



## Parent Handbook

**Open Arms Christian Child Development Center**  
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A Ministry of  
Our Savior  
Lutheran  
Church



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## **1 Welcome Letter from Our Savior Lutheran Church (OSLC) Pastors**

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the Open Arms Christian Child Development Center!

As Pastors for Our Savior Lutheran Church, and Family Life Pastors for the Center, we want you to know that we are glad you and your family are here. Open Arms is a ministry dedicated to your child's development as a whole person. Our dedicated staff intends to provide your child with the finest care in the best atmosphere for their physical, emotional, intellectual, social, and spiritual growth.

However, our interest in quality care doesn't end with the workday. Our goal is to reach out beyond the doors of our Open Arms Center to touch the lives of children and their families with the love of God. Part of Pastor Derrick's job description is dedicated to providing outreach and spiritual care for you as a family of the Center.

In that spirit, please know that we are here for you. We welcome you to participate in all the activities of both the Open Arms center and Our Savior Lutheran Church. This is your Center, a community with Christ at the center, focused on sharing Christ's Word and love, and we are here to serve you.

If there is anything that Our Savior, as a congregation, or we, as pastors, can do for you, please don't hesitate to ask, and we will do our best to address your needs with the love of Christ.

Ever in the loving Open Arms of Jesus,  
Pastor Peter DeMik and Pastor Josh Hileman

## **2 Welcome Letter from Open Arms Director**

### **Welcome to Open Arms!**

We want to extend a warm welcome into our family at the Open Arms Christian Child Development Center. You children are each a unique and special gift from God. We thank you for entrusting us with the care of your children.

The well-being of your children is our primary concern. We want you to feel comfortable and confident as you combine your life as parents with your career. We want the time your children are in our care to be as free from worry to you as possible. We do this by adhering at all times to strict operational policies which govern, for example, discipline, administration of medications, and release of children to others. We will call you immediately if any emergencies arise. Otherwise, we will share your children's day with you when you arrive to pick them up. Because consistency in child-rearing philosophy between the childcare center and the home is best for the children, we will honor parents' concerns and wishes for development.

Quality childcare is developmentally appropriate. For example, younger children need more individual adult attention. As children grow older, they clearly benefit from association with other children. These principles are reflected as we nurture each child's spiritual, social, emotional, physical, cognitive and language development. Our developmental and teaching programs are selected from the best resources available.

This handbook provides detailed information about our facility and programs. Please feel free to talk with other staff members, or myself, if you have any further questions about Open Arms Christian Child Development Center and what we have to offer to you and your family.

In His Open Arms,  
Rebecca Stewart  
Center Director

### **3 Goals and Organization**

#### **3.1 Purpose**

This handbook is to be used as a general guideline for informational purposes and is updated on a regular basis. We hope this will be a good reference for information about the center. The center does not update and redistribute the handbook with every dynamic change to the center and therefore may not reflect the most current policies and practices over time. We will strive to keep everyone informed of changes as they occur.

#### **3.2 History**

Our Savior Lutheran Church began meeting in 1969. Our Savior Lutheran Church began their Open Arms ministry in 2005.

Lutheran parochial education has more than 150 years of rich heritage in the United States. The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod has over 1,200 early childhood centers dedicated solely to the education and spiritual growth of young children.

#### **3.3 Philosophy/Mission**

The Open Arms Christian Child Development Center (CCDC or Open Arms) is a not-for-profit ministry of Our Savior Lutheran Church (OSLC), providing a child care program of the highest quality designed to meet the needs of families in our community. At Open Arms all children are guided to develop to their potential in every aspect of life within the sheltering and nurturing relationships of Christian love. We operate our center assuming all children are individuals and must be allowed to grow and learn at their own rate and to develop healthy self-images. At Open Arms, we will help your children to grow spiritually, emotionally, physically, socially and intellectually.

A preschool and/or child care experience frequently represents children's first separation from home. It may be a first experience in learning where other adults can be helpful and loving. Teaching children social skills is accomplished best in an atmosphere of love and concern for the needs of all children. Programs are planned to encourage and develop individual strengths and abilities, while helping your children to understand the value of cooperation and interaction with others. This is achieved through working, learning, playing and sharing with other children as well as adults.

#### **3.4 Founding Principles**

The foundation of the Open Arms CCDC is built on God's love. Our goal is to provide a nurturing and safe environment for the development of children and families in our community through a loving, Christ-centered, Bible-based child care center. Thank you for considering Open Arms Christian Child Development Center and the program we offer for your child's developmental needs.

#### **3.5 Goals of Open Arms**

At the Open Arms Christian Child Development Center our goal is to:

- Value each child as a unique and special gift from God
- Provide a Christian atmosphere and curriculum

- Focus on quality educational programs
- Value children’s play experiences as avenues for learning and provide a developmentally appropriate environment
- Nurture each child’s spiritual, social, emotional, physical, cognitive and language development

### **3.6 Our Services**

The Open Arms Christian Child Development Center is licensed by the state of Maryland and has National Lutheran Schools Accreditation. We offer a variety of specialized services including:

- Weekly chapel
- Age-appropriate Christian curriculum
- Full time infant and toddler care
- Half-day and full day preschool
- Technological Security Measures
- Before and after school-age program
- Spanish instruction
- Music instruction
- Fenced outdoor play areas
- Lower than state-mandated child to teacher ratios
- Experienced, caring staff

The Open Arms program blends quality care and education. Each day, children will be offered a stimulating environment with an array of developmentally appropriate learning experiences. Since young children learn best through play, activities such as Bible lessons and stories, finger plays, music, creative art, science and math exploration and language enhancement are planned to encourage the children’s eagerness to learn, especially about the Lord’s Creation.

### **3.7 Administration**

The Open Arms Christian Child Development Center is a ministry and community service of Our Savior Lutheran Church. A Christian atmosphere permeates the school. Prayers are said before snack and lunch; religious holidays are celebrated; Bible stories and songs are shared, and there is weekly chapel service. The school is operated as a not-for-profit institution, licensed by the State of Maryland and is open to children of any race, color or creed from the ages of six-weeks to 12-years-old.

