



Family Handbook



Kisha Torres, Center Director
Reverend Kevin Elseroad, Christ the Shepherd Church



4655 Webb Bridge Road 4655 Webb Bridge Road Alpharetta, Georgia 30005
770.475.6570 770.475.6570 openarms@cts.org

OpenArmsPreschool.org

Table of Contents

GOALS AND ORGANIZATION	2
Who We Are	2
Philosophy	2
Mission Statement	3
Ownership and Governance	3
Home Away from Home	3
IN THE CLASSROOM	4
What We Do	4
Transitions	5
Group Size	5
Guidelines	6
Infants, Toddlers and Two's	6
Preschool (Ages 3 and 4)	8
Private Pre-Kindergarten (Ages 4 and 5)	9
State Funded GA Pre-Kindergarten (Ages 4 and 5)	9
After School Care	9
Drop in Care	9
Parent Information and Involvement	10
OPERATIONS	10
Hours of Operation	10
Admission Policy	11
Tuition and Fees	11
Class Schedule	13
Throughout the Day	13
Meals	13
Teaching and Learning	15
Discipline	15
Progress Reports	15
Biting Policy	16
Health Procedures	17
Illness	17
Medication	18
Accidents	19
Fire, Tornado, Lock-Down Drills	19
Personal Items	19
Student Records	20
Reporting Suspected Child Abuse	20
Grievance Procedures	20
FINAL RANDOM THOUGHTS	21

I. GOALS AND ORGANIZATION

A. WHO WE ARE

Lutheran education has 125 years of rich heritage in the United States. The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod has over 1700 educational units in operation in all 50 states, including childcare and early childhood education centers, elementary, high schools, and colleges. Open Arms Lutheran Child Development Center (LCDC) opened its doors in 1990 and is a ministry partner with Christ the Shepherd Lutheran Church. This means that the Church and Center support each other to provide opportunity for the families in the Alpharetta and surrounding communities to know Jesus Christ and worship and fellowship in Christian faith.

Open Arms Lutheran Child Development Center is located at 4655 Webb Bridge Road in Alpharetta, Georgia. A Christian atmosphere permeates the school. Prayer is spoken before snacks and lunch, religious holidays are celebrated, Bible stories and songs are shared, and there is weekly chapel for all children. The school is operated as a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation, and is licensed by the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, for children of any race, color or creed aged six weeks to 12 years.

B. PHILOSOPHY

It is our Philosophy to...

- Value each child as a unique and special child of God because Jesus Christ died and rose for all children,
- Nurture individuality and diversity,
- Instill respect in each child for themselves, others and the world around them,
- Promote life-long learning, creativity and Christian values.

Scripture reference

Proverbs 22:6	Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not turn from it.
Matthew 18:5	And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me.
Ephesians 5:21	Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

C. MISSION STATEMENT

Open Arms LCDC will provide tender, loving care to young children while reaching out to them and their families in various ways with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

We will seek to carry out Christ's mission to "let the little children come to me" (Mark 10:14) by encouraging faith development in children and their families by incorporating Christian emphasis into each day's lessons as well as modeling the examples Jesus gives us in His Word.

We believe that parents are the primary educators of children and we will strive to support the teaching role of parents by providing information and sharing insights on child growth and development.

D. OWNERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Open Arms is governed by the Church Council of Christ the Shepherd Lutheran Church which functions as a Board of Directors. The majority of the Board members will be members of Christ the Shepherd or other congregations of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. The purpose of the Board is to ensure that Open Arms is functioning as established and to provide direction and support to the Director when needed. The Board assists the Director in areas of policy, personnel and finance.

Open Arms is licensed by the State of Georgia's Department of Early Care and Learning and has a minimum of two reviews annually to ensure the all requirements are followed. Open Arms has also earned two voluntary distinctions, one on the State level and one on the National level. The State of Georgia has awarded the Center a Quality Rated status by determining that Open Arms has met standards above and beyond those required by licensing. Nationally, Open Arms has earned accreditation through The National Lutheran Schools Association after undergoing an extensive three-day visit including operations review and observation. By maintaining these distinctions, Open Arms is striving to uphold the highest standards of early childcare and education.

E. HOME AWAY FROM HOME

Open Arms is unique in that it was built by a church specifically for the comfort, education and care of young children. The physical structure of Open Arms was designed to take advantage of our unique site. The building was planned with attention to the little ones and with more space than required. Older children are in a separate hallway from the younger ones. The building is secure, cheery, warm, childlike, open to the outside world, and provides fun in the function.

