilet trained.**

Animal and Pet Policy

Periodically, children or teachers may bring animals to visit the school. Any pets or animals visiting the school must have documentation that they have current immunizations (if applicable). All visiting animals are expected to be clean, healthy, and gentle with children.

Teachers shall supervise all interactions between children and animals. If children are allowed to touch the visiting animal, they are to be instructed in safe handling of the animal and will wash hands afterwards. Teachers shall make sure that any children with allergies to certain animals are not exposed to them.
Reptiles will not be allowed as classroom pets because they are carriers of salmonella.

Emergency Drills

In compliance with licensing and to ensure that children will know what to do in the event of a fire or tornado, emergency drills will be conducted each month. Evacuation procedures and maps are posted in each classroom. Children will practice what to do and where to go when they hear the emergency signals

Daily Activities

Program

Our purpose is to provide a high-quality early childhood program in a safe, nurturing and Christian environment. Our children participate in age appropriate activities that promote their physical, social, emotional and intellectual development.

The preschool is based on a thematic approach. The children are exposed to different themes through hands -on experiences and activities in small and large groups including music and movement, creative art, outdoor experiences and story time. The classrooms are designed around learning centers such as a home living area, an art table, a block center, a quiet place with books, a manipulative center, a puzzle area and more. We emphasize learning through play. Children enrolled in the Preschool classes participate in Chapel weekly, and Fitness and Music classes daily.

The infant and toddler curriculum will include holding and cuddling the children, establishing routines, providing language models, music, and outdoor play. We emphasize frequent, positive, and warm interactions between teachers and children. The children enrolled in the infant and toddler classes participate in Early Christian Awareness each day for 20 minutes. This is an early exposure to Bible lessons, stories, songs, scriptures, and truths in the Christian Faith.

Snacks

Snacks will be provided by the Learning Center in the morning and in the afternoon after rest-time for children enrolled in the 2's, 3's, and 4's. Snacks for Infant/Toddlers shall be sent from home. Please be sure to send healthy snacks that follow DHS regulations. Please be sure your child's medical history indicates ***any*** food allergies.

Snacks are planned with low sugar content, nutrition, and variety in mind. A posted snack menu is available in the office. **No peanut or nut based food products, or outdated foods will be served.**

After School Care children will receive a snack each day at the beginning of their time at the Learning Center. All guidelines for snack and food as previously noted will be followed by the After Care program.

Lunches for Preschool

Lunches are served to children after 11:00. St. James UMC Learning Center has been granted alternative compliance with Social Services concerning lunches, requiring children to bring lunches from home. The Learning Center will provide milk at lunch time for children in the preschool. 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 4 of the 5 basic food groups (grain, protein, fruit, and vegetable [can either have two fruits, two vegetables, or a fruit and a vegetable]). Information about exact amounts and explanations about food categories will be sent home periodically. The Learning Center will keep supplemental foods on hand in case of emergencies. However, 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.

Potential Choking Hazards
The following foods cannot be offered to children under 2 :

Hot dogs Raw carrots Grapes Nuts Seeds Popcorn Hard Candy

Please help us keep your child safe from choking hazards, by not sending the above-mentioned **RESTRICTED FOODS**, and by cutting all other foods into safely swallow-able pieces for your children.

Food Requirements
Parents are responsible for providing all food and drink for infants and toddlers. 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.

If a lunch for a child is forgotten, the Learning Center keeps food to provide a child with a lunch. A "No-Lunch -Fee" charge will be added to your account following the schedule below:
$5-First Offense
$6-Second Offense
$7-Third Offense

The Learning Center provides milk to drink for lunch in the 2's, 3's, and 4's preschool classes.

Therefore, lunches must contain foods all five basic food groups. Any foods/liquids hotter than 110 degrees Fahrenheit shall be kept out of children's reach. Outdated foods will not be served.
Due to accreditation requirements for children's nutritional safety and health, the Learning Center will not serve cow's milk to children under the age of 12 months, and will only serve whole milk to children between the ages of 12-24 months. Solid foods and fruit juice will not be served to children younger than 4 months.

Please do not send peanut butter or any nut based products including tree nuts. Failure of the family to comply with this requirement may be grounds for dismissal from the program.

Please label all bottles, lunch boxes, cups, etc., with your child's name. No glass bottles, please. Please send cups with lids or closeable drinking spouts.

Breast Feeding
St. James UMC Learning Center supports families in their efforts to breast feed infants. Breast feeding mothers are welcome to nurse in the classroom or quiet area at any time during the center's hours of operation.

Rest Time
Every 2 through 4 year old who stays past noon needs his/her own set of two coverings for rest time. Label these articles ***prominently*** with your child's name. We prefer a fitted crib sheet (the regular baby bed size) or towel plus a blanket. A nap roll also works well. These fit nicely on the rest mats or cots which are provided by The Learning Center. Linens will be sent home on Fridays for laundering. Please help us to comply with this requirement from Licensing.

Outside Play
All children will spend time outdoors each day, weather permitting. If you feel it is necessary for your child to remain indoors, he/she should remain home with you.

All children shall be protected from over exposure to the sun. Parents are requested to provide sunscreen for their child. Sunscreen should be labeled with child's name and given to the teacher for safe keeping. Please do not leave sunscreen in children's backpacks. Teachers will apply the provided sunscreen at appropriate times with a signed waiver.

Children will spend shorter periods of time outside when the head indexes are above 90 or below 32 degrees Fahrenheit. In these circumstances, children will be provided large motor activities in the gym.

Certain shoes can be hazardous. Flip flops and crocs create unsure footing for children as they are running and climbing. To avoid accidents, send your children in shoes with secure fit.