The Open Arms Christian Child Development Center is governed by the constitution of Our Savior Lutheran Church and is accountable to the congregation of OSLC through the OSLC Governance Board. The Governance Board members are elected by the congregation of OSLC and meet on a regular basis, typically monthly. The Open Arms Director is responsible for bring any required information to meetings of the Governance Board through the Senior Pastor. The Center Directors are accountable to the OSLC Senior Pastor and is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Open Arms Christian Child Center. Please bring any concerns to the Directors’ attention.

### **3.8 Safe and Secure**

Open Arms is unique in that it was built by a church specifically for early childhood development and preschool programs. The fenced playgrounds take advantage of the natural beauty of the site, including the surrounding fields and nature trail that serve as an ideal setting for outdoor classroom experiences. Resilient surfaces are used on all playgrounds.

The building is constructed of non-combustible material and equipped with a sprinkler system and smoke detectors. Emergency exit routes are posted in each classroom. Fire and emergency evacuation drills are conducted monthly. Access to the building is strictly controlled and each family will be assigned a family access code to gain access into the center and classrooms. Safety, security and cleanliness are maintained at all times.

Firearms are prohibited on school premises unless carried by qualified current or retired law enforcement officers in accordance with federal and state laws (H.R.218)

### **3.9 Trusted Staff**

Our teachers are professionally trained and qualified in early childhood education and experienced in working in the early childhood school setting. Staff members are required to continue their professional development by attending continuing education classes throughout the year. Each staff member has on file a criminal history records check conducted by the Maryland Department of Public Safety & Correctional Services, a sworn disclosure statement and a central registry search conducted by Maryland Child Protective Services.

### **3.10 Size of Groups**

The size of the groups will vary somewhat depending on the age of your child.

### **3.11 Programs**

Open Arms offers many different programs to fit the needs of its families:

- **Full Time Infants (6 weeks – 18 months) & Toddlers (18 months – 24 months)**
- **Full Time Two-year-old program**
- **Full Day Preschool for 3's and 4's**
- **Part Time for 3's and 4's (upon availability)**
- **Before and After Care for children Kindergarten through Sixth Grade**

More information regarding these programs is covered later in this handbook.

### **3.12 Enrollment/Registration**

The Open Arms CCDC admits children of any race, color, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities general accorded or made available to children at the center. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admission policies or other church administered programs.

The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the final source of all that we believe. For purposes of Open Arms' faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, the OSLC pastoral staff is Open Arms' final interpretive authority on the Bible's application.

Open Arms CCDC is open to children from the ages of six-weeks to 12-years. Upon completion of the required enrollment forms, students are admitted to Open Arms where space is available. Enrollment priority is given to currently enrolled students and/or their siblings, OSLC and staff members and returning Open Arms alumni.

Registration will be completed when all of the necessary forms are turned into the office and the registration fee and deposit are paid in full. All paperwork must be completed before your child can begin attending the center. Enrollment is offered on a first-come, first-served basis. Enrollment will continue until the classrooms are filled. We will then begin a waiting list for each classroom.

Registration for the next school year and summer program will take place in June of every year.

It is the parent's responsibility to keep the child's records current with phone numbers, address changes and immunization records. Please come to the Administration Office to make these important changes.

### **3.13 Parent Information/Parent Involvement**

General parent information will be found near the office at the main entrance to the center. We ask that you keep abreast of current events at the center by reading the information provided. A parent bulletin board by each classroom door will also keep you posted on any pertinent information that your children's teachers may have for you. An Open Arms seasonal newsletter is also posted online at [www.openarmslaurel.org](http://www.openarmslaurel.org).

Visits to Open Arms by parents are always welcome. However, we do ask that if you wish to visit in your children's classrooms that you first make arrangements with their teachers. We do this to try to minimize disruption in your children's day, as some children have little concept of time and think that when they see you, it is time to go home. A parent's departure after a short visit can be very unsettling to a small child.

**Communication between staff and parents is always encouraged. Although daily reports are submitted in most classrooms, we urge parents to speak with the teachers in your children's classrooms. Try to keep us informed of any significant events that may happen in your home that may affect your child's behavior. This will allow us to deal sensitively in all situations.**

We recognize that because of your interest in the welfare of your children, you will on occasion, wish to confer with a teacher or the Director. Conferences can be arranged upon request. Parent conferences for children two-years-old or older are regularly scheduled twice per year to discuss your children's adjustment and progress. Any questions which may arise should be discussed openly with your children's teachers. If satisfaction is not reached with your child's teachers, please speak with the Director.

We encourage attendance at special events offered by OACCCDC as a time to gather together and celebrate our children. These events will be publicized in the classroom and at the calendar tab at [www.openarmslaurel.org](http://www.openarmslaurel.org).

In response to the Lord's request to fulfill the Great Commission\* and our congregation's mission to spread the Gospel of Christ, the families of Open Arms CCDC will be welcomed into the fellowship of Our Savior Lutheran Church. Your family is invited to attend all of the activities of the OSLC congregation. Should any situations arise in your family life that could benefit from counseling, our pastors are readily available to provide the counseling or aid you in finding a suitable counselor. (*\*Matthew 28:18-20 – Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*)

### **3.14 Facility Layout/Map**

Open Arms has 12 total classrooms. Classrooms 1A and 1B are Infant Rooms. Classroom 2-11 are for Toddlers, 2's, 3's, 4's and school age children. See Figure 1 for a map of our facility and annex.

## **4 Policies and Operations**

### **4.1 Confidentiality**

Open Arms Christian Child Development Center stresses the importance of protecting the privacy rights of children, their families and the staff members. The practice of maintaining the confidentiality of verbal information and written records is a basic policy of our Center. It is critical that the confidential matters of the children, their parents and those of other Open Arms staff members are not repeated to other parents, teachers, other staff members, friends or family members. The identity of the children and their families should be revealed only in cases of professional necessity such as in child abuse or neglect, developmental records and special family circumstances. Staff members' rights are likewise protected.