The fenced playground takes advantage of the natural beauty of the site, including the forest, and surrounding fields. Resilient surfaces are used.

The building is constructed of non-combustible material and equipped with sprinklers and smoke detectors. Emergency exit routes are posted in each classroom and near each exit. Fire and emergency evacuation drills are conducted regularly. Each room has two exits, one each to the outside. At the same time, access to the building is strictly controlled. Safety, security, and cleanliness are maintained at all times.

II. IN THE CLASSROOM

A. WHAT WE DO

Open Arms' program involves teaching, storytelling, sharing, music, playing, and chapel in an informal, Christian home-like environment. We believe that hearing Bible stories is an important part of the development of a child because of what it teaches about God's love for the world, especially shown through Jesus Christ. We also believe that each child's personality is unique. We promote individuality, confidence, kindness and self-discipline both in individual and group situations.

Our curriculum is designed to provide experiences and activities to meet your child's spiritual, emotional, social, intellectual, and physical needs. Your child will be guided to take part in small and large group activities. This combination of experiences will broaden your child's aptitude for future school experiences, while allowing freedom for imagination and creativity. Children are attended to at all times by trained and experienced caregivers.

We will guide your child to

- become aware of and have an interest in the world about him/her,
- develop a sense of pride in his/herself, school, church, and nation,
- make a happy transition from home life to school life,
- talk to God through a regular practice of prayer,
- work and play comfortably with other children,
- manifest some degree of self-discipline and self-control,
- hear basic Bible stories and relate them to living now,
- grow in verbal, sensorimotor and conceptual skills,
- observe and use simple health and safety rules,
- help think and act for self while growing in common courtesies.

The program offers daily outdoor play through games, exploring and exercise. Indoor activities include both teacher and child-directed opportunities, including play with developmentally appropriate toys, sensory play, prayers, Bible stories, music, chapel, story time, nature study. Classroom have learning centers including Science and Sensory, Home-Living, Blocks, Math and Manipulatives Language and Writing. The ages of children determine which centers are appropriate for each classroom.

B. TRANSITIONS

From Home to School

Your child's well-being 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 child is 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, or release of children to others. We will call you if anything is amiss, but otherwise, we will share your child's experience with you throughout the day with the Bright Wheel application and in person when needed or desired. Because consistency in child-rearing philosophy between the childcare center and the home is best for the child, we will honor parents' concerns and wishes for development.

To ease the transition, the staff will greet each child warmly each morning as they arrive, and bid each good-bye with anticipation of the next day. 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 in our staff-to-child ratios, and the emphasis on social interaction especially with infants and toddlers. Our developmental and teaching programs are carefully selected from the best resources available.

From Classroom to Next Classroom

As your child progresses in our program, an assessment will be completed by your child's teacher to determine their readiness to move to the next classroom. Parents will receive timely notification that their child is ready to transition to the next room. This transition will be a gradual introduction to the new room, from 30-minute intervals up to 2 hours for one week prior to complete transition. It is important that your child has ample time to adjust to the new room, new classmates and teachers. This timeline can change to more or less time depending on the child's ability to adjust to the transition.

C. GROUP SIZE

The sizes of the groups depend on the age of the child. All ratios at Open Arms are better than State regulated, allowing us to maximize attention to and care for our children. There will be occasions when unexpected staffing issues arise and our ratios may temporarily increase, always within State requirements.

D. GUIDELINES

To help us successfully meet all goals, the following guidelines have been set.

- Attendance will be monitored through Bright Wheel in lieu of parents signing each child in and out. This policy meets the State security attendance requirements. Teachers also record attendance daily with a physical check in and out paper document.
- All personal items must be labeled, including blankets, clothing, bottles and bags. Open Arms is not responsible for any items not labeled.
- Sick children should remain home. Children with fever or other signs of illness upon arrival will not be accepted for the day. If a child should become sick on the premises, he or she will be immediately isolated and the parent contacted. For the comfort of the child and safety of classmates and staff, parents are expected to pick up the child as soon as possible and at least within an hour of being notified. This information is detailed in our Illness Policy.
- For infants and toddlers, an ample supply of diapers, wipes, formula and/or baby food must be provided. Teachers will update parents on what is needed.
- A fresh change of clothing is required for each child each day. Dirty clothing will be sent home the same day and will need to be replaced the following day.
- Medication can be given only with a completed Medical Authorization Form for both prescription and non-prescription medication. Each medication must be labeled with the child's name and dosage. For details, see Operational Policies/Medication.
- Any grievances are to be taken to the Director. Caregivers are responsible for implementing Center policies.

E. INFANTS, TODDLERS AND TWO'S

a. General

An infant's capacity to learn is present from birth. Infants learn about their world primarily through social contact. Every infant is an individual with a unique temperament, possessing 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 closely attuned to the predictable sequences of normal infant development in the areas of motor skills, communication, cognition and socialization. This occurs by the caregivers playing with the children, talking to them, making faces, responding to them. Consistency in response makes the child's environment more predictable and comfortable. Varied experiences such as textures, different foods, shapes and sounds, going for strolls outdoors, watching birds and animals, help to stimulate your child.

Throughout our Center, no child is ever left unattended, even when asleep. Our staff is highly qualified, loving, and patient. Because of our low child/staff ratio, a great deal of time is

allowed for holding and cuddling the children. We do not allow a child to “cry it out”, but rather try to comfort the child in every way possible. We encourage nursing mothers to continue as their individual schedule permits. Mother’s may bring a day’s supply of fresh or frozen breast milk.

Each child has his or her own crib and linens are changed each day. When the child is not asleep or eating, he is free to move about the room, explore and interact with others. The children are held, rocked, talked to, sung to, and taught basic concepts of language.

b. Individual Infant Schedules

We will ask you to furnish a daily schedule for your infant with regard to eating, sleeping, and other routines, and we will adhere to it as much as possible. The schedule may be adjusted with mutual consent between the parent and teacher. We will also make Bright Wheel entries from time to time throughout the day, including detailed information of foods he has eaten, how long he has slept, his 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.

c. Diapering and Toilet Training

Children are checked frequently throughout the day, and changed at the first sign of wetness or soiling. No child is knowingly left in wet or soiled clothing. Parents will provide disposable diapers and wipes and ointment (if desired).

The changing table is disinfected after each use, and diaper changers wash hands with disinfectant soap after each change.

We will support the parent’s initiative regarding potty training. When you think you and your child are ready to begin toilet training, we will assist you in accomplishing this skill for your child.

The toddler rooms are designed to serve children between the ages of 18 months to 2 years. The staff/child ratio varies from 1:4 in the early infant room up to 1:6 and 1:8 in the two-year-old groups. This gradual change from smaller groups to slightly larger groups provides a structure in which the child is prepared for the larger kindergarten groups as well as first grade. Communication and academic skills are developed, and self-help skills, such as table manners, toilet training, and dressing themselves are also taught. Social skills such as sharing toys and positive interactions with their peers are stressed throughout the day. The positive atmosphere in the toddler room enhances a child’s good feelings about himself and those around him.

Two-year-olds are transitioning from teacher-directed activities to child-directed cognitive and social learning. Social skills must be practiced with proper guidance and behavior modeling. In our two's room, we provide plenty of opportunity for children to grow in confidence and ability as they develop relationships with each other, learning how to be a good friend, and when to self-advocate and when to ask for help. The twos are toilet training and learning how to take responsibility for their actions. Learning centers and small group are more challenging and stimulating as they grow from infancy to preschool.

F. PRESCHOOL (AGES 3 - 4)

As children continue their experience at Open Arms, new considerations are given to their increased attention span, activity level and need to satisfy their curiosity. A more structured environment is created and the opportunities of exploration increased. The pre-school program serves children between the ages of 3 and 4 years with a 1:9 teacher/student ratio. Emphasis is placed on cognitive skills. Our curriculum concentrates on pre-reading, pre-mathematics and science, creative arts and music. Planned activities are used to reinforce the natural learning that is part of every activity in a child's day. We encourage the child to learn by doing and experiencing in a safe and well-supervised environment. All these activities are presented in a positive, caring atmosphere by trained professionals.

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 carefully nurtured.

Creativity is promoted in a relaxed environment. Our close staff-child relations contribute to the development of a positive self-image. All developmental areas are given equal attention. Spiritual values are strongly promoted through modeling behavior, as well as Bible story time, prayers before meals, and regular chapel praise and worship. Our main objective is to show love and individual attention through appropriate environmental stimulation.

Programs for older children include early development of pre-reading skills, math, art, music, and nature studies. The children select activities from a variety of interest centers that reflect the weekly theme. Learning activities alternate with indoor and outdoor play periods, both to forestall boredom and to accommodate young attention spans. The pre-school wing at Open Arms is designed to provide children with both the security of a "home" room and the flexibility of various structured activities at Learning Centers.

G. PRIVATE PRE-KINDERGARTEN (4 – 5 YEARS)

The Private Pre-K program is designed for children between the ages of 4 and 5, with a teacher/child ratio of 1:10. The child must be 4 years old by October 1st of given year in order to be enrolled in this program. We begin to develop pre-reading skills and lay the groundwork for kindergarten programs. We round out our program with art, music, dramatic play, and

motor skill activities. Our well-rounded curriculum incorporates Christian content in all areas of learning, providing a stimulating and fulfilling pre-kindergarten experience.

H. STATE FUNDED GEORGIA PRE-KINDERGARTEN (4 – 5 YEARS)

The purpose of the GA Pre-K program is to provide a minimum of 180 full days (6.5 hours of instructional service per day) of high quality educational/instructional services for eligible four-year-olds (date of birth by or before September 1st). Positions for GA Pre-K are first offered to the current families in our preschool program before opening up enrollment to the public. This usually occurs in January of each year and the current families are given a two-week period to enroll in this program. During this time, we will accept public inquiries and begin a waitlist for vacant positions remaining. The waitlist is numbered and we call each family in the order they are on the waitlist. We start responding to our waitlist families in early February.

The Georgia Pre-K program has a separate handbook provided by the State of Georgia and is available online on the Bright from the Start website.

I. AFTER SCHOOL CARE

We offer after school care to children through the fifth grade. Transportation will be available from Abbotts Hill, Ocoee, Creek View, and Lake Windward Elementary Schools. The afterschool schedule includes supervised study hall, outdoor play, learning centers and a nutritional snack. Personal electronic devices are not permitted. Full-day care will be available for registered children on school holidays.

J. DROP IN CARE

When other schools have holidays and breaks, Open Arms may remain open to provide care for siblings, alumni and Georgia Pre-K parents on a drop-in basis. Open Arms is closed on some holidays and will not be able to provide care on those days.

K. PARENT INFORMATION AND INVOLVEMENT

Parents and family members receive information in several ways. There is a parent table in the common area with licensing information, emergency procedures and other program information. On the bulletin board by each classroom door your child's teacher will post any pertinent information she/he may have for you. Each month, there is a newsletter sent by the Director with important updates. Teachers will Bright Wheel daily with news and information, typically specific to the classroom. Lastly, parents are always welcome to call the office with any questions or discussion items. Please be sure to keep the office updated with email and phone number to ensure that communications are deliverable.

It is part of our philosophy to bring together the child's school and home environments. It is to the child's advantage that we work together cooperatively. A child receives a great deal of satisfaction when parents are interested and involved in the life of the school. Towards this end, we have an open-door policy and invite you to come and share your special talents.

Visits to Open Arms by parents are always welcome. We do require that if you wish to visit in your child's classroom, you first make arrangement with the Director or Assistant Director.

In response to the Lord's request to fulfill the Great Commission and our congregation's priority to spread the Gospel of Christ, the families of Open Arms children are welcome into our fellowship. Your family is invited to attend all the activities of Christ the Shepherd congregation. Should any situations arise in your family life which could be benefited by counseling, Pastor Kevin is readily available. CTS is also affiliated with several community organizations which may also meet your needs.

III. OPERATIONS

A. HOURS OF OPERATION

The center operates from 6:30 AM to 6:30 PM, Monday through Friday, year-round, except for the following holidays: New Year's Eve and New Year's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and the following Friday, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Any changes to this schedule will be reflected on the annual calendar. The Georgia Pre-K program operates on a separate schedule and is published in the program handbook.

Open Arms will follow the inclement weather closing policy for Fulton County Public Schools. If Fulton County closes schools due to inclement weather, Open Arms will also close. This information will be announced on local radio, tv and streaming.

B. ADMISSION POLICY

The Center admits children regardless of race, color, or faith. Each child must be at least six weeks old. To confirm enrollment, a parent or legal guardian must complete an enrollment packet and submit the registration. Enrollment is rolling and placement is based on availability.

C. TUITION AND FEES

a. Registration

An initial registration fee of \$100 will be assessed per child at time of enrollment. This is a non-refundable fee to secure a space for your child. Additional family members pay a \$50 registration fee.

b. Consumable Fee

An annual (non-refundable) \$120 consumable fee will be assessed per child each September and upon initial registration, at which time the fee is prorated based on when a child begins.

c. Tuition

Regular tuition is due each Friday by 6:30 PM for the following week. Tuition must be paid in full without deduction for absences. The reason for this is that our staff and other operational expenses are based on our current enrollment level and these are not reduced when your child is absent. Therefore, we cannot prorate tuition. One exception is that each family is entitled to one week's vacation annually after 3 months of continuous enrollment. For this week, no tuition will be charged IF proper notice is given. We ask that notice is at least one full week prior to the absence and it is in writing.

A late payment penalty will be assessed by Wednesday each week if there is a balance due at that time. This provides a sufficient grace period for both full and part time families. Checks should be made payable to: Open Arms Lutheran Child Development Center.

If an account remains delinquent for three weeks, and no arrangement has been made regarding bringing the account current, the children may be withdrawn until the debt is resolved.

d. Absences and Credits

There are no make-up days extended for absences, holidays, or illness with the following exception. As we understand the need for personal time for your family, there will be a one-week vacation credit per family granted per school year (August-July). In order to qualify for this benefit, a student must be enrolled for at least 30 days prior to the requested leave. Upon qualification, a family may use this week at their discretion. Weeks are based on Monday-Friday, and the credit is for the amount of your child's scheduled weekly tuition. Weeks cannot be divided or prorated in any way, and will be credited as one full week. For billing purposes, written notice must be provided at least one week prior to the beginning of the vacation week.

Extended Absences: Families who require an extended absence (2 weeks or more) will need to continue to pay tuition to hold their child's spot. If families choose to withdrawal for the extended absence, a 2-week notice is still required. A registration fee may be required for re-enrollment, and Open Arms cannot guarantee immediate placement. If there is a waitlist, your child will be added to the list in subsequent order of interested families.

Exceptions would be an extended absence for serious medical reasons at the discretion of the Executive Director.

Parents of afterschool students will not be charged when their School Day program is closed, for example, if the public schools are on Spring Break, our elementary students who come for aftercare will not be charged.

e. Late Pick-Up Fees

Our goal is to care for your child in the best possible way. Children become anxious when it is time to go home and no one has come for them. It is not only unfair to the child, but to the teacher as well because she cannot perform the duties required at the time. For these reasons, a stringent late pick-up fee of \$15.00 from 5 minutes to 15 minutes late, and \$5.00 per 5 minutes thereafter. The fee will be invoiced the following day and is to be paid no later than the next tuition due date. A child may be withdrawn at the Director’s discretion if parents are consistently late.

Additionally, early drop off is not permitted without prior approval for special circumstances. Students may come in to class no sooner than five minutes prior to the start of their scheduled class. For example, a 9:00 a.m. student may come in no earlier than 8:55 a.m.

f. Withdrawal

If it becomes necessary to withdraw your child from the Center, a two-week notice must be submitted in writing to the Director. If this notice is not given, two weeks additional tuition will be assessed at the time of withdrawal.

g. Returned Checks

A charge of \$30.00 will be applied to all returned checks. After the second returned check, fees will be accepted only as cash or certified funds.

D. CLASS SCHEDULE

Open Arms Lutheran Child Development Center

Class Schedule

Hours and Costs are reviewed and subject to change biannually or based on enrollment.

Please see the current information for details and/or updates.

Class	Age	Hours	Days	Meals	Weekly Cost
Full Day	6-weeks to Pre-K	6:30 a.m.- 6:30 p.m.	5-Day or 3-Day	2 Snacks, Lunch	5-Day: \$296, \$269, \$242 Based on Age
					3-Day: \$220, \$200, \$189 Based on Age
School Day		8:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.		1 Snack, Lunch	5-Day: \$169, \$162 Based on Age

	12 Months to Pre-K		5-Day, 3-Day or 2-Day		3-Day: \$127, \$123 Based on Age
					2-Day: \$103, \$99 Based on Age
Half Day	12 Months to Private Pre-K	8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.	5-Day, 3-Day or 2-Day	1 Snack, Lunch	5-Day: \$106, \$99, Based on Age
					3-Day: \$90, \$86, Based on Age
					2-Day: \$78, \$74, Based on Age
After School	GA Pre-K to 5th Grade	2:20 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.	5-Day, 3-Day or 2-Day	1 Snack	5-Day: \$110
					3-Day: \$89
					2-Day: \$74
Drop In	GA Pre-K to 5th Grade	6:30 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.	Public School Holidays	2 Snacks, Lunch	\$30 Current Students & Siblings

