



Parent Handbook

Early Education
2016-2017

Our Mission: Equipping minds and nurturing hearts to impact the world for Christ.

Early Education Staff Information

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Early Education
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Hours of Operation

7 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Welcome to Des Moines Christian Early Education! This handbook is designed to inform you of our policies. Please read through it and keep it for future reference. If you have any questions, please contact the Early Education Director.

MISSION AND CORE VALUES

Our Mission Statement – Equipping minds and nurturing hearts to impact the world for Christ.

Our Core Values –

- Modeling Christ-like behavior
- Integrating Biblical truths in all learning
- Partnering with Christian parents
- Striving for excellence
- Serving others

PHILOSOPHY

Thank you for choosing Des Moines Christian School as your partner for your child's education. Christian values are at the foundation of everything we do. We strive to educate the whole child academically, socially, emotionally, physically and spiritually.

Our teachers are committed, supportive educators who continually search for ways to actively engage students in the learning process. Each child is uniquely created by God and our teachers strive to tailor instruction to meet the varied learning styles of individual students.

PROGRAM DETAILS

CURRICULUM

We use The Creative Curriculum®, which is a well-regarded, research-based early childhood curriculum. They have developed goals and objectives to assist us in identifying areas to focus on in considering the developmental process during the preschool years. These are not rigid expectations but are guidelines on a loose continuum as a child moves through our program and prepares for Kindergarten.

By using The Creative Curriculum® as well as studying topics of interest to young children, preschoolers here learn to interact positively with others and become independent, self-confident learners. Our programs not only promote kindergarten readiness but enable children to become enthusiastic learners for life.

Through the activities we plan, the way we organize the learning environment and interact with the children, we seek to accomplish the goals of our curriculum and give your child a well-rounded, successful start to school.

We do this by creating purposeful and productive play experiences to develop the whole child focusing on the following areas:

- **Spiritual Development** – through a comprehensive Bible curriculum including stories, worship and sensory experiences that encourage children to discover God's world.
- **Social/Emotional Development** – through large group, small group and individual activities that foster Christ-like behavior towards others.
- **Physical Development** – including small and large motor skills.
- **Cognitive Development** – helping children acquire learning skills such as the ability to solve problems, ask questions, and use words to describe their ideas, observations, and feelings.
- **Language Development** – engaging in developmentally appropriate activities such as letter recognition and phonetic awareness in a literacy rich environment.

In Genesis 1:26, scripture indicates that children are created in God's image capable to communicate, reflect and be creative.

ASSESSMENT

Des Moines Christian Early Education uses Teaching Strategies GOLD as an ongoing assessment tool. Teaching Strategies GOLD is a comprehensive assessment tool that is based on the latest research, proven valid and reliable, and is fully aligned with the Iowa Early Learning Standards. Teachers use the assessment tool to determine and plan instruction for each individual child. (www.teachingstrategies.com)

ADMISSIONS

In addition to the DMCS Admissions Guidelines, which can be found on the DMCS website, Early Education has the following admissions requirements:

- A child's class placement is determined by their age at the beginning of the school year.
- To participate in our three-year-old classes and older, your child must be toilet trained.
- The entire enrollment packet must be completed and the registration fee paid prior to admission.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Des Moines Christian Early Education full-time preschool is in operation five days per week, exclusive of holidays*, from 7 a.m. until 6 p.m.

LATE PICK UP FEE

To be respectful of our staffs' schedules, please make every effort to pick your child up on time. If you arrive after our closing time to pick-up your child, a \$25 late fee may be assessed. We will notify you of this fee and it will be billed to your account. If there are more than three occurrences of late pick-up, DMCS reserves the right to terminate the contract.

HOLIDAYS & VACATIONS

Families receive one week of vacation that can be used any time during the school year August 23, 2016 - May 26, 2016. Vacation time is to be used as a full week, not five individual days.

We observe the following Holidays and the center will be closed.

| | |
|----------------|---------------------------|
| New Year's Day | Thanksgiving Day |
| Good Friday | Friday after Thanksgiving |
| Memorial Day | Christmas Eve |
| Fourth of July | Christmas |
| Labor Day | |

Families will be billed a full week of tuition for these weeks. If the holiday falls on Saturday, we will be closed in observance on Friday. If the holiday falls on Sunday, we will be closed in observance on Monday.

SCHOOL EARLY DISMISSAL, LATE START OR CANCELLATION

In the event that an early dismissal, late start or school cancellation is necessary due to inclement weather, announcements will be made on the following news stations as well as the school's website, Facebook and Twitter pages. If Early Education's hours are different than K-12, it will be specified within the announcement.

