



KALAMAZOO DROP-IN CHILD CARE CENTER

First Congregational Church, U.C.C.

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PARENT HANDBOOK & ORIENTATION

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Kalamazoo Drop-In Child Care Center (KDCCC) is to provide low-income families with preschool-aged children the opportunity for optimal growth and development in a safe and structured environment, primarily through free part-time child care, parent education, and support. Parents are able to place their children in the care of the KDCCC while they search for jobs, seek housing, attend appointments, go to school, or simply need respite time away from their children. KDCCC is a warm, safe, supportive environment for children and their parents. KDCCC is fully licensed by the State of Michigan. The book of Licensing Rules for Child Care Centers and the KDCCC Licensing Notebook is available for parents to view any time during business hours.

HOURS

Monday through Friday, from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

INCOME REQUIREMENTS

Parents are income eligible for the free childcare if they qualify for WIC or Medicaid. Our parenting education program is also available free to parents who qualify to use the Center.

INCLUSION, DIVERSITY, AND ANTI-BIAS POLICY

Policy Statement: KDCCC supports the principles of social justice. All children and families of all abilities and from religious, cultural, and linguistically diverse backgrounds are treated equitably and are valued and included in all aspects of the Center.

Rationale: All children and families have a right to be treated with fairness and equity, have the same opportunities for participation, and are accepted as valued members of the community.

Although KDCCC is housed in a church, we do not provide any religious instruction.

STAFF

KDCCC's professional staff consists of a full-time Executive Director—Kathy McNinch, a part-time Assistant Director—Heidi Albertson, Preschool Teacher—Julie Chase, Assistant Infant/Toddler Teacher—Alma Bernard, and Volunteer Coordinator—Beth Walters. *We also utilize qualified substitute teachers to support our teaching staff. Volunteers help us with the children each day. They are never alone with the children. They do not take them to the bathroom or change diapers.

AGES SERVED

The KDCCC serves infants, toddlers and preschoolers, ages 6 weeks through 5 years old. The Center serves up to 20 children each day—10 infants & toddlers (6 wks to 2 ½ yrs) and 10 preschoolers (2 ½ yrs to 5 yrs).

REGISTRATION

Parents will need to complete a KDCCC Child Information and Enrollment Card prior to their child's first attendance. Parents will also be required to bring their child's complete and up-to-date immunization records, sign a notification of KDCCC's licensing notebook, and show proof of income. At that time our policies will be explained and any questions will be answered.

SCHEDULING

Once registered, parents may call to reserve a space up to two (2) weeks in advance. Children can be placed on our waiting list if we are scheduled full. Messages may be left on our voice mail and we will call back to confirm. Children may attend a maximum of six times per month and no more than three days per week. Parents/Guardians (18 yrs. or older) must sign in each time they come and leave a number where they can be reached. If a space has been reserved and the child/children will not be coming in, the parent is required to call to cancel so other children may use it. Always leave a message on the voicemail if we don't answer the phone. If a parent does not call to cancel their reserved space by 11am of that day, it will count as one of their six days. If a parent repeatedly reserves spaces without calling to cancel, they will be able to use the Center only as space becomes available on a daily basis.

PROCEDURE FOR LATE ARRIVALS AND WAITING LIST

If you will be arriving after 11:30, you will need to call and let us know or we will relinquish your spot to a child on the waiting list if needed. If you are on the waiting list, we will call you by 11:30 if we have any cancellations.

CENTER HOLIDAYS AND CLOSINGS

New Year's Day, Spring Break (same as KPS), Memorial Day, Summer Break (1 week), Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and the day after, Christmas Break (same as KPS). KDCCC also closes a few days during the year for staff training. Parents will be notified in advance of any closings.

SEVERE WEATHER/SCHOOL CLOSING

Our snow day policy will coincide with the Kalamazoo Public Schools (KPS). If KPS closes due to snow/ice, we will also close. Sign up with wwmt.com to get text alerts. (See emergency procedures for additional information).

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

KDCCC uses The Creative Curriculum for Preschoolers and The Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers & Twos as its foundation for helping all our children to prepare for success in school and life. This curriculum combines current research and knowledge about high-quality early childhood programs and articulates the "what" and "why" of infant/toddler and preschool teaching. Our teachers place a high priority on helping children learn basic socialization skills, such as playing nicely with other children, taking turns, following directions, etc. By teaching through play, we also incorporate academic learning, such as literacy, math, and science, to round out your child's educational experience at KDCCC. Each week, the Center focuses on a different theme and the teachers base the activities on that theme. An outline of the activities is located above the daily sign-in sheet in the Infant/Toddler room.

KDCCC DAILY ROUTINE

Our daily schedule has a relaxed and comfortable routine. Each day is flexible to meet the individual needs of the children and times for activities may vary. The day goes as follows:

Infant/Toddler Routine:

11am-11:30am Children arrive and Creative play time (both teacher and child directed)
11:30am-noon Walk around Bronson Park (when weather permits)
noon-12:30pm Lunch
12:30pm-1pm Diapering and Creative play time
1pm-2:30pm Quiet time (Napping or Quiet play) and/or quiet activity for non-sleepers
2:30pm-3pm Snack time and Creative play time
2:45pm-3pm Children depart

Preschool Routine:

11am-noon Children arrive and Creative play time (both teacher & child directed)
Noon-1pm Lunch, Bathroom break, and Creative play time
1:00pm-1:30pm Large motor room
1:30pm-2pm Walk or Playground (when weather permits)
2pm-3pm Large Group time, Snack time and Creative play time
2:45pm-3pm Children depart

TRANSITION PLAN

Children that are between the ages of 6 weeks and 2 ½ years old will be placed in the Infant/Toddler Room. Children that are between the ages of 2 ½ years old and 5 years old will be placed in the Preschool Room. When a toddler turns 2 ½ years old, KDCCC Staff will meet with the parent and discuss transitioning the child to the Preschool Room. If both parties feel the child is ready, he/she will go to the Preschool Room on the next day that the child is scheduled. If ever the child does not feel ready to join the Preschool age group, that child may join in the Infant/Toddler class. If your child is transitioning to another Preschool program or to Kindergarten, please ask a staff member for information about Preschool/Kindergarten readiness and registration.

OUTDOOR PLAY AND FIELD TRIPS

By enrolling your child at KDCCC, you give permission for the staff to take your child outside for walks or playground time. The children will be transported by strollers and/or wagons which are provided by KDCCC. If the children go for a walk, we will only walk around Bronson Park and then return to the Center. If we go to the playground, we will walk to First Care Child Care at the First United Methodist Church, 212 S. Park St. It is a licensed, fenced-in playground. See the Daily Schedule for times during the day when we will be outside. Be sure your child has appropriate outdoor clothing. If there is inclement weather or we do not have enough volunteers, we will not take the children outside. Written permission will be required for any field trips, outside of the daily walks or playground time.

NUTRITION POLICY

Families with **infants** will be required to provide ready-to-feed formula or breast milk in bottles. The bottles will need to be labeled (we provide labels) with the child's name, date and contents of the bottle and the nipples must be covered either with a cap or a plastic baggie (we provide baggies). Bottles will be stored in the refrigerator and heated using a small bottle warmer. Infants under 12 months of age shall only be served formula to drink unless written authorization is provided by the child's licensed health care provider. Baby food must be provided and labeled, just like the bottles.

For **older children** we will provide a nutritious lunch consisting of a main course (examples: soup, grilled cheese sandwiches, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, ramen noodles), vegetables, and fruit. We serve milk and offer 100% juices and water during the day. Daily lunch menus are posted above the daily sign-in sheet. Children with special dietary needs may bring nutritious lunches labeled with the child's name.

For infants and toddlers (6wks up to 2 ½ yrs), a record will be kept of what and when they drank and ate, when they slept, when they had a diaper change, and their general mood for the day. The record will be given to parents at the end of the day.

KDCCC is part of the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program. This program provides reimbursement to KDCCC so that we can provide and purchase healthy meals and snacks for your children. Ask about signing up!



Lunch time is FUN time!!



Volunteers are having fun helping one of our babies learn to walk.

MEDICAL POLICY

In order to prevent the spread of infection, we ask that you keep your child home (this includes staff) if he/she displays any of the following symptoms:

1. Elevated body temperature **
2. Vomiting
3. Complaints of pain
4. Diarrhea
5. Frequent coughing, sneezing or congestion
6. Prolonged coughing, producing phlegm
7. Audible breath sounds, wheezing
8. Sore throat
9. Any draining sore or infection
10. Any type of rash
11. Communicable disease
12. Earache
13. Red, puffy or draining eyes
14. Swelling on any part of the body
15. Toothache
16. Head or body lice (all nits need to be removed)
17. Child complains of being tired or looks fatigued
18. Runny nose, if not allergy related

**A child with a temperature of 100 degrees or higher will be sent home. Child must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to the Center.

Please notify the Center if your child contracts a communicable disease. Check with your doctor to determine when it is safe to allow your child to return to the center after an infectious disease. We may require a doctor's slip. We reserve the right to refuse admission to any child who appears to be ill. We will call you to pick up your child if he/she becomes sick during the day. If a child becomes too sick to remain in the group, they will be placed in a separate area and cared for until the parent arrives. Center staff cannot dispense any medications.

In the event of a medical emergency at the Center, the following procedure will be followed:

1. First aid will be given to stop bleeding, restore breathing, etc. A staff person will make an accident report.
2. Parent will be informed by a staff person of any minor injuries or incidents at pick-up time. If the injury or incident is more serious or if first aid attempts are not working, the parent will be notified immediately by phone. If the parent is unavailable, the emergency contact person listed on the family enrollment card will be contacted.
3. If necessary, emergency treatment will be secured at the hospital.

If your child needs over-the-counter diaper cream or sunscreen, please inform a staff member so you can fill out a special permission form.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

The KDCCC staff will relate to children in a positive, nurturing and supportive manner. Our guidance methods will ensure a sense of safety, competence, and respect for self and others.

1. We will not use any form of physical punishment and child will not be confined in an enclosed area.
2. Any form of verbal abuse will not be acceptable: a harsh tone of voice, humiliation, shaming, ridicule, sarcasm, threats, name-calling or insults.
3. A child will not be deprived of food, rest, or necessary toilet use.
4. Positive language and guidance methods will re-direct inappropriate behavior.
5. We encourage constructive play. Destructive or aggressive behavior will be channeled into constructive play through positive suggestions.
6. We will encourage children to identify and verbalize feelings.
7. We will offer choices (as much as possible).
8. Children will be encouraged to choose and complete activities. Children will not be excluded from outdoor play, gross motor activities, or other daily learning experiences. We will strive to ensure success. Clean up will be a part of our daily routine.
9. If unacceptable behavior continues, a child may be removed from on-going activities and given a chance to "cool down" with staff supervision. If the behavior of a child is interfering with the learning process of the program, a conference with the parents may be requested.
10. **Withdrawal or temporary dismissal** from the KDCCC program may be considered if a child continues to exhibit disruptive or inappropriate behavior that interferes with the safety, quality, or process of the program.

MANDATED REPORTING

KDCCC staff is mandated by the State of MI Child Protection Law to report suspected child abuse or neglect.

KDCCC
"A safe place for children"

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Severe weather and impending danger information.

Because all of us are deeply concerned about the safety of our children when disaster threatens, it is important to plan in advance for protection and survival in emergencies (tornados, etc.) In the event of such emergency, the plan outlined below will be followed.

Tornado or other natural disaster procedure.

1. When the U.S. Weather bureau issues a “tornado watch” covering a time when the Center is normally open, all children should be picked up and taken home.
2. If a tornado appears without warning or when the U.S. Weather bureau issues a “tornado warning,” children will remain in the church building and will take cover in the emergency shelter area in the basement of the church under the supervision of the staff.
3. If a tornado watch or warning occurs in the morning before we open, KDCCC will close for the day. Families will be notified, if that were to occur.

Severe winter weather:

Center closings due to weather will coincide with the Kalamazoo Public School closings.

Fire or other emergency evacuations:

If the event of a fire or any other emergency evacuations (such as bomb threats, gas leaks, dangerous intruder, etc), the children will be evacuated safely next door to the First Baptist Church at 315 W. Michigan Ave. Parents or emergency contacts will be notified after the children are safely relocated.

PICKING UP CHILDREN:

Children must be picked up by 3 p.m. Please call us if you will be late. Parents need to plan ahead to connect with bus schedules etc. so they can return on time. If a parent is repeatedly late, they will be restricted from using the Center.

Center staff will not release a child to anyone other than the parent/guardian listed on the KDCCC Child Information and Enrollment Card. If the parent/guardian informs us in advance that someone else will be picking their child up, we will need to have their name. The person picking up the child must be at least 18 years old and show us a picture ID, if we do not already know who they are, before they may take the child home.

If, upon arrival to pick up a child, an adult appears intoxicated, we will call another adult on the Family Enrollment Card to come and get the child. If no other person is available, we will offer to call a cab. If the adult refuses and insists on taking the child, the police will be called as the adult exits the Center.

WHAT TO BRING

Parents are responsible to bring diapers or pull-ups, a change of clothes, baby food/bottles, and appropriate clothing for walks outside. Children must wear either shoes, socks, or both on their feet. Please bring extra socks if your child wears sandals.

REMINDER ALERTS

As a courtesy, KDCCC sends out reminder alerts to parents for days that you are scheduled. Parents can sign up to receive text or email reminders. If you schedule your child(ren) for a day, but do not receive a reminder, please note that you are still responsible for attending or cancelling for that day. Remember that “no-shows” count as one of your 6 days. Make sure that your phone number and/or email address are up-to-date with the Director/Assistant Director.



OTHER SERVICES KDCCC OFFERS

Parents As Volunteers—Parents are invited to “give back” to KDCCC by serving as volunteers. Parents receive valuable work experience, exposure to positive role modeling and appropriate adult/child interactions, and a chance to develop a new bond with their child(ren). If you are interested in volunteering, please see Beth.

Parent Education Classes—Throughout the year, KDCCC partners with other organizations to host free parent education classes for our families. The classes are held here on-site and free child care is always provided. Watch in the monthly parent newsletters for more information.

Community Resource Referral—Parents are given referrals for themselves and their children to appropriate community services for early interventions. See our Parent Resource Table for information about a variety of programs and opportunities for your family.

Stay Informed—Stay informed about what’s happening at KDCCC through our monthly parent newsletters, *Parent Pages*. Info about closings, toy recalls, Center events, etc. will also be posted near the Sign-In table.

*If you ever have any questions or concerns, we invite you to talk with one of the KDCCC staff. Our goal is to provide a safe, educational, and fun experience for you and your child(ren).

WAYS TO BE INVOLVED AT KDCCC

Besides volunteering your time at the Center, there are many ways that you can be involved with your child’s education and care at KDCCC, such as:

- *Donating an item off of our Wish List. Even if it’s one box of crackers, every little bit helps!
- *Donating money. KDCCC is free for our families, but it is not free to operate. Every dollar helps our Center provide quality care for your family.
- *Share your talents with the kids. Do you sing, play an instrument, like to read books, make art, dance, or anything else that you’d like to teach children about? Talk to our teachers and we’d love to have you join our classroom.

“Fun and learning at KDCCC!”