### **4.2 Hours**

The Open Arms Christian Child Development Center is open twelve (12) months of the year from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM, Monday through Friday. The Center is closed for the holidays listed in the next section and for a week in August before Prince Georges County School begins. This week is necessary for repairs, painting, teacher training, Staff CPR and First Aid re-certifications and to prepare the classrooms for the new school year.

The Half-Day Preschool program runs from September through June; it starts the Wednesday after Labor Day. The morning Program operates from 8:45 AM to 12:15 PM. The Half-Day Preschool program follows the Prince Georges County public school calendar for major holidays, winter and spring break closings.

### **4.3 Holidays**

The Center will be closed for the observance of the following holidays:

1. New Year's Day
2. Martin Luther King Jr. Day
3. Good Friday

4. Memorial Day
5. 4<sup>th</sup> of July
6. Juneteenth
7. Labor Day
8. Thanksgiving Day
9. Friday after Thanksgiving
10. Christmas Eve, Christmas Day & one additional day

In addition, if a holiday occurs on Saturday, the previous Friday is observed as a holiday. If a holiday occurs on Sunday, the following Monday is observed as a holiday.

#### **4.4 Registration and Activities Fees**

All initial registration, activities and re-enrollment fees are **non-refundable**.

Each child is subject to a registration fee that is due upon initial registration and then an annual re-registration fee, due by June each year. Failure to pay re-registration fees in a timely manner may jeopardize ongoing enrollment at Open Arms. Registration fees for simultaneously enrolled siblings are charged at a reduced rate for additional children. Members of OSLC are responsible for the initial registration fee.

#### **4.5 Wait List**

To add your child's name to our Wait List, please contact the front desk. Our Wait List is on a first-come, first-served basis. Priority is given to siblings of current students, OSLC church members, and Open Arms staff and alumni families. Should an offer of placement be declined, your child may be moved to the bottom of the Wait List. While we can document a desired projected start date, we cannot guarantee or hold a space longer than 30 days from the desired projected start date. Phone/e-mail offers will be made within 30 days of your desired projected start date, contingent on space availability.

In order to fairly offer enrollment opportunities to the entire community, Open Arms does not accept half-day program applications throughout the year.

#### **4.6 Tuition**

Our tuition is based on an annual fee that is divided up into twelve (12) monthly payments that are due on the first of the month. Late fees will be charged if payment is not received by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month. If payment is not received by the end of the month, we will have to disenroll your child. Please see the Tuition Agreement (included in your parent folder) for more information regarding tuition.

Full tuition is due even if your child is not in attendance. In order to maintain proper staff ratios and correct operational costs, Open Arms has based costs on current enrollment. Therefore, no exceptions are made for illness, vacations, holidays or inclement weather.

Checks should be made payable to Open Arms. We also offer a **FREE** electronic funds transfer (EFT) payment plan. We do not accept credit cards for payment. A charge of **\$55.00** will be applied for all returned checks. After a third (3<sup>rd</sup>) returned check, tuition and other payments will be accepted only by cash, certified funds or a money order.

Weekly or monthly tuition payments scheduled via electronic funds tuition will be auto-debited from the account on file. Additional charges (enrollment fees, late fees, etc) are not auto-debited. Authorization to debit these charges must be received via e-mail or written permission. Accounts with EFT authorization for monthly tuition are subject to late fees when additional charges are not authorized.

After two (2) weeks delinquency, the child/children will not be allowed to return to the center. Open Arms may collect any outstanding payments using a third-party collections agency. Accounts with a past-due balance will not be eligible for re-registration for the upcoming school year until the balance is paid.

Tuition rates will be reviewed each year. Open Arms CCDC reserves the right to increase tuition each year. In the event of a tuition increase, notification will be sent out no less than one (1) month in advance.

#### **4.7 Drop Off/Pick Up/Late Pick Up Policy**

In the interest of safety, always walk your children to and from the Center. Never drop your children off at the front door or the administration desk. Please walk your children to their classroom and leave them in the care of a staff person before you leave each day.

Parents are required to sign in upon arrival and sign out upon departure. This is a requirement of the Child Care Licensing Office and lets us know who is in the building at all times. By using your family key fob, you can access the building through the front security door.

For the safety of the children, our staff is instructed not to let any child leave the center with anyone that is not listed on their emergency card. If the staff do not know the person picking up the child, ID will be requested. If someone different is going to be picking up your child, please call the office. The person's name should then be added to the emergency card for future pick-ups.

#### **4.8 Late Pick Up Fees**

Open Arms is open from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM, Monday through Friday, all year, except designated holidays and the week before Prince Georges County School begins in September. Children become anxious when it's time to go home and no one has come for them. It is not only unfair to your child, but also to the teachers as they cannot perform their end-of-class duties. For these reasons, late fees of \$20.00 per every 15 minutes (or portion thereof) per child, will be charged until the child(ren) is picked up. If the child(ren) are not picked up for more than 30 minutes past the center closing time, local authorities may be contacted. Two or more late pick-ups can result in losing your space at the center.

For the half-day program, the late fee is also \$20.00 per every 15 minutes (or portion thereof) per child.

##### **4.8.1 After School-Age (ASAs) Schedule Changes**

Parents of ASAs (After-School Age) children are responsible for notifying the center when your child's schedule changes, including if they are out sick. Bus drivers will wait at your child's school until the school confirms your child's absence (or that they had taken alternate means of

transportation home). Open Arms must be notified (before 10:30 AM for Kindergarteners and before 2:00 PM for 1<sup>st</sup> grade & up) that your child is not to be picked up from school. Again, we ask families to please consider the staff and children on the bus pick-up route.

The Open Arms bus will only run on days when Prince George's County and Anne Arundel County public schools are in session.

#### **4.9 Custody of Children**

At the time of enrollment, you are expected to provide us, in writing, the name of at least three (3) persons to whom we may release your child. If someone other than the parents pick a child up, they must show proper identification. The administration office must have a copy of custody papers in order to keep a non-custodial parent from picking up their child.