E. THROUGHOUT THE DAY

Daily Activities/Schedules are posted at each classroom and available on request.

a. Field Trips

We take walking trips to explore our property. We may also take trips further away by vehicle. We will send home field trip slips prior to all major trips to inform parents where we will be going and to obtain written permission.

b. Meals

Hot lunch and snacks are provided for your child every day. The menu is planned to provide a nutritious diet which is low in salt, refined sugar, preservatives or artificial flavors and coloring. Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) Guidelines are followed to promote optimal growth and development. The children are served lunch and snacks in their room with their teacher to promote a family environment. Snacks of juice, fruits, cheese and crackers are provided for both morning and afternoon snack time. Menus are posted on the bulletin board in the entry way, and by each classroom door and available upon request.

Children are given as much time as they wish to eat. Children are encouraged to be interested in the food before them, and assisted where needed, but no child is forced to eat any food. Special eating problems, or marked changes in lunchtime behavior will be reported to the parent at once.

We will review each child's medical report to be aware of allergies or other food problems. We also do some cooking and baking in school to provide children with both a fun and nutritional experience.

c. Birthdays

Birthdays may be celebrated at school with a simple party consisting of cupcakes, cookies or other treats and party napkins brought by parents. Parties are held in the child's group during their snack time. Please remember that we are a peanut-free program.

d. Naptime

All younger children are required to rest quietly after lunch. The room is quiet and the teacher discourages extensive talk or physical activity. A restless child may be soothed with a back rub.

F. TEACHING AND LEARNING

a. Discipline

We believe that all our children can behave appropriately at Open Arms. Setting limits helps the child. If a child engages in improper activity, we will explain to him why his actions are unacceptable to those around him.

Discipline practices, which involve humiliating or striking a child or any other physical displays of anger, are not tolerated. Instead, we offer praise and reinforcement. We will tolerate no child misbehaving and/or hurting another child. If we recognize an unacceptable pattern of behavior emerging, we will confer with the parents to establish a plan to improve the situation.

Open Arms Rules

- No running inside
- Quiet voices inside
- Keep hands to yourself except to hug
- Show respect for others
- Show respect for the center and resources
- Follow directions

The child can be asked to sit apart from others as a last resort if there is repeated disciplinary attention required. This is time for the child to calm down and decide when he/she is ready to rejoin the group. This will be used as a last resort only with children over 24 months of age who are disturbing others or at risk of harming themselves or others. This will only be used long enough to enable the child to regain control of him/herself.

b. Progress Reports

For Infants through Two-Year Old's, at a minimum, parents will receive daily communication on each child's activity through Bright Wheel. This information will include developmental milestones, individual notes to families and school-wide announcements. If teachers and/or the Director feels a need to discuss anything with parents beyond the Bright Wheel reports, they will reach out to the parents. Additionally, if parents would like to discuss anything with the teacher or Director, they are encouraged to contact Open Arms at any time.

All children ages three and older will receive daily information through Bright Wheel as discussed in the previous paragraph. Additionally, teachers will present a written progress report based on our center-wide Learner Outcomes twice in the school year (Fall and Spring) with optional parent conferences at the teacher's or parent's request

c. Biting Policy

Even in the best preschool settings, periodic outbreaks of biting occur among infants, toddlers, and sometimes preschoolers. This is an unavoidable occurrence in groups of young children. When it happens, it can be scary, frustrating, and stressful for children, parents and teachers. Understand that this is not an unusual phenomenon among children who are going through the oral stage of their development. It is also not something to blame on children, parents or teachers. There are no quick and easy solutions.

Children bite for a variety of reasons: simple sensory exploration, panic, crowding, seeking to be noticed, teething pain or intense desire for a toy. Before a child becomes very verbal, biting can be a chief way of expressing needs. Repeated biting becomes a pattern of learned behavior that is often hard to extinguish since it does achieve results: the desired toy, excitement and attention. Children who are teething may bite because it is a pleasant sensation to their mouth. Knowing that the biting will hurt another person is not yet part of a child's mindset, so the "cause-effect" relationship is not internalized. Our teachers plan activities and supervise carefully to prevent biting from occurring. There are times, however, that a teacher cannot be within immediate reach to prevent a bite.

Our policy for handling a biting incident is as follows:

The biter is immediately removed from the group with a firm "NO". The bitten child is consoled and the bitten area is washed with soap and water. If necessary, ice is applied to reduce any swelling or bruising. The biter is not allowed to return to play and is talked to on a level that he/she can understand and then redirected.

A written incident report is given to the parents of all children involved when they are picked up that day. The name of the biting child is not released because it serves no useful purpose and can make an already difficult situation more stressful.

We look intensively at the context of each biting incident for patterns in an effort to prevent further biting behavior.

We work with each biting child on resolving conflict or frustration in an appropriate manner. We try to adapt the environment and work with parents to reduce any child stress.

We make special efforts to protect potential biting victims.

If a child has bitten or attempted to bite other children multiple times in a single day or there is a pattern of multiple bites over several days, the parents may be asked to keep the child home for a period of time to help extinguish this behavior.

We try to make every effort to extinguish the behavior quickly and to balance our commitment to the family of the biting child and the other families. Only after we feel we have made every effort to make the program work for the biting child do we consider asking a family to withdraw the child.

G. HEALTH PROCEDURES

We will promote the health of your child by providing a clean, smoke-free environment, safe toys, physical education, and supervised physical activities, and provide resources to for disease prevention for parents.

a. Illness

A Certificate of Immunization or religious exemption on the State approved form is required upon enrollment and must be kept current.

We are required by the Department of Human Resources (DHR) to have the name, address, and telephone number of your child's physician in our files. Please be sure to bring this information with you when you are ready to enroll your child.

Each child will be checked upon arrival by the teacher for symptoms of illness. The admitting teacher in the morning may request that a seemingly ill child be returned home. We do not have facilities for caring for sick children and in such cases will need to call parents to pick-up children who become ill at school. Children who become ill on the premises will be isolated from the other children and parents will be contacted. We expect ill children to remain at home.

If your child displays any of the following symptoms you will be notified by the teacher or administrative staff and you will have the option to pick up your child. If the symptoms worsen, you may be asked to pick up your child.

- Loss of appetite
- Severe itching and scratching of body or scalp
- Cranky or less active than normal
- More crying than normal
- General discomfort

If your child displays any of the following symptoms you will be notified by the teacher or administrative staff and may be asked to pick up your child.

- Unusual spots or rashes
- Red, irritated sore throat with trouble swallowing
- Colored discharge from the nose accompanied by upper respiratory symptoms
- Infected skin patches: crusty, yellow, dry, or gummy areas of skin
- Vomiting

Any child with a fever of 100 degrees or higher will not be permitted to remain in the center and must be picked up as soon as possible by a parent or authorized pick-up person. Children who are sent home may not return to the center until at least 24 hours from being sent home and are symptom-free or has a doctor's note stating that they are not contagious.

Tylenol or another pain reliever may be given for the following reasons if the medication is available.

- If prescribed by a doctor
- For teething pain
- For immunization pain
- To reduce high fevers in an emergency

In the case of diarrheal diseases, if a child has two diarrheal stools, the parents will be notified by the administrative staff. After the third diarrheal stool, the parents will be called to pick up their child as soon as possible by a parent or within one hour.

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 stool. The child must be symptom-free or have a doctor's note stating that the child is not contagious.

In the case of Conjunctivitis ("Pink Eye"), any child with redness, swelling or pus discharge of the eyes will be sent home. Pink Eye is highly contagious, therefore, a child with Pink Eye may return to the center only after prescription eye drops have been administered for a period of 24 hours and there is no active discharge.

When parents are called to get their children due to an illness, they must do so within an hour. If the parent is not available, a person on the authorized pick-up list must be contacted to pick

up the child. Please consider that if your child does not feel well, it is in their best interest to be picked up as soon as possible.

In the event of recurring head lice--when an infestation is found, the child will be sent home for a 24-hour period, during which time, all personal items must be cleaned. Before returning to the classroom, the child must be checked in the Open Arms office and given approval to re-join the group.

b. Medication

With written consent, medication may be administered. Our "Authorization to Administer Medications" form is used. The completed form, together with the medication itself should be left in the front office. A separate form must be completed for each medication. **DO NOT LEAVE MEDICATIONS IN YOUR CHILD'S CUBBY OR TOTE!!**

All medications must be in the original containers and prescription drugs will only be released to those to whom the drug is prescribed. 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 labeled containers, one for school, and one for home. Delivery and retrieval of medication will be the responsibility of the parents.

Medications can only be given at food serving times--12:00 and 4:00--so please designate either or both of these times. A daily medication log is located in the front office and will be maintained by the administering staff.

The only exception to the above is acetaminophen products. You may provide us with prior written approval to administer acetaminophen products.

c. Accidents

All Open Arms staff members are certified in Pediatric First Aid and CPR. In the event of an accident, appropriate procedures will be followed and parents notified either by a phone call if there is an immediate need to notify, or through a written report that will be sent home that day. Reports are kept on all accidents in the child's permanent file.

d. Fire, Tornado and Lock-Down Drills

Fire drills are practiced monthly. Tornado and Lock-Down drills are held twice a year. The Emergency Plans are located in a binder in the front lobby area and office and procedures are reviewed with staff regularly in accordance with State Licensing requirements.

e. Medical and Liability Insurance

We carry insurance to cover any accidental injury to your child, whether on our premises, or away from the school with a teacher-supervised group.

H. PERSONAL ITEMS

a. Clothing

Please dress your child in play clothes to school that are comfortable and easy for your child to manage as we encourage children to do as much for themselves as possible. Especially when toilet training, dress your child in loose fitting bottoms that can pull up and down independently. This is part of the learning process and helps to build self-esteem.

We require that your child have a complete change of clothing, including socks, at school. Each item of clothing should be clearly labeled so that clothes are not misplaced. Please place the clothes in a clearly labeled Zip-loc bag to be kept in the child's cubby. It is important that your child be allowed to get dirty and to get wet (we have water play indoors and out). Soiled clothing will be placed in the child's cubby in a plastic bag. Jackets or sweaters sent to school should also be clearly labeled.

Appropriate play shoes are required during all activities. This rule is vitally important to avoiding falls, which could result in injury. Dress shoes, cowboy boots, rubber boots and backless sandals are prohibited at all times and may prevent a child from being permitted to run on the playground.

b. Other Personal Items

Pillows, stuffed animals, and blankets from home are allowed at school for rest time only. All items will be sent home each Friday and parents are responsible for ensuring the cleanliness of such items. Toys should only be brought on special days as requested by the teacher. Replicas of weapons are not allowed.

I. STUDENT RECORDS

Your child's records will be maintained in a secure, accessible manner in the office of Open Arms. A completed file will contain the following.

1. Open Arms Enrollment Form
2. Parental Agreement
3. Financial Agreement
4. Emergency Medical Form
5. Food and allergy form, if relevant
6. Accident Reports
7. Immunization or Exemption

8. Medication Authorizations

9. Field Trip Forms

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, or in an emergency.

J. REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

We are required by state law (O.C.G.A. Chapter 19-7-5) to report to the Fulton County Department of Family and Children's Services any suspected abuse of a child by parent or guardian.

K. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

All grievances should be brought to the attention of the Center Director. Open Arms has a Board of Directors that supports the Administration and Teaching Staff by establishing policy and helping with conflict and decision-making. If a family is not satisfied with the Director's response to a grievance, they are invited to contact the President of the Board of Director's for further discussion. The Board contact information is available through Christ the Shepherd Church.

Final Thoughts

Open Arms is a ministry and the core of the organization is service to the community. You can help us become better by pointing out shortcomings, problems or concerns and by allowing us to resolve them for the benefit of those we serve.

Some Important "Dos" to Remember

- Do accompany your child to the classroom and say good-bye positively and quickly.
- Do have your child at school on time.
- Do voice appreciation and make space to display your child's creative work at home.
- Do feel free to discuss with us concerns your child's behavior, language, health problems, or family changes that could affect attitude or behavior in school, and to respond positively when things are good.
- Do call for your child on time--it is difficult to be the last to be picked up.

We reserve the right to terminate a child's enrollment for violations of policies and rules of the school or the Department of Early Care and Learning.

Parents are free to visit at any time, and have access to all areas of the facility; however, we request consideration so as not to disrupt our programs. If you are concerned or uncertain about anything, please speak with the Director at once. Do not keep it to yourself. If there is a problem, we want it corrected as quickly as you do.

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.

"Most of what I really need to know about how to live, and what to do, and how to be, I learned in Kindergarten...Share everything. Play fair. Don't hit people. Put things back where you found them. Clean up your own mess. Don't take things that aren't yours. Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody. Wash your hands before you eat."

Robert Fulghum, Church and Public Education

Let all that you do be done in love.

1 Corinthians 16:14