Parents are asked to follow one or more of these information sources should the weather deteriorate during the day.

| | | |
|---|---|------------------|
| KCCI TV Channel 8 | WHOTV Channel 13 | WOI TV Channel 5 |
| WHO Radio 1040 AM | https://schoolalerts.iowa.gov | |
| www.dmcs.org | twitter.com/dmcs_updates | |
| facebook.com/DesMoinesChristianSchool | | |

TUITION

- Tuition is payable monthly by check, cash or ACH for half day programs.
- Tuition is payable weekly by check, cash or ACH for preschool plus extended care programs.
- Registration fees for all Early Education programs are due annually.
- Your billing and payment information can be viewed on the DMCS website through "Netclassroom." A login ID and password will be provided to you when you register.

Please contact Cindy Vanderlinden at 252-2840 or cvanderlinden@dmcs.org with any tuition related questions.

WITHDRAWAL/TERMINATION OF CONTRACT

If you are moving or, for some other reason, need to withdraw your child from our program we require either two weeks' notice or two week's tuition. Please give your notice to the Assistant.

Reasons for DMCS to terminate a family's contract include but are not limited to failure to pay tuition; required forms are not submitted after a reasonable length of time, as determined by the Director. If we feel your child's needs are not being met by our program, we may ask to discuss other programming options for your child. We work with each child as an individual and this is only done when we've had a parent conference and all options and services available have been discussed.

FIELD TRIPS AND TRANSPORTATION

Children in the Early Education program will take occasional field trips. If you choose for your child to not attend the field trip, you must find alternative care for your child during the field trip time. Emergency numbers are taken when the class leaves on a field trip. All children involved in school authorized activities ride the DMCS bus driven by drivers who are state certified or the children walk. The children do not ride in teacher or parent driven vehicles.

REST TIME

Each child in an all-day program may bring a blanket, pillow or a soft small object every Monday to use during rest time. Please take rest time items home each Friday to launder. DMCS provides the cot sheets and launders them weekly.

OUTDOOR GUIDELINES

We love our time outdoors and play outside whenever the weather permits. We follow the guidelines given by Iowa Department of Public Health for wind-chill factor and the heat index.

CUBBY SUPPLIES

Change of Clothes: We would like each student to have a complete change of clothing that can be left at the school in case of an emergency. Please label each piece. If clothing is sent home, please replace the clothing items the next day the child attends.

STAFF REQUIREMENTS

Each staff member maintains a current first aid, CPR, universal precautions, and mandatory child abuse reporting certificate. Four to ten hours of training in the areas of child development, guidance and discipline, developmentally appropriate practices, nutrition, health and safety, communication skills, professionalism and business practice.

FOOD ALLERGIES

Des Moines Christian Early Education is a nut safe zone.

SNACK

State law requires that children receive a nutritious mid-morning and mid-day snack. We have carefully selected items for our snack list that align closely with the Iowa Child Care Food Program Standards. Snack menus are posted in your child's classroom.

Part of the preschool experience includes the opportunity to bring a snack to share with your friends. During your child's designated preschool days there will be a snack rotation so each child gets an opportunity to bring snack to share. Your teacher will provide a schedule and send home a snack bag the day before. Please bring the snack bag along with a nutritious snack to school on the day you are assigned. We are a nut safe zone, but your teacher will let you know if there are other allergies to be aware of in the classroom. Listed below are some great options, but it's not intended to be all inclusive. We ask that you check the labels to make sure the item is nut-free.

Fruits and Vegetables

- Apples
- Bananas
- Baby Carrots
- Watermelon
- Cucumber
- Bell Peppers

- Grapes
- Strawberries
- Peaches
- Plums
- Blueberries
- Raspberries
- Cherries

Snack Crackers and Other Options

- Wheat Things
- Triscuits
- Cereals – Such as Shredded Wheat, Cheerios, Apple Jacks, Fruit Loops, Kix. There are several cereal options, just be sure to check the labels
- Gogo Squeeze Applesauce
- Sun Maid Raisins – Not the yogurt or chocolate covered ones
- Nutra-Grain Cereal Bars
- Pepperidge Farms Goldfish
- Delmonte Fruit Cups
- Kraft String Cheese
- Kraft Cheese Cubes
- Yogurt – Yoplait, Trix or Danimals. Avoid the yogurts with granola or candy toppings
- Fruit Snacks – Betty Crocker, Target, Annie's Organic.
- Cheese Nips
- Teddy Grahams
- Nilla Wafers
- Honey Maid Graham Crackers
- Premium Saltines
- Cheez-its
- Wheatables
- Popcorn – Pop Secret, Act 11, Jolly Time, Orville Redenbacher
- Jell-O Pudding Cups and Gelatin
- Hunts Pudding
- Kraft Handi Snacks Pudding Cups
- Rold Gold Pretzels – Thins, Sticks, Rods, Tiny Twists, Lightly Salted Tiny Twists, Tiny Twists Cheddar, Tiny Twists Honey Mustard, Sourdough, Honey Wheat, Cheesy Garlic