#### **4.10 Inclement Weather Policy**

Open Arms follows the inclement weather policy of the Federal Government, and we close if the Federal Government is closed. However, Open Arms Administration reserves the right to close or alter scheduled hours in cases of severe local weather conditions or emergency situations. If it begins to snow during working hours, we will remain open until the last child is picked up. Nevertheless, we encourage parents to pick up their children as soon as possible in snowy weather in order to allow a safe journey home for everyone.

For children enrolled in our Half-Day Preschool program, we follow the Prince George's County School System's closings for snow days.

#### **4.11 Public Health Emergency Closures**

While we certainly hope that it will not be the case, there may be future instances when it will be necessary for the Center to close as the result of a public health emergency, such as the COVID-19 outbreak. This may include, but will not necessarily be limited to, instances when the Center is required to close in compliance with a federal, state or local government order or when the Center is required or advised to close to address a confirmed or suspected outbreak amongst staff or children. Please be advised that, in the event that the Center must close for less than two consecutive weeks (14 days) due to a public health emergency, no refunds will be issued for those periods when the Center is closed.

#### **4.12 Admission Changes**

##### **4.12.1 Moving to a New Classroom**

Older 3-year-olds & 4-year-olds move to their new classroom based on the calendar year of September to August. 6-week-olds – young 3-year-olds move according to their birthdays, unless in a combined classroom.

##### **4.12.2 Withdrawal from the Center**

You are required to notify the Center, in writing, **two (2) weeks prior to your children's last day**. The monthly fee and any other balances on your account must be paid in full during this period. If proper notice is not given, your deposit will not be returned and two (2) weeks of additional tuition may be assessed at the time of withdrawal for students enrolled in the all-day program and the entire month's tuition may be charged for students enrolled in the half-day program.

## **4.13 Daily Program and Routines**

### **4.13.1 Daily Attendance**

We highly value any time your children may be able to spend at home with you or relatives. However, if your children are ill or absent for any reason, please call the Center and let us know.

We strongly recommend your child arrive by 9:00 AM, unless at a doctor's appointment. This will allow us to plan for our day.

### **4.13.2 Toys from Home**

Generally, we discourage children from bringing toys from home, except for a "soft lovely" to be held during rest time, or specific program purposes such as "Show and Share Days." The toys often cause conflict, and we cannot be responsible for their safekeeping. We request that no weapons (play guns, knives, swords, etc.) be sent with your child for we do not consider them toys.

However, bringing a "piece of home" is often important to children. It is possible to work out an arrangement with your child's teacher to have a "special toy" that travels from home to Open Arms. Please be sure to label your child's toys as best as possible and place it in their cubby.

### **4.13.3 Breakfast/Snacks/Lunch**

From 7:00 AM to 8:00 AM, a breakfast will be offered and provided for the children. Parents should let the Center staff know if they need a breakfast that morning. One morning and one afternoon snack are also provided by the Center. Food exceptions are not made for individual children except in the case of allergies or a special written diet prescribed by a physician.

In regards to infant care, we do not provide baby foods, cereals, formulas or bottles. For safety's sake, we cannot accept baby food jars or glass bottles. Transferring food/milk to a BPA-free/plastic container is an acceptable substitute. We request that each family label these items with the infant's name and date and provide a written daily feeding schedule indicating the amounts and times to be fed. Milk, juice and table foods are provided at snack time once your children convert from formula and baby food and with your written permission. Please discuss any specific concerns with your children's teacher.

**Families will provide a nutritious lunch each day for their child.** To ensure children are receiving nutritious, balanced meals and snacks, meals provided from home will be monitored. If necessary, parents will be asked to supplement their child's meals if they are not nutritious and balanced.

Please place refrigerated items in a re-sealable bag or lunch box marked with your child's name on it and place it in the refrigerator in the kitchen marked with your child's classroom number. The children eat lunch and snacks in their classroom with their teachers in order to promote a family environment. Any uneaten lunch food will be sent home with the children.

Children are encouraged to be interested in the food before them and assisted when needed, but no child is forced to eat any food. Special eating problems or marked changes in lunch-time behavior will be reported to the parent at once.

#### **4.13.3.1 Food from Home**

Food exceptions are not made for individual children except in the case of allergies or a special written diet prescribed by a physician. Please send to the center the necessary food your child must have in these cases. Please feel free to discuss any specific concerns with your child's teacher.

If your child requires an alternative to cow's milk, parents will be required to provide this option by supplying the alternative labeled with child's name and date. A current allergy form must be on file.

**Open Arms is a nut-free center**, meaning that any products containing nuts may not be brought to the center, but items made in the vicinity of nuts may, at times, be present at the center.

#### **4.13.4 Birthdays**

Birthday parties may be celebrated at the Center, and we ask that you make arrangements one (1) week in advance with your child's teachers. Parties are held in your children's classroom during their snack time and can be as simple as cupcakes, ice cream or fancy cookies and party napkins and/or plates. Since we are a nut-free facility, please do not bring in peanut products or food from a facility that processes peanuts. Parents are always welcome to join in the fun and picture taking is certainly encouraged.

#### **4.13.5 Transportation / Field Trips**

All of our classrooms enjoy taking walking trips to explore our property and the community. Children are always accompanied by their teachers and the proper staff-to-child ratio will be maintained at all times. We send home permission slips prior to all field trips, off of the Open Arms property, to inform parents where we will be going and when.

Center children who ride on our center bus/van or rented bus/van and are expected to use all of our safety rules, which include using quiet voices, following teacher directions, and remaining in their seats while the vehicle is moving until the vehicle is stopped and parked. We ask that parents talk to their children before all field trips and remind them of our center's bus/van safety rules. If a child is continually disruptive on the bus, which causes a hazard to the safe operation of the vehicle by the driver, that child may not be allowed to participate on future trips.

At times, we may rely on parent carpooling to and from all non-walking field trips.