Water Play
From time to time, especially in the summer, children will be provided sensory play experiences with water. Children will not be permitted to drink the water. Any children with visible sores/cuts will be restricted to playing in the sprinklers. Water play tables and toys shall be cleaned each day after use.

Special Activities

School Parties
The Learning Center will celebrate various holidays (Halloween, Valentine's Day, Christmas). Teachers will ask for parents to volunteer to send snacks for these days.

Birthdays
Birthdays are special and can be celebrated at snack time. You may send party cookies or some other food your child enjoys that has been prepared in a health department-approved kitchen***. No favors, gifts, or balloons*** please. "Unbirthdays" for summer birthdays may be celebrated, also. Please notify the teacher and Director in order to schedule special treats.

Field Trips
Appropriate field trips may be planned for children. Parents will be notified in advance of the field trip location, date, and time. If everyone in the class cannot participate in the field trip, the class will not go. Transportation will be provided by parents only. School policy does not allow siblings on field trips.

Special Services

Should a teacher or parent believe that a child is in need of special help beyond what is provided at the Learning Center, they may request contact information for additional resources from the Director. Once parents and staff agree that a child requires special services, parents may contract with approved providers. Learning Center staff may share information about the child with the approved therapists. By signing the enrollment agreement, parents agree to the policy.

All outside therapists and special service providers shall sign in upon arrival at the center. Therapists and specialists shall provide a copy of each child's Individual Education Plan, or IEP, to the center to be reviewed by the directors and the child's teachers and kept in the child's file. Teachers shall communicate and cooperate with specialists who work with children either in or out of the classroom as directed by the child's IEP.

All results of screenings and therapy sessions shall remain confidential, and will only be shared with the child's parents, teachers, therapists and administrators. Screenings and therapy sessions shall take place in areas which are out of view of other children and families in the center. In addition, confidentiality will be maintained by keeping discussions and any documents relating to the child's progress out of hearing or view of other parents and children.

Developmental Assessment

Throughout the school year, teachers make observations and assessments of each child in regular classroom and outdoor settings in the context of routine activities.

For formal assessment, Learning Center teachers use developmental skills checklists. These checklists address each of the educational areas listed in our curriculum and our philosophy (cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development) by:

- ·giving concrete examples of specific skills measured
- ·offering a positive evaluation of a child's continuing growth

Teachers use a variety of informal assessments including but not limited to the "Anecdotal Note" form or other methods of collecting observations as well as conversations with parents. Teachers examine all information collected to use as evidence of skill development.

Teachers use these observations and assessments of children's development to:

1. guide lesson planning to help each child develop to his/her full potential
2. aid in sharing the child's strengths and growing areas with parents to determine if there is a need for intervention services or therapies

Assessments of individual children are kept confidential. They will be shared only with the child's parents and any other Learning Center teachers, administrators, or therapists working with the child. These formal assessments are made from at least 2 sets of observations of the child taken early and later on in the course of the school year to show the child's growth. Teachers shall store assessments in children's files kept out of sight throughout the year, although parents may request to view them at any time. At the end of the year, formal assessment checklists shall move to the child's permanent file in the office.

Requests from other schools to complete their own assessment forms for entry into their program will not be honored. Copies of the St. James UMC Learning Center assessment forms may be requested by other schools at the end of the school year.

Discipline Policy

St. James Learning Center 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. Inappropriate behavior will be ignored when possible.

Teachers will provide reasonable rules with logical consequences for breaking those rules. Discipline shall be consistent and appropriate to the child's level of understanding.

Should repeated unacceptable behavior occur, the child will spend an appropriate period away from the group. The period away from the group shall be one minute per age of the child, not to exceed five minutes. The area away from the group shall be specified by each teacher, but not in an area associated with eating, sleeping, or restroom facilities. Redirection will be used with children under two years of age when harmful behavior occurs. If a child shows destructive or harmful behavior on a regular basis, a call or conference will be held with the child's parents, teacher, and director.

Corporal punishment will not be administered at St. James UMC Learning Center. If undesirable behavior continues after all previous steps have been carried out, dismissal of the student may occur.

2021-2022 Calendar

August 10	Last Day of Summer School
August 11-13	Teacher Workdays, LC Closed
August 13	Meet & Greet Teachers
August 16	First Day of School
September 6	Labor Day, LC Closed
November 24	Thanksgiving Holiday, LC Closed
November 25	Thanksgiving Holiday, LC Closed
November 26	Thanksgiving Holiday, LC Closed
December 20-31	Christmas Break, LC Closed
January 3	LC Opens
January 17	Martin Luther King Holiday, LC Closed
January 24-28	LC 2022/2023 Fall Registration
March 14-17	Summer 2022 Registration
March 21-25	Spring Break, LC Closed
April 2	Good Friday, No School
May 27	Last Day of Fall/Spring 2022, tentatively
May 30	Memorial Day, LC Closed
June 2	First Day of Summer School, tentatively

Important Contact Information

Child Enrichment Ministries Management Team

Ashley Minchew, Director	217-6740	ashley@stjameslr.org
Rebecca Clement, Assistant Director	217-6740	sitesupv2@stjameslr.org
Barb Schirack, Accounting Associate	217-6717	AcctAssoc1@stjameslr.org

St. James United Methodist Church

Sean Dunbar, Director Children's Ministry	217-6744	sean@stjameslr.org
Sarah Owens, Director of Nursery Ministries	217-6748	sarah@stjameslr.org
Kim Anderson, Executive Director of Ministries	217-6708	kim@stjameslr.org

Web and Social Media

Church website	www.stjamesLR.org
Church Facebook	www.facebook.com/St.JamesUnitedMethodistChurch
Children's Ministry Facebook	www.facebook.com/StJamesUMCKids
Learning Center Facebook	www.facebook.com/StJamesLearningCenter