Special Occasion/ Birthday Treats

- Skeeter Snacks – <http://www.skeeternutfree.com/>
- Nabisco Oreos – Original in blue packaging
- Nabisco Oreos Golden – Yellow Packaging
- Loora Doones Cookies
- You may bring cupcakes or cookies but they need to be nut-free and store bought

LUNCH

Lunches are catered by Hy-Vee for students enrolled in child care. The lunch menus are posted in all classrooms and emailed in the monthly Early Education newsletter. Having a good healthy lunch promotes learning so, if for some reason your child needs a special accommodation please discuss with your teacher.

PARENT/SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

COMMUNICATION

Des Moines Christian School Early Education is an extension of the home.

"[Parents] . . . bring up your children in the training and instruction of the Lord." (Eph. 6:4)

- You may call the preschool office at any time and leave a message for a teacher. Unless it is an emergency, teachers do not take calls during a session. Messages are checked regularly and we make every effort to return calls and emails as quickly as possible.
- Please check your child's bag/cubby every day. You may leave notes for us with the staff in your child's room.
- Your child's leader will provide a class newsletter that will come home regularly with information about our days at preschool, snack assignments and upcoming events. Your Administration team also writes a monthly program-wide newsletter that is distributed via email.
- Conferences will be held twice a year during the school year to discuss developmental checklists and ongoing assessment data. (Classes 3 year olds - 5 years olds)
- Please let us know if you have any changes in email, phone, address, doctor, or a family situation is changing.
- If your child will be absent for any reason please call the office and let us know. If it is due to illness please let us know the type of illness. We are required to notify the other families if it is communicable. We will not mention your child's name in the notification.
- If you have a question or concern at any time please let your teachers, the Department Manager or the Director know.

OPEN DOOR POLICY

Parents are allowed unlimited access to their children unless parental contact is prohibited by court order.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Please walk your child into the building and help them wash their hands. Once in the room please sign the child in and help them put away their belongings.

When a child enters preschool for the first time they may show fear, crying or cling to the parent. Because tearful departures are as traumatic for the parent as for the child, it is important for you to know this reaction is common and may occur the first few days or even weeks. It is important to establish a positive attitude toward learning, school, and social growth during the early years of a child's life. Much harm can be done to slow positive attitude and growth if the departure process is prolonged or delayed. We strongly encourage parents to keep the departure time as brief as possible. Say goodbye and give a hug once, tell your child when you will return, then leave calmly and quickly. It is important you do not show the child any stress you may feel concerning the separation. Our staff will hold and console the child and quickly divert their attention toward class activities. Usually a child will calm down and become involved in activities within minutes.

When picking up your child please notify the teacher and sign them out on the attendance sheet. If a child is being picked up by someone other than the legal guardians, this person must be listed on the pick-up permission form on the child's file. They will be asked to verify their identity with a driver's license until we get to know them.

Our parking lot is very busy with all kinds of student activities. For safety, please keep your student with you at all times and drive very carefully in the parking lot. Please do not leave children unattended in your car at any time.

HEALTH & SAFETY

HEALTH POLICIES

These health policies are a collaborative effort with: Administration for Children, Youth and Families, American Academy of Pediatrics, Division of Maternal and Child Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Georgetown University Child Development Center, Massachusetts Department of Public Health, NAEYC.

In order to keep our children and staff as healthy as possible, we ask that you do not bring your child if he/she has any of the following symptoms:

- a temperature over 100.4 degrees or more
- vomiting
- diarrhea
- pink eye
- your child is too ill to fully participate in activities, he or she is too ill to attend school.

If your child develops one of these symptoms, you will be contacted to take your child home. For illnesses requiring medications, your child must be on the medication for 24 hours before returning. Children must be fever free for 24 hours (without fever reducing medication) before returning. Your cooperation will assist us in lessening the amount of illness at DMCS.