#### **4.13.6 Discipline**

Children are not expected to immediately understand or fully comply with all of the rules; rather they are to be gently taught, reminded and when necessary, redirected. The staff is responsible for setting up an environment that encourages positive reinforcement, cooperation and sharing rather than negative and aggressive behavior.

There may be times when children may endanger themselves or others by their actions. Due to these actions, specific behavior guidance steps have been set up. Logical consequences will be established for problematic behavior. For example, a child who throws or damages a toy may be prohibited from the use of that toy for the rest of the play period in question. Redirection to another activity or verbal reminders (brief statements of the problem behavior) are used to

explain to children that their behavior is unacceptable and what the acceptable behavior is. At times, children may require a little time to themselves to calm down and redirect their thinking.

Open Arms Christian Child Development Center complies with all federal, state and other local laws that prohibit corporal or abusive punishment in a child care setting. Additionally, staff are expressly prohibited from using unproductive, shaming methods of punishment.

Open Arms Christian Child Development Center believes that parents and teachers must work together to address persistent behavioral issues such as biting, unusual or dangerous aggression or other issues. Parents will be contacted for a conference when a child appears to be unusually stressed, anxious or otherwise motivated to engage in negative behaviors. Children who cannot adjust to the group environment, benefit from the programs offered or endanger the safety and well-being of others, may be dismissed from Open Arms after the Director and teachers have made every effort to work with the children and the parents to eliminate the problematic behaviors.

#### **4.14 Health Procedures**

We promote the health of your children by providing a clean, smoke-free environment, with safe toys that are disinfected regularly and supervised physical activities that are offered daily. Therefore, in order to protect the children in our care, we must enforce the following rules regarding illness and the administering of medications.

##### **4.14.1 Physical and Immunization Records**

A certificate of immunization and current physical record for your child (signed and dated by a physician/physician's assistant or registered nurse) is required upon enrollment and must be kept current. Updates are required at the following ages: 6 months; 12 months; and 18 months; 24 months and once between 4-6 years old. Families who fail to provide required records in accordance with licensing standards may be unenrolled at any time.

##### **4.14.2 Illness**

**Sick children should remain home.** Please do not bring your child to the Center if he/she is showing any signs or symptoms of illness. Some clearly unacceptable signs and symptoms are:

- Temperature of over 100 degrees (within the last 24-hour period) without the use of Tylenol or any other pain reliever
- Unusual spots or rashes on the skin or in the mouth
- Continuous mucus from the nose accompanied by upper respiratory symptoms
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Unusual behavior
- Child is lethargic
- More crying than normal
- General discomfort

Children may attend Open Arms with a slight cold as long as their temperature is less than 100.1 degrees (temperatures are taken under the arm, or in the ear, or infrared on forehead) and none of the above symptoms are present. Children with a fever of 100 degrees or higher are not permitted

to remain at the center. **We cannot allow Tylenol or any other pain reliever to be given to mask a fever if a child is ill.**

Tylenol or any other pain reliever must be accompanied by a detailed doctor's note/prescription before they can be administered.

If children have one diarrhea stool, the Center staff will notify the parents. After a second diarrhea stool, the parents are called to pick up their children. To eliminate the spread of infection, children who are sent home with diarrhea may not return to the center until at least **24 hours** after the last soft stool. Children must be symptom-free or have a doctor's note stating that they are not contagious.

In the case of conjunctivitis ("Pink Eye"), children with redness, swelling or discharge of the eyes will be sent home, as "Pink Eye" is highly contagious. Therefore, children with "Pink Eye" may return to the Center only after prescription eye drops have been administered for a period of **24 hours**.

Exclusion from Open Arms is required when the teachers and the Director feels that children are in a contagious phase of an illness which may require more care and observation than can be offered in the Center, or if the children can no longer be comfortable in the Center. Children who become ill on the premises will be isolated from the other children and their parents will be contacted for early pick-up. Please help us by letting us know how to reach you at all times while your children are at Open Arms. If you are off-site and unreachable, please give us the number of someone we may contact on behalf of your children. Please also consider that if your children do not feel well, it is in their best interest to be picked up as soon as possible.

**If we send your children home, they must remain out of the Center for at least 24 hours.**

This means that children may **not** return to Open Arms the day after being sent home. A parent will be asked to sign a "sick policy" form acknowledging their child's illness and minimum "return to" school date, unless you provide us with a dated doctor's note stating the child is **not** contagious. Children excluded from the Center for health reasons may return to the Center under one of these conditions:

- Children are fever free for at least 24 hours without the use of Tylenol (or the like)
- Children's pediatrician has indicated in writing that they may participate in group care.
- Children have completed one (1) full course in antibiotic treatment (usually one (1) days' worth) and are eligible for return because symptoms are within guidelines.
- Children's symptoms are lessening and they are getting well.
- Children have fully recovered.

If a doctor has seen your child(ren), please bring a note with the doctor's diagnosis and recommended treatment.

Some communicable diseases may be reported to Public Health authorities so that control measures can be used. Parents and staff are asked to notify Open Arms within 24 hours after a child, a person in that child's immediate family and/or staff member, have developed a known or suspected communicable disease or any other illness of any type.

#### **4.14.3 Medication**

**Please do not leave medications in your children's cubby.** All medications must be in the original containers and must be clearly marked with your children's name and dosages to be given. So that you need not remember to take medicine home each evening, it is helpful if you ask your pharmacist to put your prescription medications in two (2) labeled containers so that you have one (1) for the Center and one (1) for your home. All prescription medications are allowed with written authorization from your children's physician **and** a parent or legal guardian. If your child is to receive any medication (prescription or over-the-counter), while at Open Arms, the correct forms must be filled out and accompany the medication. Medication is not provided by Open Arms. All medicine needs to be in the **original container with the child's name clearly written on it** and dosage to be given. All medication must be left at the front desk. Medications will be returned at the expiration date. Expired medication will not be administered or kept at Open Arms.

For an **Epi-Pen**, a **Food Allergy Action Plan** form must be filled out in addition to the **Long-Term** form(s).

A separate form must be completed for each type of medication that is to be administered.

