



El Dorado Federated Church

Preschool and Child Care Center

1031 Thompson Way
Placerville, California 95667
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Welcome!

The Federated Church Preschool and Child Care Center, established in 1993, is a non-profit church sponsored child care center licensed by the State of California Department of Social Services. As part of our church's Ministry of Children and Families, it is administered by the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Board. We provide a morning preschool program as well as full days of child care.

Ours is a unique program based on independent child-centered decision making. We believe that the foundation for learning is based on positive self esteem, and that the processes of decision making and creativity form the roots of each individual's set of values. Our staff fosters creativity by giving children the opportunity to make appropriate choices. Our warm and loving environment is a place where children can safely grow.

Our goal is to provide a loving and nurturing Christian environment where children can learn to respect and care for themselves, each other, their community, and the world. We seek to provide opportunities for the whole child to develop through social, emotional, and physical experiences.

Our Classroom Organization:

- ◆ Interest areas are clearly defined.
- ◆ Space is provided for children to work in these areas.
- ◆ Ample space is furnished for children to move between areas.
- ◆ Space is available for children to meet together in large groups.
- ◆ A variety of materials are available for children to explore in many different ways.
- ◆ The materials are accessible to the children.
- ◆ The equipment and shelves are labeled using real objects or pictures.

Our Daily Routine:

- ◆ A balance is created between child-initiated and adult-initiated activities.
- ◆ Abundant opportunities are provided for children to make choices and decisions.
- ◆ Adult-initiated activities are offered in both small and large group settings.
- ◆ Children are given opportunities to freely interact and learn from each other.
- ◆ Children's understanding is strengthened through interaction between adults and children.

Administration

The governing board of the center is the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Board. The Board consists of members representing the Church Council, Children and Family Ministry, staff of the center, center parents, members of the congregation, and members of the community. Meeting monthly, the ECE Board is an advisory board concerned with overseeing the operation of the center. All policies and procedures for the operation of the center are available to parents by request through the ECE Board Chairperson. Staff, parents, and the church community are encouraged and invited to share any concerns about personnel, program or operation of the center with the Program Director or Financial Secretary whenever possible or appropriate. If that is not possible, or if it is believed the issue is not dealt with adequately, he/she may follow up with communication in writing to the ECE Board Chairperson. Generally, issues concerning personnel will be referred to the Personnel Committee of the ECE Board. The matter will be dealt with and resolved in a confidential matter.

The ECE Board sincerely hopes that your experience as part of our preschool family is a positive and supportive one. Regular program evaluations are part of their schedule and your input is valid and appreciated.

Staff

Our staff meet or exceed all qualifications required by the State of California and are experienced early childhood educators. All participate in a continuous program of in-service education and studies for professional advancement in order to remain alert to the ever-changing needs of today's families and to the findings of current research. We maintain a staff-to-child ratio of 1:12.

Admissions

The center is open to all children, regardless of race, ethnic background, gender, religion, or handicapping condition who may benefit from our type of program. This includes children with severe allergies to certain foods or materials (i.e. peanuts, latex etc.). The center is required under the Americans with Disabilities Act to make reasonable accommodations for children with special needs who enroll in our program. The child must be at least 2 years of age and must not yet be eligible for kindergarten.

After an initial tour of the center and registration deposit is made, a parent handbook and required enrollment forms will be given. At this time an orientation with the Program Director will be scheduled to return registration forms, discuss policies, and determine placement of your child in the appropriate preschool group. We encourage parents to visit with their children prior to their first scheduled day, if needed to help ease the transition into preschool.

Days and Hours of Operation

The center is open weekdays, 7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. throughout the year. Our morning preschool program is 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. We close one to two days per year for staff in-service training, and also close for the celebration of the following holidays:

- ◆ Good Friday
- ◆ Independence Day (and following day)
- ◆ Labor Day
- ◆ Memorial Day
- ◆ Thanksgiving (Thursday and Friday)
- ◆ Christmas (1 week +)
- ◆ New Year's Day
- ◆ Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- ◆ Presidents' Day

During the winter there are occasional days when it becomes dangerous to use Thompson Way due to snow. Our policy is to close when Placerville Union School District or Sierra School closes. Radio and TV news can keep you abreast of the closures.

Confidentiality of Records

A Student Record file is kept for each child containing required forms, evaluations, medication requests, etc. These records are open only to the staff, an authorized employee of the licensing agency, or the child's parent or legal guardian. Community care licensing has the authority to interview children or staff, and to inspect and audit child or child care center records, without prior consent.

Tuition and Fees

A non-refundable registration fee of \$100 is required at the time of enrollment. A re-registration fee of \$50 is due May 1st of each year thereafter. Once attendance begins, tuition payments are due on the first of the month prior to service being rendered. Tuition payments are to be placed in the Tuition Lock Box. A \$15 fee is charged for service on all checks returned from the bank. Parents who arrive after 6:00 p.m. will be charged \$2 per minute for this service. Parents will be notified in writing in advance of any changes in the rates or services provided by the center. There will also be no credit given if the child is out due to illness, vacation, school closures or holidays.

Late fees are charged for payments made after the fifth of the month. A late fee of \$10 will be charged for payments made after the fifth of the month. A late fee of \$20 will be charged for payments made after the fifteenth of the month. Tuition not paid by the end of the month is cause for dismissal.

The Family Discount Policy applies to families with more than one child in attendance. For the first child, the family pays the current full tuition fee. As long as the first child is still enrolled, each subsequent child of the same family will receive a 10% discount off the subsequent child's tuition rate or the lessor of the two rates.

Drop-In Child Care is available to families of children actively enrolled in the Center. In addition, a child may extend regularly scheduled time with Drop-In Child Care. The service is only available when there is space available and parents must verify space availability with the Program Director. The Drop-In Tab must be checked on student's attendance sheet as well as times in and out filled out. Emergency Information must be on file. All Drop-In charges will be added at the end of the month and must be paid with the current charges.

A Summer Holding Fee is available for families who take time off during June, and July. A written Holding Fee Application and Agreement form is required by May 1st of each year, and information about the fee is made available prior to that date so that families can plan for the summer.

Our Scholarship/Tuition Assistance Fund is available for families experiencing financial difficulty. The scholarship program is supported by tax deductible gifts from church members, center parents, and members of the community. Applications are available from the Program Director and all information is strictly confidential.

Withdrawal of a child from the center is sometimes necessary. We ask that you give at least two weeks notice in writing in order to avoid being charged for that time. This allows the center to have adequate time to fill the vacancy.

Drop Off and Pick Up of Children

Children must be signed in and out by a parent or authorized parent representative every day. The sign in and out sheets are located in the parent corner as you come in the main entrance. A full signature is required. Children will only be released to those authorized persons designated on the child's emergency card. Identification may be required.

When entering or leaving the center, please hold your child by the hand on the stairway. Do not leave your car engine running or any child unattended in a car while you are in the center, it is against California State law. Siblings, other children accompanying adults, or the child being picked up are not allowed on the playground without adult supervision.

Health and Safety Information

Each child is required by state regulations to have on file a health statement, which includes a record or up-to-date immunizations signed by his/her healthcare provider, and a signed Consent for Medical Treatment.

Your child's health status will be checked daily. Children with symptoms such as rash, a temperature of 100 degrees or higher, diarrhea, or other infections should not be brought to the center. If at any time our staff determines that your child is ill, the parent or other authorized person will be called and be expected to pick up the child as soon as possible. The school shall give appropriate first aid to a hurt child, (i.e.: cleaning, bandaging, and applying ice) but will not remove splinters, etc. You will receive a written report of injuries beyond the "normal bumps and scrapes of childhood." In the event of a medical emergency, 911 will be called and calls will be made to parents.

Children will be administered prescription and over the counter medication only if the parent or guardian provides a note from the child's physician stating the name of the medication, the amount to be given, time to be given and duration. The exception to this is diaper rash cream and sunscreen. These can be given provided the parent/guardian completes a parent medication permission form. The center shall have no responsibility of any kind whatsoever for failure to provide requested medication nor for adverse reactions which are caused by the administration of medication at the parent's request.

As required by law, the Program Director or any other staff members shall report to Children's Protective Services any suspicion of child abuse, sexual or otherwise, neglect, or endangerment of which they may become aware.

Smoking is prohibited on the center premises. A center disaster plan is posted in the classroom near the phone, and fire drills are held regularly.

Mealtime

Family style eating is an integral part of our program and we sing or say a prayer before each meal. We provide a nutritious morning and afternoon snack. The menu is posted in the center office and above the sign in counter for your information at all times. The children are asked to bring their own well balanced, nutritional lunch and beverage each day, and **candy is not allowed** except for special occasions such as parties etc.. If your child arrives early or stays late, you may want to send an additional snack.

Quiet / Rest Time

We provide a quiet time from 12:30 - 2:30 p.m. Sleeping is not mandatory, but children are asked to rest quietly. Children who do not sleep regularly, will be asked to rest for a short while and then allowed to do quiet activities. Each child needs a crib size blanket. We will launder the bedding once a week.

Clothing and Other Belongings

Comfortable dress is an important part of your child's learning process because daily activities include active and sometimes messy play and we want children to enjoy themselves without worrying about their clothing. Children are encouraged to wear play clothes and are required to wear close toed shoes (please no flip flops).

The child's name should be placed on all outdoor clothing and other belongings to help ensure the return of all the proper possessions and clothes.

The center shall make every effort to safeguard personal belongings brought by the child, but shall not be responsible for lost or broken items.

Star of the Week and Birthdays

Each child will be recognized as the "Star of the Week" once during the school year. The group-time teacher will send home a Star of the Week form to fill out and add a photo. This will be displayed on our Star of the Week bulletin board. During that week, your child may bring a favorite book, toy, photo, or new discovery to share each day they are scheduled to come. **We discourage bringing toys at any other time except during this special week.**

We like to celebrate birthdays. If you would like to bring a special snack, please let us know in advance. We encourage parents who wish to celebrate a birthday at school to bring individual treats such as cookies, cupcakes, or popsicles, etc.

Conferences, Assessments and Visits

Portfolio files are compiled for each child that includes art and writing samples, photos and assessments. Each March, annual assessments are completed on all children followed by a parent conference; however, a parent may request a conference with the Program Director and/or teacher at any time.

Parents are encouraged to visit the center at any time. If the teachers are not free to talk with you, please understand that the children come first during class time; the teachers will be happy to talk with you when the schedule allows.

With the exception of our annual walking Pre-K Field Trip across the street to Sierra School, we do not leave the school grounds for field trips. As alternative special visitors are invited to talk with the children at circle time about their job or bring animals to show them, etc.

Discipline

Acceptable behavior is encouraged by giving positive verbal responses. This reinforces a child's good feeling about his/her behavior and serves as a model for other children. Asking a child to stop and think about unpleasant behavior enables that child to work at self-control.

For a child not cooperating in a group situation, the child is seated by a teacher and reminded of acceptable behavior. Removal from the group for a period of time (to "reset") is the next tactic used for a child who continually demonstrates unacceptable behavior. This is not a punishment, but rather a time when the child may calm down, remember what behavior the teacher is asking for, and decide for him/herself when he/she is ready to rejoin the group with appropriate behavior.

In cases of ongoing and extreme disciplinary behavior such as: biting, causing severe intentional body harm to self, others and staff and continuous disruptive behavior, the following procedure will be followed: 1.) A verbal warning to parent, 2.) A verbal and written warning to parent, 3.) 2nd written warning, 4.) Termination

No corporal punishment or violation of rights is allowed.

No child will be allowed to hurt himself, others or staff to a point that creates an undue hardship on the program.

Communications with Parents

Parents are informed of the activities of the center through monthly calendars and occasional newsletters from the Program Director and/or Financial Secretary. In addition, each group teacher will keep parents informed of group time curriculum through newsletters. The ECE Board shares written highlights of meetings and keeps you informed of new policies and decisions made. Check both your child's cubby/mailbox and the sign in and out area for information.

This handbook has been written in an effort to answer many of your initial questions about our center. Throughout your child's time with us, please do not hesitate to communicate with our staff, ECE Board, or church ministry team. Parents are invited to attend special events and programs throughout the year and we welcome your efforts to improve our center through your gifts of time or talent.