We will assist with lessening illness at DMCS by:

- Calling parents to send sick children home
- Observing proper hand washing procedures to prevent spread of germs
- Observing proper surface sanitation procedures around mealtimes and diapering
- Ensuring staff members who are ill stay home
- Posting exposure notices for parents when we are notified of communicable illness in the Center
- Observing universal precaution procedures when handling bodily fluids

Please refer to Appendix A for a detailed listing of common illnesses.

MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION

In accordance with Iowa laws all medication brought to DMCS-EE must bear a current prescription label. No medication will be given to a child without a signed medication permission form from guardian(s). We keep record of all medication administration. The teacher administering the medication signs the date, time, and initials verifying the dose given. All medicine is kept in a locked box out of reach of the children.

SUNSCREEN

All children will have sunscreen applied for outdoor play. Parents please fill out a form stating the center can apply sunscreen filled out with your preference of sunscreen. If you would like your child to use a specific kind of sunscreen please provide it labeled with your child's name.

ACCIDENT REPORT

Every precaution is taken to ensure the safety of the children in our care; children are supervised at all times within the facility and on the playground. First-aid kits are available at all times. Scrapes, bumps and bruises do occur however from time to time. When a child suffers a minor injury first-aid will be administered and the staff who witnesses the accident will fill out a report. A copy of the report will be provided to you.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

In the event of a medical emergency or of an accident we will contact the parents and the doctor of the child. If it is impossible to reach either and should emergency treatment be required, the child will be taken to the hospital designated on the Health Form you completed as part of enrollment.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

One of the primary purposes for the Des Moines Christian Early Education and School Age Program is to continually facilitate the protection and development of a healthy self-esteem in each child. Strategic to this development is the administration of appropriate discipline measures which are articulated in this statement.

I. Discipline Purpose

A. Character Development

1. Discipline, when administered properly, will encourage and enhance daily growth in each child's spiritual, mental, emotional, social and physical life.

B. Classroom Environment

2. Use of discipline helps to ensure an orderly environment which promotes security and safety for each child and is conducive to learning.

II. Discipline Procedure

A. General Principles

1. Each teacher will be primarily responsible for administering discipline.
2. Each teacher will seek to identify and reinforce positive behavior demonstrated by each child whenever possible.
 - a. Verbal acknowledgement and praise.
 - b. Granting special privileges.
 - c. Positive touch.
 - d. Rewards such as stickers and candy are not desired techniques.
3. Each staff person will seek to maintain a calm and controlled posture while interacting with an individual or a group of children.
4. Each staff person will treat each child with dignity and respect.

B. Specific Practices

1. Each teacher will allow a period of orientation (i.e., usually one month) for each new child to become acquainted with the classroom schedule and behavioral guidelines.
2. Each teacher will attempt to redirect minor inappropriate child behavior and response (i.e., the taking of another child's toy).

3. If redirection attempts of minor offenses prove unsuccessful, or if the child's inappropriate behavior or response is considered major (i.e., hitting another person), then the teacher will establish a cool-down area. The child is separated from the class activity. The formula for length of time away is one minute for each year of the child's age.
4. Upon a successful completion of the separation activity, the teacher will initiate a re-entry conversation with the child.
 - a. "What is wrong?"
 - b. "What should be done?"
 - c. The rationale is that children need patterns and models without lecturing and demoralizing. They need practice, practice and more practice so the appropriate behavior becomes a natural response.
5. Upon a child's unsuccessful completion of re-entry to the classroom activity, the teacher may take a child to visit the director. The director visits with the child and talks about the desired behavior necessary to be successful in the classroom. Then the director takes the hand of the child, together they re-enter the classroom and ease the child back into the classroom activity.
6. The teacher/director will contact and inform the guardian(s) of repeated inappropriate classroom behavior.
7. If behavior is repeated without improvement, a parent conference may be initiated to develop a behavior plan that is supported by the intervention team made up of teachers, parents and director.
8. Some additional resources available are the Elementary Guidance personnel for Des Moines Christian School, the Area Education Agency in Johnston, and Child Guidance.
9. Should it be determined DMCS Early Education is unable to accommodate the child and redirect their behavior, termination may take place.

Discipline is a lifetime process. The responsibility of the teacher is to model appropriate behavior because we are told in Luke 6:40, "a student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher." In II Corinthians 3:3 we are told that, "teachers are a letter from Christ, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on the tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts."

BITING POLICY

Biting is a common behavior among children birth to three years of age. Children bite for many different reasons. It is important to think positively of children who bite. If we label children as "biters," we will harm children's self-perceptions and intensify biting behaviors (Zero to Three, 2010).

When a biting incident occurs, the child who was bitten should be immediately cared for and shown concern and support. The child with the challenging behavior should be taught in a caring and firm way the behavior is not acceptable and express acceptable alternative behaviors. The center should examine the child's needs, including potential changes to the

environment and routines, to prevent future incidents. If a child is provided developmentally appropriate and individualized care in a purposefully planned environment, discharging a child is needed only in rare, extreme situations.

- An incident report will be written for the biter.
- An accident report will be written for the bitten. The biter's name will not appear on the accident report.
- Bites will be washed and ice can be applied.

Please refer to Appendix B for detailed information about biting in young children.

SECURITY

Because the safety of our students is of paramount concern to us, we have installed security door locking mechanisms on all doors leading into the Early Education Department. Below is information you need to know about our safety guidelines.

- Every family will be issued two fobs (a digital device, usually carried on a key chain, used to unlock determined doors) assigned to the parents.
- The fob is specific to only open certain doors.
- If a fob is lost or stolen, it will be deactivated and a replacement fob will be issued for \$25.
- If a fob is broken, please return whatever pieces you have to the Early Education office and it will be replaced.
- Additional fobs can be purchased for \$25 each.
- The fob will only unlock the door during normal business hours, Monday through Friday.
- Please do not prop open a door or let someone follow you if you do not know them.
- When your child is no longer enrolled in the Early Education department, the fob must be returned to the office. If it is not returned your account will be charged \$25 per fob issued to your family.

Anyone who has had a sex offense against a minor shall not be allowed on DMCS property except for the time reasonably needed to transport the offender's own child to and from DMCS. They will not operate, manage, or be employed by DMCS.

EMERGENCY PLAN POLICIES

Fire and tornado drills are practiced monthly. If there is an emergency that does not permit the staff and children to re-enter the center, families will be notified by telephone or radio/television broadcast.

Appendix A - Common Illnesses

VOMITING

(This should not be confused with spitting up due to sinus drainage.) Children will be dismissed immediately from the center and will need to be picked up. They may return 24 hours after the last vomiting episode.

DIARRHEA

When a child has loose stools and is not able to get to the bathroom in time, you will be asked to pick your child up and he/she must be diarrhea free for 24 hours before returning.

FEVER

Children will be sent home when their oral temperature is 100.4 degrees. Children must be fever free for 24 hours (without fever reducing medication) before returning.

STREP THROAT

Children may return to school 24 hours after beginning antibiotic treatment.

PINK EYE

In the case of suspected pink eye, you will be asked to pick up your child and he/she may return to the center 24 hours after medication has been applied to the affected eye.

CHICKEN POX

The child may return to the center after all lesions have scabbed over. This takes approximately seven days from the onset of the first lesion

HAND, FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE

Children are exposed and contagious before they break out, so there is no need to be removed from the center. Symptoms may last 7-10 days. However, if blisters on hands are weeping, and if blisters are found in the mouth, your child will be sent home.

IMPETIGO

This rash is round oozy, and red. It may be flat, honey-crust and itchy. Child will be sent home and may return 24 hours after being on medication.

LICE

Parents will be notified when their child has lice. The child may return after being treated with medicated shampoo. Depending on the shampoo used, treatment may be one or two washings at the onset. Treatment must be repeated in 7 days.

Appendix B - Biting

Young children bite if they:

- Are not provided developmentally appropriate care and guidance
- Do not have a strong attachment with a consistent, responsive caregiver
- Have too many transitions throughout the day
- Are cared for in large groups
- Are in large, open/undefined spaces
- Lack the language skills necessary for expressing needs or strong feelings
- Are overwhelmed by the sounds, light and/or activity level in the room
- Need more active playtime, choices, and access to materials
- Are over-tired
- Are teething
- Have a need for oral stimulation (Zero to Three, 2010)

A responsive caregiver can begin to anticipate when a bit might occur. The caregiver may be able to act immediately and prevent the biting behavior (e.g., distraction, redirection, close physical presence of caregiver).

If a biting incident does occur, appropriate caregiver responses should include the following:

- Caregivers should keep their feelings in check and not express frustration or anger to the child.
- Ensure all children are safe.
- Caregiver should (in a firm, calm voice) address the child that bit in a short, simple, and clear way.
- Caregiver should shift their attention to the child who was bitten and show concern and support for that child.
- Go back and talk with the child about the different strategies s/he can use next time, instead of biting.
- Help the child move on (Zero-Three, 2010).