For students who require emergency medication, all medication and accompanying forms must be complete and current. Failure to provide current medication forms will prevent your child from attending Open Arms, until all requirements are met.

For sunscreen, diaper cream, lotion, lip balm and insect repellent, a **Non-Prescription Topical Treatment Consent Form** must be filled out.

#### **4.14.4 Accidents (Incident Report Forms)**

In the event of an accident, appropriate procedures will be followed and parents will be notified. Incident reports are kept on all accidents and copies are available to the parents at the end-of-the-day when you come to pick-up your child. In the event your children need emergency care and we cannot reach the parents, children will be taken to a local hospital or a previously requested emergency facility. Upon enrollment, a "Consent and Emergency Contacts" form must be completed and signed by the parents or legal guardians.

#### **4.14.5 Accident Insurance**

We carry accident insurance to cover any accidental injury to your children that may occur during the hours that your children attend Open Arms. The cost for this insurance is covered in part of your yearly registration fees. This insurance is secondary to any primary health insurance under which your children are already covered. This accident insurance covers accidental injury whether your children are on our premises or away from the Center with a teacher-supervised group or field trip.

#### **4.14.6 Emergency Response**

In the event that Open Arms were to relocate to our temporary evacuation center at Parkview Apartments, 9010 Briarcroft Lane, Laurel, MD, 20708, parents would be contacted by the Open Arms staff via the Center, Parkview phones, or cell phones. All pick-up procedures and policies

would still apply and an authorized adult would need to sign out your child/ren. In order to contact Open Arms during an evacuation, you may call 301-490-9730 (Parkview Apartments).

#### **4.15 Dismissal**

Open Arms reserves the right to dismiss a child or family for problematic behavior at the sole discretion of the Director. In assessing whether to dismiss a child, the Director shall consider the best interest of the Center, staff and other children. Dismissal is a last resort action to situations, such as: the Director and teacher should make a reasonable effort to work with the child and the parents to eliminate the problematic behavior before dismissal is invoked. These problematic behaviors include, but are not limited to families or children that: endanger their safety or others; have an inability to adjust to the group or have an inability to benefit from the programs offered.

### **5 Programs - Your Children's Home Away From Home**

#### **5.1 General**

The Open Arms program of child care and early childhood education includes teaching, storytelling, sharing, music, playing, Jesus-time and chapel in an informal, home-like environment. We believe that hearing Bible stories is an important part of the development of children because of what it teaches about God's love for the world, especially as shown in Jesus Christ. The Open Arms program provides experiences and activities which will meet your children's spiritual, emotional, social, intellectual and physical needs. Your children will be guided to start taking part in small and large group activities. This combination of experiences will broaden your children's aptitude for future schoolwork while allowing free reign for imagination and creativity. Children are attended to at all times by trained and experienced teachers.

Your children will be guided:

- To become aware of and have an interest in the world around them
- To develop a sense of pride in themselves, school, church and nation
- To make a happy transition from home life to school life
- To talk to God through a regular practice of prayer
- To interact comfortably with other children
- To manifest a degree of self-discipline and self-control
- To hear Bible stories and relate them to living now
- To grow in verbal, sensor, motor and conceptual skills
- To observe and use simple health and safety rules, and
- To help, think and act for themselves while growing in common courtesies

The full day program includes breakfast, two (2) snacks and rest time, outdoor play with games, exploration and exercise, indoor child-selected play with developmentally appropriate toys, dress-ups, manipulatives, sand and water play, prayers, songs, Bible stories, music, chapel, story time, Jesus-time, nature study and age-appropriate field trips. Our half-day program includes one snack and the above activities.

## **5.2 Curriculum**

Curriculum in an early childhood classroom is what happens throughout the day that contributes to the growth and development of young children. It is the total of all experiences that occur in a day. It includes Bible stories and worship, music, art, language, science, math and physical development activities. These subject areas are not taught separately, but rather are integrated into the happenings of an entire day.

Faith development is the core of our curriculum at Open Arms CCDC. All planned activities will add to the spiritual life of the young children who are placed in our care. The curriculum will help to integrate experiences that help children understand God's love for all people.

The academic curriculum is a theme-based curriculum. We teach numbers, letters, colors and shapes in a variety of age-appropriate activities. It includes opportunities for growth in all major developmental areas, as well as creating a place where children will feel happy, secure and loved.

## **5.3 Daily Notes**

The teachers are available by appointment to discuss your children's progress. In addition, for children up to 24 months, we will provide you with a daily, written or ProCare App progress report summarizing your children's activities. These reports may include developmental milestones, current themes of study and special events. It is intended, by these reports, to include you in your children's progress and to provide you with information on activities that you may wish to reinforce at home with additional discussions or activities.

## **5.4 Infants and Toddlers**

### **5.4.1 General**

An infant's capacity to learn is present from birth. Infants learn about their world primarily through social contact – the experiences they have with those who care for them beginning at birth. Every infant is an individual with a unique temperament. All infants possess a set of skills and abilities, which change with development. Although the rate, pattern and quality of development vary from child to child, all infants progress through similar stages of development. Our infant and toddler program is based on the predictable sequences of normal infant development in the areas of motor skills, language and communication, cognition and socialization. Reinforcement of these basic stages of development are provided by our teachers, who play with the children, talk with them, make faces with them and respond to them.

Consistency in response makes the children's environment more predictable and comfortable. Varied experiences such as textures, different foods, shapes and sounds, going for strolls outdoors and watching birds and animals, are all offered to help stimulate your children to response to their environment.

For infants and toddlers to 18 months of age, care is at the ratio of one-to-three (1-to-3) children per staff member. Children are never left unattended, even when asleep. Our staff is highly qualified, loving and patient. Because of our high staff to child ratio, a great deal of time is allowed for holding and cuddling the children. We do not allow children to "cry it out", but rather try to comfort them in every way possible. We encourage nursing mothers to continue as

their individual schedules permit. Mothers may bring a day's supply of fresh or frozen breast milk, or may nurse on-site.

Each child has his/her own crib or cot. Crib and cot linens are provided each day. When children are not asleep or eating, they are free to move around the room and to explore and interact with others. The children are held, rocked, talked to, sung to, and as appropriate, taught basic concepts of language.

#### **5.4.2 Individual Infant Schedules**

We will ask you to furnish a daily schedule for your infants with regard to eating, sleeping and other routines. We will adhere to it as much as possible. In addition, you may provide special requests to our staff on a daily basis by making whatever written entries you wish on your children's daily record sheet. We will also make written entries at various times throughout the day. These entries will include detailed information on foods your children have eaten; how long your child slept; their disposition and activity level; noted symptoms of illness or discomfort; special experiences during the day and any extraordinary achievements such as a new word or a first step. The form will be returned to you at the end-of-the-day as a record of your child's activities during the hours when you were separated from him/her. Remember to label all personal items for your children, such as bottles, baby food, pacifiers, diapers, blankets and any spare clothing that will be left at the Center.

#### **5.4.3 Diapering and Toilet Training**

Children are checked at least every two (2) hours throughout the day and changed at the first sign of wetness or soiling. No children are knowingly left in wet or soiled clothing. As a comfort to your child and a courtesy to your child's teacher, please do not drop off your child with a wet or soiled diaper. Parents will provide an ample supply of diapers, baby wipes and seasonal changes of clothing. Extra charges may be assessed if we must supply these items.

The changing table is disinfected after each use and teachers use the state-approved method of changing diapers posted in each room.

We will maintain your practices regarding potty training. When you think you and your children are ready to begin toilet training, we will assist you in accomplishing this skill for them.

#### **5.5 Toddler's/Two's Program**

The toddlers/two's rooms are designed to serve children between the ages of 18 to 24 months. The staff-to-child ratio is one to three (1-to-3). For 2-year-olds, the ratio is one-to-six (1-to-6). This gradual change from smaller groups to slightly larger groups provide a structure in which the children become prepared for the larger groups in the 3 and 4-year-old classes.

Communication and academic skills are developed in the toddler rooms, as well as self-help skills such as table manners, toilet training and dressing themselves. Social skills, such as sharing toys, sitting in chairs, eating with utensils and other fine motor development activities. Positive interactions are stressed throughout the day. The positive atmosphere in the toddler room enhances children's good feelings about themselves and those around them.

## 5.6 Preschool (3-4 years)

As children increase their experience at Open Arms, new considerations are given to their increased attention span, activity level and the need to satisfy their curiosity. A more structured environment is created in the classrooms and the opportunities for exploration are increased. The Preschool program serves children between the ages of three to five (3-to-5) years with a one-to-ten (1-to-10) staff-to-child ratio. Emphasis is placed on cognitive skills and our curriculum includes pre-reading activities, pre-mathematics, science, creative art and music. Planned and student-led activities are used to reinforce the natural learning that is part of every activity in the children's day. We encourage the children to learn by doing and experiencing in a safe and well-supervised environment. We use age-appropriate field trips and other special experiences to extend the children's knowledge of the world around them. Trained professionals present all these activities in a positive, caring atmosphere.

Consistency is given through routine. Variety is promoted through activities to stimulate all areas of development. Social interaction is encouraged; communication and cognitive skills enhanced and emotional and spiritual development are carefully nurtured.

Creativity is promoted in an uninhibited environment. Our close staff to child relationships contributes to the development of positive self-images. All developmental areas are given equal attention. Spiritual values are strongly promoted through exemplary interaction, as well as Bible stories, Jesus-time, prayers before meals and weekly chapel worship. Our main objective is love and individual attention through proper stimulation by the environment.

Programs for older children include early development of pre-reading skills, language development, math, science, art, music and nature studies. The children select activities from a variety of indoor and outdoor play periods every day, weather permitting. The Preschool program at Open Arms is designed to provide children with the security of a "home" room and the flexibility of experiencing various structured activities at learning centers throughout the classrooms.

## 5.7 Before and After School Program

We offer both before and after school care to children in kindergarten through the 6<sup>th</sup> grades. The after-school program will provide your children with nutritional snacks and supervised homework periods. Outdoor activities will be available, weather permitting, as well as both organized and free choice activities such as arts and crafts, music and science and nature studies. There will be no regular TV viewing.

Full day child care will be available for registered children on school holidays, vacation weeks, snow days and during the summer with the exception of holidays when the center is closed. It is very important to **sign up two (2) weeks in advance** for schools out days so we can provide adequate staffing and prepare activities for the number of children attending. There will be **additional charges** for these days.

## 5.8 Half-Day Program

Our half-day preschool program serves potty-trained children who are age 3 or 4 by September 1. Cutoff is for this program is January 1. No new students will be accepted after that. Special circumstances may be made, depending upon history and previous child care.

Emphasis is placed on cognitive skills. Our curriculum includes pre-reading activities, pre-mathematics, science, creative art and music. Planned and student-led activities are used to reinforce the natural learning that is part of every activity in a child's day. We encourage the children to learn by doing and experiencing, in a safe and well-supervised environment. We use age-appropriate field trips and other special experiences to extend the children's knowledge of the world around them. Early childhood trained professionals present all these activities in a positive, caring atmosphere.

Consistency is given through routine. Variety is promoted through activities to stimulate all areas of development. Social interaction is encouraged; communication and cognitive skills enhanced and emotional and spiritual development are carefully nurtured.

Creativity is promoted in an uninhibited environment. Our close staff-to-child relationships contribute to the development of a positive self-image. All developmental areas are given equal attention. Spiritual values are strongly promoted through exemplary interaction, as well as Bible stories, Jesus-time, prayers before meals/snacks and weekly chapel worship. Our main objective is love and individual attention through proper stimulation by the environment.

Our half-day preschool program includes early development of pre-reading skills, language development, math, science, art, music and nature studies. The children select activities from a variety of interest centers throughout the classrooms. Learning activities alternate with indoor and outdoor play periods every day, weather permitting.

## **5.9 Summer Program**

Programs for students entering 1<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade are available during the summer.

## **5.10 Reporting Suspected Child Abuse**

State law requires that child care workers report suspected child abuse directly to Child Protective Services. In keeping with state law, any report made remains confidential. Once a report has been made, the entire matter is out of the hands of the Center, and any further questions should be referred to Child Protective Services.

## **6 Your Child's Personal Items**

### **6.1 Clothing**

Please have your children wear play clothes to school that are comfortable and easy for them to manage as we encourage children to do as much for themselves as possible. This is part of the learning process and helps to build self-esteem. It is important that your children be allowed to get dirty and to get wet. We do have water play times both indoors and out. Therefore, we require that your children have a complete change of seasonally appropriate clothing, (including socks and underwear) at the Center at all times. Any soiled clothing will be bagged and placed in your children's cubby to be taken home that day. A clean change of clothing must be returned the following day. **Each item of clothing should be clearly labeled with your child's names**, including jackets and sweaters. It is recommended that your children have a plastic, canvas or paper bag available at the Center with them all times. The bag will be kept in your children's

cubby and can contain a spare change of clothes as well as a place for personal belongings to be kept during the day to be sure they get back home in the evening.

Only **sneakers** are appropriate for your child's day with us. For playground play and walking safety in our building, closed-in shoes with rubber soles like tennis shoes are the best protection for your child.

Cubby hole dimensions (Height x Width x Depth) are 11.5" x 11" x 15 ¾" or 29 cm x 28 cm x 40 cm.

## 6.2 Other Personal Items

Pillows, blankets and stuffed animals from home are allowed at the Center for rest time only.

**Please label everything with your child's name.** Parents are responsible for ensuring the cleanliness of such items. Pillows, if used, are required to have a pillow cover.

## 6.3 Records

Your child's records are maintained in an accessible manner at Open Arms. These records include the following and must be kept current and accurate:

- Your child's identifying information (name, birth date, etc.)
- Parent(s) name, address, home and business phone numbers
- Name, address and telephone numbers of persons, including the child's physician, to contact in emergencies
- A signed statement by the parent regarding any allergies and other known health problems (medical, mental, emotional, developmental) and any special procedures that should be used in caring for the child
- Parental agreements for obtaining emergency medical care for the child when the parent is not available
- Current physical and immunization records
- IEP (Individual Education Plan)
- Center agreements and releases

Information pertaining to your child will not be disclosed to persons other than the Center staff or other authorized personnel, unless you have granted written permission to do so.

All records must be complete and up-to-date in order for your child to attend Open Arms.

Students with incomplete files will not be permitted to attend until the record is brought up-to-date.

## **7 Last But Not Least**

Our greatest gift is to share the love we have received from Christ with the children in our care. The policies established by Open Arms are for the welfare and safety of each child who attends our facility.

Jesus said, “... Let the little children come to me; do not stop them, for the kingdom of Heaven belongs to them ... Then He put His arms around them, laid His hands on them and gave them His blessing ...”

*Mark 10: 14, 16*

### **Children Learn What They Live**

If a child lives with criticism, he learns to condemn.

If a child lives with hostility, he learns to fight.

If a child lives with ridicule, he learns to be shy.

If a child lives with tolerance, he learns to be patient.

If a child lives with encouragement, he learns confidence.

If a child lives with praise, he learns to appreciate.

If a child lives with fairness, he learns justice.

If a child lives with security, he learns to have faith.

If a child lives with approval, he learns to like himself.

If a child lives with acceptance and friendship,

He learns to find love in the world.

*By Dorothy Law Nolte*

**WELCOME TO OPEN ARMS CHRISTIAN CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER.**

## List of Handouts

1. Tuition Agreement
2. WEE Learn Curriculum
3. Children's File Checklist
4. Late Slip
5. School Year Calendar
6. Photo/Video Release
7. Parental Agreement
8. Simply Giving Authorization Form (Auto Debit Account)
9. Maryland State Department of Education – Office of Child Care – Health Inventory (4 pages)
10. Maryland State Department of Education – Office of Child Care – All About My Child (2 pages + 2-page form (1 page front and back))
11. Wait List Form
12. Infant/Toddler/Preschool Registration Form
13. School Age Program Fall Registration Form
14. Emergency Form
15. Infant Daily Report – Classroom
16. Open Arms My Day Form
17. Text Message Authorization Form

## Classroom Schedule (Older 3's and Younger 4's)

7:00 – 8:30 Classroom Free Play

8:30 – 9:00 Yoga / Exercise / Story Time

9:00 – 9:30 All School Devotions (Outside or Zoom)

9:30 – 10:15 Circle Time (Greeting, Calendar, Weather, Bible Story, & Memory Verse Practice)

10:15 – 10:40 Bathroom, Wash Hands, & Morning Snack

10:40 – 11:50 Story Time & Centers / Small Group (Reading, Writing, Math, Art, Computer, or Motor / Social Skill Development)

11:50 – 12:30 Outdoor Play / Outdoor Learning Extension Activity

12:30 – 12:35 Bathroom & Wash Hands for Lunch

12:35 – 1:00 LUNCH

1:00 – 1:10 Bathroom & Prep for Nap

1:10 – 3:10 Naptime

3:10 – 3:30 Clean-up Cots, Bathroom, Afternoon Snack

3:30 – 4:30 Story & Centers / Small Group (Reading, Writing, Math, Art, Computer, or Motor/Social Skill Development)

4:30 – 4:40 Bathroom & Water Break

4:40 – 5:30 Outdoor Play / Classroom Free Play

5:30 – 5:40 Bathroom & Water

5:45 – 6:00 Story Time / Quiet Activity / Clean-up and Final Dismissal

### Appendix A – Acronym List

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
ASA	After-School Age
BPA	bisphenol A, an industrial chemical that has been used to make certain plastics and resins since the 1960s.
CCDC	Christian Child Development Center
EFT	Electronic Funds Transfer
IEP	Individual Education Plan
OACCDC	Open Arms Christian Child Development Center
OSLC	Our Savior Lutheran Church
RDA	Recommended Daily Allowance
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture