



## **St. Luke's Community House Child Development Center Parent Handbook**

### **Mission Statement**

St. Luke's creates a community where children, families, and seniors from different backgrounds can easily access the resources needed to live a fulfilling life.

### **Program Philosophy**

St. Luke's Child Development Center provides a safe and healthy learning environment for the children we serve. Our staff are trained to develop skills and behaviors in children that will enable them to succeed in school and in their lives. We believe strongly in partnering with parents and community organizations to ensure that the best services are being provided to empower and support our families.

### **Program Quality**

High quality early care and education programs benefit children. Children who experience a high-quality program have greater academic success, increased self-control, and enhanced self-esteem. There are four factors present in high quality programs. We at St. Luke's strive to meet all four factors:

1. Lower staff-child ratios
2. Smaller group sizes
3. Staff that is educated in Early Childhood or Child Development
4. Parent involvement

Please note that the staff-child ratio charts are posted throughout our school. We are very proud to be a three-star center and continue to strive for our rank and to provide high quality care for all children enrolled in our school.

All staff are required to receive at least twenty-four hours of training a year, as well as training in CPR and first aid. We encourage all staff to continue education in Early Childhood and/or Child Development.



## **Non-Discrimination Statement & Policy**

St. Luke's Community House does not discriminate against any child (or adult) based on the person's race, color, national origin, religion, sex, or disabilities. Reasonable accommodations will be made to provide service to persons with disabilities.

St. Luke's will make reasonable modifications in its policies, practices, or procedures when such modifications are necessary to afford its childcare services and facilities to children with disabilities, including children with autism spectrum disorder, unless the modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of its services or facilities.

St. Luke's will take such reasonable steps as may be necessary to ensure that no individual with a disability is excluded, denied services, segregated, or otherwise treated differently than other individuals because of the absence of auxiliary aids and services.

## **Children with Special Needs**

We are committed to creating an environment where all children thrive, including children with special needs. A child with special needs is one whom it has been determined requires special attention and/or accommodations that other children in a group setting do not require. These determinations may be based on physical, cognitive, or behavioral challenges that the child may face. Our program specializes in group childcare and is an inclusive program that recognizes each child's uniqueness. Our desire is to work with every child and family so that their child succeeds in our program. We will make reasonable accommodations in our program toward that goal, but we must note that there are some circumstances where we cannot effectively meet the needs of a child.

St. Luke's staff will decide whether the child needs one-to-one care and what program accommodations can be made. Based on its current funding levels, St. Luke's is not able to provide one-to-one staffing. This does not mean that children who require such care are excluded from the program, but only that St. Luke's cannot provide additional staff to meet that need. Where providing one-on-one care would allow the child to reasonably participate in the program, parents have the option of providing one-to-one care at their expense.



## **Curriculum Goals**

Each Classroom will have their curriculum and lesson plans posted in their room each week.

- Frog Street Pre-K is a comprehensive, research-based curriculum that integrates instruction across developmental domains and early learning disciplines. Engaging and easy to use for both teachers and children!
- Frog Street Threes provides intentional instruction in key areas of development so children ages 36-48 months can effectively continue on the path to kindergarten readiness.
- The Frog Street Toddler program is designed around the latest scientific brain research and is comprised of 52 weeks of easy-to-use activities specifically created for children ages 18-36 months.
- Frog Street Infant Program is designed around the latest scientific early brain development research, Frog Street Infant is designed to build strong foundations for little ones ages 0-18 months.

## **Enrollment Process**

The enrollment process at St. Luke's is handled both online at [www.stlch.org/preschool](http://www.stlch.org/preschool) and in person. The parents must participate in a pre-enrollment tour of the facility with a member of the Preschool Leadership Team. After the tour, parents will meet with our Accounting Assistant to determine childcare tuition.

The first step in the process is to complete a waiting list application online. When an appropriate slot becomes available, the parent/guardian is contacted and asked to complete the second step, which is the enrollment packet, and is required to pay the enrollment fee and first week tuition.

Below is a list of the required forms and documents needed for enrollment which are required to be submitted at least 3 days prior to the child's first day of school.

- Financial Form (provided by St. Luke's)
- Most recent year's income tax return (provided by parent/guardian)
- USDA Eligibility Form (provided by St. Luke's)
- USDA Addendum (provided by St. Luke's)
- Copy of the child's Birth Certificate (provided by parent/guardian)
- Child's Immunization Form completed and signed by a physician (provided by parent/guardian)



- Child's Proof of Physical signed and stamped by a physician (infants only)
- Influenza form (provided by St. Luke's)
- Signed service agreement (provided by St. Luke's)
- Photo Release form (provided by St. Luke's)
- Read-to-Succeed Enrollment form for ages 3-5. (Provided by St. Luke's)

Parents are expected to carefully read this handbook, and the summary of the DHS licensing requirements, prior to the child attending school. Following the completion of the items mentioned above.

Because we are licensed by the TN Department of Human Services and receive funding from local, state, private and federal sources, we are required to submit documentation and forms annually. Additionally, we may be audited by multiple sources to meet compliance requirements. We ask that all our parents comply.

### **Hours of Operation**

The Child Development Center's hours of operation are Monday-Friday, 7a.m. until 5:30 p.m.

Children will not be accepted after 9:00 a.m., unless the late arrival has been communicated to the teacher (or office staff) previously. Also, children will not be accepted between 11:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m., so that disruption to the children's naptime may be avoided.

Parents are expected to sign children in and out daily using their fingerprint on our kiosk or by using the QR code to sign in through the ProCare Engage app located at the entrance. Parents are required to walk their children to their classroom each morning after checking in. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian, as well as a State requirement, to ensure the center has an up-to-date emergency contact who can be reached at any time in case of emergency. Parents of children who are not signed in or out will be charged a \$5.00 fee per incident. Failure to comply on a regular basis can result in suspension from the Center.

A late fee of \$1.00 for every minute past the 5:30 p.m. closing time will be charged to the parent's account if a child is not picked up by 5:30. If continuous tardiness occurs, within 1-2 months after the first offense, there will be a fee of \$3.00 for every minute past 5:30 p.m. If continuous tardiness occurs within 1 month after the 3<sup>rd</sup> offense services may be suspended or terminated.



Parents are not permitted to be on the phone when dropping off or picking up their child. It is important that the teachers be able to communicate with parents during these times. Teachers are not permitted to be on their personal phones during hours of operation. If you need to be in contact with your child's teacher, you can:

- Use the Communication App.
- Call the main line of the school (615-350-7893) and you will be transferred to the classroom.
- Call the Director (615-350-7040) or Assistant Director (615-350-1141) to be transferred to the classroom.

### **Placement**

The placement of children in a classroom is determined by age and developmental level. St. Luke's wants your child to be placed where their needs will be met, and interest will be challenged.

### **Inclusion**

St. Luke's is inclusive and makes every attempt to reasonably accommodate any child based on whatever their needs may be. Whenever possible, we work in partnership with the families to ensure an impactful experience may be provided for any child who needs extra support and attention for developmental and/or physical growth. We are open to working with any additional professional supports which have been secured by the parents.

Our goal is to work together to create thoughtful approaches that are in the best interest of the child. At the time of enrollment, families are expected to share additional information about their child's needs with the staff. Program Directors will review all child enrollment information including the Health and Behavioral Notification form and communicate this information to staff.



## Discipline Policy

Learning boundaries is a very important part of a child's development. Sometimes, discipline is necessary for children to understand that these boundaries exist to help children grow into responsible adults. St. Luke's uses the Conscious Discipline Model which integrates social-emotional learning, discipline and self-regulation.

In each age group, boundaries and consequences of unacceptable behavior are clearly stated in age-appropriate language. Staff use positive behavior reinforcement and discipline methods that encourage self-control, self-direction and cooperation. No staff will use any form of physical punishment, psychological abuse, or coercion when disciplining a child. Examples of physical punishment: Shaking, hitting, spanking, slapping, jerking, squeezing, kicking, biting, pinching, excessive tickling, and pulling of arms, hair, or ears; requiring a child to remain inactive for a long period of time. Examples of psychological abuse: shaming, name calling, ridiculing, humiliation, sarcasm, cursing at, making threats, or frightening a child; ostracism, withholding affection, seclusion.

Examples of coercion: rough handling (shoving, pulling, pushing, grasping any body part); physical restraint (forcing a child to sit down, lie down, or stay down) except when restraint is necessary to protect the child or others from harm; physically forcing a child to perform an action (such as eating or cleaning up).

NOTE: The use of a physical escort as defined below and properly used when necessary to protect the child or others from harm is NOT coercion. Mechanical restraint: "the use of devices as a means of restricting a student's freedom of movement."

Physical escort: "the temporary touching or holding of the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder, or back for the purpose of inducing a student who is acting out to walk to a safe location."

Physical restraint: "a personal restriction that immobilizes or reduces the ability of an individual to move the individual's arms, legs, torso, or head freely, except that such term does not include a physical escort, mechanical restraint, or chemical restraint."



Seclusion: “the involuntary confinement of a student alone in a room or area from which the student is physically prevented from leaving, except that such term does not include a time out.”

- St. Luke's policy is to limit or eliminate the use of suspension, expulsion and other exclusionary measures.
- Staff action will not damage the child's self-image or embarrass the child.
- Staff action will help kids learn self-control, choose alternatives, identify feelings, and develop understanding and respect of feelings for others.
- Staff will communicate regularly with families regarding behavior concerns.
- Every effort will be made by staff to enlist the cooperation of the child and parents to solve problems.

To teach responsibility, in the event that a child deliberately damages any property or equipment that St. Luke's is using, the child/parent will be responsible for the cost of replacement.

Staff are responsible for proper discipline of children. We cannot allow parents to “discipline” or question children who are not their own. This applies regardless of whether activities are on or offsite.

Consequences for inappropriate behavior are as follows:

- The child will be redirected to other activities of interest.
- If redirection continuously fails, the child will be directed to a “safe place” where he/she will be given an opportunity to calm down. If the child appears to be out of control and unable to calm down on their own, or become extremely defiant, parents may be called to pick their child up.



## **Suspension from services**

St. Luke's has a zero-tolerance policy for any aggressive or violent behavior that may cause injury to a teacher or another child. These behaviors include (but are not limited to) slapping, kicking, spitting, hitting someone with an object, throwing objects, biting and any other behavior causing an injury.

Exclusionary measures are not considered until all other possible interventions have been exhausted, and there is agreement that exclusion is in the best interest of the child. If exclusionary measures must be taken, we will offer assistance to the family in accessing services and an alternative placement.

Children presenting medical, behavioral, learning or emotional problems that challenge their ability to participate in and benefit from the St. Luke's program may be recommended for evaluation by an appropriate professional or organization, such as TEIS (Tennessee Early Intervention System), MNPS (Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools) Special Education Program, or Vanderbilt's R.I.P. program. These evaluations will be used to assess the child's needs to be successful and to identify the best service provider(s) to meet those needs.

Policy acknowledges that it complies with federal and state civil rights laws.

## **Biting Policy**

Biting is a typical behavior often seen in infants, toddlers, and 2-year olds. As children mature, gain self-control, and develop problem-solving skills, they usually outgrow this behavior. While not uncommon, biting can be an upsetting and potentially harmful behavior. As a preschool, we understand that biting is a part of developmental growth. Our goal is to help identify what is causing the biting and resolve these issues.

If the issue cannot be resolved, this policy serves to protect the children that are bitten. If a biting incident occurs, state regulations require that the parent of the child biting and the parent of the child who was bitten be contacted. Names of the children are not shared with either parent.





### **When Biting Does Occur:**

Our staff strongly disapproves of biting. The staff's job is to keep the children safe and help a child that bites learn different, more appropriate behavior. We do not use techniques to alarm, hurt, or frighten children such as biting back or washing a child's mouth out with soap.

### **For the child that was bitten:**

1. First aid is given to the bite. It is cleaned with soap and water. If the skin is broken, the bite is covered with a bandage
2. Parents are notified
3. The "Injury Occurring at School" form is filled out documenting the incident.

### **For the child that bit:**

1. The teacher will firmly tell the child "Biting hurts, no thank you!"
2. The child will be redirected
3. The parents are notified by phone. If unable to answer, parents will be notified via email and/or ProCare app
4. An accident/incident form is completed for documentation

### **When Biting Continues:**

1. The child will be shadowed to help prevent any biting incidents
2. The child will be observed by the classroom staff to determine what is causing the child to bite (teething, communication, frustration, etc.) The administrative staff may also observe the child if the classroom staff is unable to determine the cause
3. The child will be given positive attention and approval for positive behavior



### **When biting becomes excessive:**

1. If a child inflicts 3 bites in a one week period (5 weekdays) in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken or bruised or the bite leaves a significant mark, a conference will be held with the parents to discuss the child's behavior and how the behavior may be modified.
2. If the child again inflicts 3 bites in a one-week period (5 weekdays) in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken or bruised or the bite leaves a significant mark, the child will be suspended for 2 business days.
3. If after steps 1 and 2 have been taken, the child continues the pattern of biting and there is no sign of improvement or active involvement from parents to find a solution, the parents may be asked to make other childcare arrangements or intervention services.

If a child, who has been through steps 1 and/or 2, goes 3 weeks (15 business days) without biting, we will go back to step one if the child bites again.

If a child bites twice in a 4-hour period, the child will be required to be picked up within 1 hour of notification.

### **What can families do to prevent biting?**

There are a variety of things that families can do to prevent biting. It helps to

- Have age-appropriate expectations for your child's behavior based on his or her current skills and abilities.
- Make sure your child's schedule, routines, and transitions are predictable and consistent. At meal and bedtimes, try to do things in the same way and at the same times. Young children thrive when they know what will happen next.
- Offer activities and materials that allow your child to relax and release tension. Some children like yoga or deep breathing. Offer playdough, foam balls, bubbles, soft music, and other stress-reducing items.
- Use positive guidance strategies to help your child develop self-control. For example, offer gentle reminders, phrased in a way that tells them what behaviors are expected. "Be sure to hang up your coat on the hook."



“You can each have a bucket to use in the sandbox.” “Put a small dot of toothpaste on your brush. You won’t need much to get your teeth clean.”

- Provide items to bite, such as teething rings or clean, wet, cold washcloths stored in the refrigerator. This helps children learn what they can bite safely, without hurting anyone else.

## **Fee Payments**

A non-refundable registration fee is required at the time of enrollment.

When a parent/guardian pays tuition at St. Luke's they are paying for the slot, not the number of hours or days attended. Therefore, even though a child may be absent, for example, tuition is still assessed and expected to be paid. When fees are not paid, the associated slot is given to the next child on the waiting list.

St. Luke's has a documented fee schedule that is set according to the child's age. These fees are set using Middle Tennessee childcare rate surveys. Therefore, our fees are considered competitive and current.

In some cases, a parent/guardian may need assistance paying their childcare fees. Interested parties should see the Accounting Assistant or one of the Directors to apply for the Smart Steps program or to learn about our Sliding Fee Scale, which is intended to assist working parents. Eligibility for the sliding scale assistance program is based on the family's household size and income. This information is taken from the most recent income tax return(s) and/or the last eight weeks of current pay stubs. To remain eligible for the sliding scale program, parents/guardians will be asked to provide income details at routine intervals throughout the year. If updated income information is not received when requested, fees will revert to the full rates.

**DHS Certificates** — St. Luke's accepts DHS certificates. Parents are responsible for: (1) full fees until we receive their DHS certificate; (2) securing their certificate and keeping it up to date; (3) paying the difference between the value of the certificate and the program fees.

Fees must be paid prior to services being rendered, which is prior to Monday mornings of the new service week. Payments may be made using check, money order or credit/debit cards. No cash payments will be accepted. Credit and Debit Card payments may be made on the ProCare kiosk by the entrance or online via myProCare.com. Teachers may not accept payments. Checks and



money order payments must be placed in the drop box in the Director's Office. From time-to-time fee adjustments are made. St. Luke's will make every effort to give prior notice, so that families can plan for an increase.

### **Past Due Balances**

Failure to pay fees will result in the loss of the childcare slot. If fees become two weeks overdue, children will automatically be suspended from the program until full payment is made. When overdue fees are paid and if space is available, childcare can continue. Failure to pay after being suspended will result in termination from the program and any unpaid fees will be transferred to St. Luke's contracted collections agency.

### **Returned Payment**

A \$25 charge will be assessed for all returned checks. Checks returned NSF must be redeemed with cash or certified funds. A \$5.00 per week late fee will be charged when payment of childcare fees are not made on the designated payment date.

Payment for hours, in excess of contracted hours (late fees), are due immediately.



## School Closings

The Preschool will be closed on major holidays and for staff in-service days. Parents will be notified of these closures in advance and will be notified of last-minute closures (e.g., inclement weather, power outage, etc.) via the One Call automated call system and through the Communication App. It is important to provide a current telephone number to receive these calls. We encourage parents to save the One Call phone number (1-877-698-3261) in their cell phones as "St. Luke's Emergency Number," so they will be prompted to answer the call and listen to the message. *Please note that while we will do our best not to alter the schedule below, it is subject to change.*

## Holiday Calendar:

New Year's Eve	Memorial Day	Thanksgiving Day
New Year's Day	In-Service Day (June)	Day After Thanksgiving
Martin Luther king, Jr.'s Birthday	Independence Day	All Staff Retreat (December)
President's Day	Labor Day	Christmas Break (12/24-12/30)
Good Friday	In-Service Day (October)	

## Attendance

St. Luke's has a drop-off time of 9:00am. We ask for 24 hours' notice if your child will be late due to a doctor's appointment, etc. In the event of an emergency, please contact St. Luke's by 8:00 a.m. if your child is going to be late. This is to provide a correct meal count and to ensure optimal learning experiences.

If your child is sick, please keep us informed about their condition. As a DHS requirement, St. Luke's alerts other parents to possible communicable diseases. In these instances, your child's information will always be kept confidential.



## **Release of Children**

Children are only released to individuals on the current contact information form. St. Luke's staff will ask for identification of any person that we are not familiar with. If the individual is not on the pickup list, the child will not be released, and a parent will be notified. You may be asked to present a photo ID at pick up. St. Luke's requires at least 3 people to be listed as an emergency contact

Any person picking up a child in an impaired condition (ill or under the influence of drugs or alcohol) will need to find an alternative form of transportation for the child. St. Luke's will not release any child to an impaired individual.

If you haven't made contact with the site by 5:30 p.m., we will start calling your authorized pickup list for someone to come and pick up your child. Because we are licensed by DHS, if your child is not picked up by 6:30 p.m., local authorities will be called.

## **Security Cameras**

St. Luke's security cameras are installed for the safety and protection of all staff and children. To protect the privacy of all children, videos will not be made available to parents.

## **Supervision of Children**

For infants, toddlers and young twos, staff will be able to see and hear all of the children at all times.

For preschoolers and pre-kindergartners, staff will be able to hear and see them. Supervision for short intervals by sound is permissible as long as teachers staff frequently check on children who are out of sight.

## **Child Custody Issues**

It is St. Luke's intent to meet the needs of all children in our facility. This includes when families may be going through difficult situations (divorce, separation, remarriage, etc.). Sharing information with the staff may be beneficial to the teachers of your child and will be held in the greatest of confidentiality.

St. Luke's cannot legally restrict the non-custodial parent from visiting the child, or picking up the child, unless the facility has been furnished with legally filed documents. The documents must be current, and court executed. Copies of all court documents must be submitted to St. Luke's.



## **Meals**

The center serves breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack to all children ages one and older. These meals meet State and USDA guidelines for quantity and nutritional value. Weekly menus are posted in each classroom. The children sit together at the table, which allows them to interact with each other while learning basic table manners. Parents of children one year old and older are not allowed to bring food into the classroom, except for teacher-approved special occasions such as birthdays or holidays. If a child is on a special diet or has food allergies, accommodations can be made by parent's request. All accommodations and substitutions require a Doctor's note, to be renewed annually.

Mealtimes are as follows:

**Breakfast** 8:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.

**Lunch** 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

**Snack** 2:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

\*Young infants in the infant room will be served iron-fortified formula, breast milk and/or baby food that meet USDA nutrition guidelines, on their own schedule, as specified by the parents. Older infants in the infant room will begin to transition into a center-wide feeding schedule, eating solid foods. Once children turn 1 year old, breakfast, lunch, and snack will be provided by the center, and follow the schedule outlined above.

Staff will encourage (not force) children to try new foods. Staff also encourages children to practice good manners, converse freely, and eat at the table.

## **Special Events**

There will be numerous opportunities throughout the year for parents to come together to meet with teachers and experience the classroom. Parents will be notified of events in advance so that arrangements can be made to participate. These events include parent orientation, parent/teacher conferences, Read-To-Succeed programs, community thanksgiving, holiday programs, pre-k graduation, etc.



## **Birthdays**

Birthdays are a very special time. We strive to acknowledge a child's birthday in a way which supports creating equitable experiences and lifelong healthy habits. We serve a diverse community which means every child may have varying access to resources and may also have different personal needs and dietary restrictions. For this we discourage families from bringing in items such as goody bags, homemade sweets, and snacks. We ask that families work in coordination with the program leadership to determine what celebratory items are most appropriate for the program. This may mean encouraging families to bring in items which enhance the curriculum and enrichment activities.

Teachers should be notified in advance of any special plans. Discuss date, time, classroom allergies, and developmentally appropriate food or favor choices (that align with curriculum and enrichment activities).

## **Holiday Celebrations**

During any celebration, all parents and families are welcome and encouraged to attend.

- On Halloween, children may wear their costumes to school if they are safe and comfortable to wear. Please ensure that the children's costumes are weapon-free.
- Thanksgiving is celebrated with a center wide luncheon.
- Christmas is celebrated with a joyful Christmas performance.
- For Easter, St. Luke's will host a center wide Easter Egg Hunt.
- Other cultural and national holidays will be celebrated.

The staff will make every effort to be culturally sensitive.

## **Multicultural, Gender Free, & Inclusive Environments**

St. Luke's encourages diversity within our program. We offer an anti-bias curriculum and encourage families to share their cultures with the children. Books, activities, posters and foods provide the children with a chance to experience a range of culture.





## **Parent Involvement**

Classroom Involvement - The center has an open-door policy. Parents are welcome to “drop in” anytime. Please keep in mind that classes have a basic schedule and visitors should plan on children being involved in activities when they visit. Parents are encouraged to read to the child’s class, participate in outdoor or indoor gross motor playtime and/or join the class for lunch. Parents are welcomed to volunteer in the preschool, library or other areas of St. Luke’s Community House such as in the food bank, mobile meals, etc.

Parent Communication — We communicate by email. To receive email communication from St. Luke’s, please include a legible email address on the Child Information Form. Please ensure you update your email, should it change during the year.

Parent Information Area — There is a designated area for dissemination of program information.

Parent Advisory Committee — There is a Parent Committee for the Preschool program. This committee meets quarterly to discuss recommendations, suggestions and/or to plan special events. We encourage all parents to participate and be actively involved. The committee serves as a clearinghouse for recommendations and complaints from parents. The committee will also assist the Directors in various projects to enhance the services to children, the families, and staff.

Parent/Child Input — Twice a year, children and parents are asked to complete an evaluation of our program. With this feedback, we can incorporate program ideas and services to better meet our site families’ needs.

Parent Conferences — The exchange of information about a child from the parent’s perspective and the staff’s perspective can be very helpful to parents, school officials and program staff. Parent conferences can be informal or formal. We cannot emphasize enough that it is important that you share changes at home or at school that affect your child(ren)’s life. Staff can better provide for a child’s needs at these times if we are aware of the changes. Conferences take place three times a year.

Family Fun Events — Family Fun Events are scheduled throughout the year to offer families and staff an opportunity to play and learn together.



Evaluation — To better serve your child and their needs, we release your child's academic information, including assessments, student conduct, attendance records and developmental assessment data for program evaluation purposes and to submit for funding.

Content of each child's health and safety file is confidential but is immediately available upon request to:

- Administrators and teaching staff educators who have consent from a parent or legal guardian to access the records
- The child's parents or legal guardians
- Regulatory authorities

### **Field Trips**

Due to DHS transportation regulations, the center has chosen not to transport children to and from field trips. We do, however, have in-house field trips such as the zoo, Community Helpers, puppet shows and others that coincide with our weekly themes.

### **Transportation**

St. Luke's does not provide transportation in its Child Development Center.

### **Dress Code**

Children learn through play and exploration, and they will get dirty. Food, washable markers and paints can sometimes stain clothing. Outdoor equipment can be rough on delicate materials. It is important that parents dress children accordingly. Parents should avoid sending their children to the Center in clothing that should not get dirty and/or stained. Children are required to have a minimum of two extra changes of clothing. If a child has a mishap and needs to change clothing, and there is no extra clothing available for her/him, the parents may be called to bring extra clothing or to pick up the child. Please make sure that all extra clothing is season appropriate and the correct size for the child.



### **Items to be Supplied by the Parent:**

**Parents of children ages 6 weeks–2 years should provide the following items each day:**

- Diapers
- Wipes
- Diaper ointment (optional)
- For children learning to walk, a sturdy pair of shoes with a non-slip bottom.
- A favorite blanket for nap time (for children one year and older). The center provides mats and sheets.
- 2 complete changes of clothes: pants, shirt, socks and underwear.
- A lightweight jacket or winter coat (depending on the weather), along with hat, gloves and appropriate footwear.
- Children in the infant room have the option of signing up for meals (baby food) and iron fortified formula ().
- Parents of babies who are breast-feeding are asked to bring pre-made bottle labeled with the child's name and date. *Note: Mothers of children who are breast-feeding, are welcome to nurse children at the center.*
- Parents may bring other items that may be helpful in providing comfort, such as pacifiers or special blankets. *Note: Only babies in the Guppies and Bees rooms (infant rooms) are permitted to use pacifiers and bottles in the classroom*
- Detailed schedule for children under the age of 1.
- Any cereal or food, must be unopened. State law prohibits the school from accepting any opened baby food of any kind.
- Family photos.

**Parents of children ages 2-5 years, who are potty-trained, should make sure their child has the following items each day:**

- 2 complete changes of clothing (i.e. pants, shirt, socks and underwear).
- A lightweight jacket (depending on weather).
- A favorite blanket for nap. The center provides mats and sheets.
- Family photo.



**Parents of children ages 2-5 years, who are not potty-trained, should make sure their child has the following items each day:**

- 3 complete changes of clothing (i.e. pants, shorts, shirt, socks, and underwear)
- A lightweight jacket (depending on weather).
- A favorite blanket for nap. The center provides mats and sheets.
- Family photo
- Pull-ups and wipes

*\*The items listed above are required and not optional.*

*\*\*The School and the School staff cannot and will not be responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged items that are brought to the center.*

### **What Not to Bring**

Please do not bring the following items to the center.

- Toys from home. The school and staff will not be responsible for any toy that is lost, stolen, or damaged. We do however encourage items that are related to the subject matter of the week. For example, children may bring shells in during beach week, or a picture of Grandma in her garden during Grandparent week. It is always a good idea to check with the teacher first, before any items are brought into the classroom.
- Candy (Unless it is being provided to the class for a special occasion).
- Food (excluding children in the infant room). Breakfast, lunch, and snacks are provided to children twelve months or older. Baby food and iron fortified formula are provided for infants. If a child has special dietary needs or if a parent would like to join their child for lunch, teachers should be notified so that proper arrangements can be made.



## **Toilet Training**

The two-year-old classrooms provide the structure needed for toilet training. This will be done according to the child's readiness.

Classrooms can assist in toilet training with the understanding that it only works if everyone works together. Your child will not learn if they do not work on it at home and at childcare. Please make sure that their clothing is also easy to take on and off for toilet training reasons.

Is your child ready to be Potty Trained?

- Follows simple directions
- Remains dry for at least 2 hrs. at a time during the day
- Dry after nap
- Regular and Predictable Bowel movements
- Walks to and from bathroom
- Pulls down own pants and up again
- Seems uncomfortable with soiled or wet diapers
- Seems interested in the toilet
- Has asked to wear grown-up underwear

## **Naptime**

All children are required to have a rest time. Even if your child does not sleep, he/she will be expected to lie or sit on their cot or mat quietly. All children nap on individual cribs or mats. If the child chooses not to sleep, they can/will be given a quiet activity to do during rest time.

## **Sudden Infant Death (SIDS) Special Note**

St. Luke's is proactive against SIDS. We follow the ABC's of Sleep.

- Alone- No mobiles, stuffed animals, or extra blankets will be allowed
- Back- Children will be placed on their backs in their crib. No propping is allowed
- Crib-Children will sleep in their crib, they are not permitted to sleep in swings, or bouncy chairs

These rules are in accordance with DHS rules and regulations. Sleep checks will be performed on children in their cribs every 15 minutes. Swaddling is not allowed.



## **Communication**

- Parent Bulletin Boards
- Parent Newsletter
- Classroom App
- Email
- Parent Information Area (located in main hallway)
- Daily Communication, a teacher will be able to give you an oral account of the child's day at pickup
- Parent Conferences, these will be offered three times per year

You may contact the School at any time during operating hours to speak to your child's teacher or any member of the administration team.

## **Difficulties and Differences**

We wish to give the best possible care for your child and family. If you are dissatisfied with your child's care, please take the following steps:

1. Speak directly to your child's teacher.
2. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of step 1, you may request a meeting with a member of our administration and your child's teacher.
3. If the problem is not resolved, you may request a conference with the one our supervisors, a member of the school administration, and your child's teacher.

## **Illness**

Children will not be accepted into care if they:

- Have a communicable disease or symptoms of a communicable disease.
- Have a fever more than 100.4.
- Are vomiting (2 vomits within a 24-hour period)
- Have diarrhea (3 loose stools within a 24-hour period)
- Have lice.
- Have an undiagnosed rash.
- Have had an unexplained cough for 3 weeks or longer.
- Child is not able to comfortably participate in class activities
- Behavior changes or other signs of symptoms
- Other possible signs of symptoms: lethargy, uncontrolled breathing, rash with fever, mouth sores, wheezing, or any other unusual signs.



If a child is suspected to be ill, his/her temperature will be taken via a nonintrusive thermometer, which is not always 100% accurate. St. Luke's will use its best judgement in assessing your child's health and will err on the side of caution since we are also considering the safety and welfare of the other children and staff in the child development center.

Children with a Fever more than 100.4 must be fever-free without the aid of fever-reducing medication, for a minimum of 24 hours before returning to the center.

Children who have been diagnosed with **Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease** may not return to the center for 72 hours after diagnosis, and the start of prescribed medication, and must present a doctor's note upon returning to the center.

Children who have been diagnosed with **Pink Eye** may not return to the center for 24 hours after diagnosis and the start of prescribed medication and must present a doctor's note upon returning to the center.

Children who have been diagnosed with **Strep Throat** may not return to the center for 24 hours after diagnosis and the start of prescribed medication and must present a doctor's note upon returning to the center.

Children who have been diagnosed with **Ringworm** may not return to the center for 24 hours after diagnosis and the start of prescribed medication and must present a doctor's note upon returning to the center.

Children who present with a rash must have a doctor's note, indicating that it is not contagious in order to return to the center. If the staff observe a suspicious rash after the child is dropped off, the parent will be contacted and asked to pick up the child and have the child seen by a physician. If the physician states that the rash is not contagious, **the child may return to the center the same day with a doctor's note, before 11:30 a.m., or after 2:30 p.m.**

State Licensing requirements state that if a child is sent home due to **Lice**, a Dr.'s statement stating that the child is lice and nit-free is required before the child can return to the center.

If a child shows signs of the above symptoms after he/she arrives, parents will be contacted and be expected to arrange for the child to be picked up within one hour. If the child is not picked up in a timely manner, the parent is at risk of losing the child's daycare slot.



The center is required to strictly enforce the 24-hour rule, which means that a **child must be symptom-free for 24 hours before returning to the center** (i.e., a child may not return to class the day after being sent home).

A child that has had an unexplained cough for 3 weeks or longer will not be allowed to be in our care until he/she is evaluated by a physician and medically cleared with a doctor's note.

St. Luke's is not able to provide medical care. Parents are required to inform teachers of a child's diagnosed communicable disease, for example: Covid-19, Chicken Pox, Measles, Strep Throat; Hand, Foot and Mouth, etc., so that other parents may be notified.

Once you are called for any illness, your child must be picked up within an hour of the phone call.

### **Medication**

If a child has medication that needs to be administered by the childcare staff, these specific guidelines must be followed:

- Parents must complete the medication permission sheet in the child's classroom. The sheet must include the date, name of medication, dosage, side effects, time to be given and parent's signature.
- Medication must be in the original bottle with the child's name, name of the medication, physician's name, and directions for giving it clearly typed on the label.
- Medication must be placed in a locked space located in the classroom, Emergency medication such as an Epi-Pen or inhaler will be taken in the classroom's emergency backpack when leaving the classroom
- Permission to apply the following items must be given by the parent/guardian: Sunscreen; Bug spray; Diaper ointment, Chapstick.
- Permission is documented on the "Non-Prescription Medication Permission form





## **Daily Health Check**

St. Luke's staff will perform a daily health check on each child daily upon drop off. We will check temperatures upon arrival (anything 100.4 or higher, and the child will not be permitted in the building). We may also check for any rashes or unusual spots. Parents shall relay information regarding any bruising, cuts, markings, etc. to staff upon drop-off.

## **Personal Safety of Children**

Tennessee law and the Department of Human Services mandate that teachers report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect. Teachers are trained to recognize possible indicators of such abuse and neglect and in the procedures of how to report.

DHS licensing regulations require that centers provide a personal safety curriculum for preschool children ages three and up. This curriculum includes a prevention of child abuse component. Program Directors can discuss this with any parent that may have questions.

Children will not be released to any individual; parent or guardian included, whose behavior may place the children at immediate risk. The child may be released to an alternative authorized individual on the child's pickup list. If an individual becomes hostile or aggressive towards any of St. Luke's staff, management will be immediately notified and in some cases the police may also be notified, due to safety concerns.

A child can only be released to an individual who is on the parents' approved pick-up list and whose name and fingerprint is registered in our ProCare kiosk system.

## **Emergency Procedures**

Fire and evacuation drills are held monthly to acquaint your children and all staff with evacuation procedures. Evacuation routes are posted in each classroom. St. Luke's also performs weather related drills also. These are done in compliance with DHS Child Care Licensing Rules. We want your child to feel safe in knowing what to do in case of inclement weather.



## **Outdoor Play**

State licensing requires every child to have outdoor play time. Children should be dressed appropriately. Layering is advised when weather conditions are expected to change dramatically during the day.

Outdoor play is part of the Early Childhood Curriculum. Children are given 30 minutes of outside play in the morning, and 30 minutes in the afternoon. Outdoor play is posted on the daily schedule inside the classroom.

During the winter, your child needs a coat, hat, and gloves. During the summer, your child will need to come with sunscreen already applied and the teachers will reapply as necessary.

Children will go outside every day, except for the following cases:

- Temperature above 95° F (feels like)
- Temperature under 32° F (feels like)
- During active precipitation with lightening

## **Television, Radio, Videos, and Computers**

- Programs, movies, computer games, and music with violent or adult content (including "soap operas") shall not be permitted in the children's presence.
- Programs/movies/computer games shall be developmentally appropriate for the viewers.
- Parents shall be informed of movie showings and video/computer games and their ratings. Parents will also be asked to sign a form for permission.
- If television, video tapes/DVDs, video/computer games, and/or movies are used, they shall be limited to one (1) hour per day. All programs shall be designed for children's education and/or enjoyment.
- No infant or toddler will be permitted to have screen time.
- Computers which allow internet access by the children shall be equipped with monitoring or filtering software, or an analogous software protection, which limits children's access to inappropriate web sites, e-mail, and instant messages. Other activity choices shall be available to children during television/movie viewing or computer use.



## **Grievance Policy**

Communication is the key to building strong parent/teacher/child relationships. When a concern arises, parents must remember:

- Teachers truly care about your child. Concerns should be shared with the teachers immediately and parents should avoid allowing issues to build over time.
- Talk to teachers directly when possible. Parents should communicate their recommendations and suggestions as they arise.
- Expect a conversation follow-up from your teacher or a director to make sure concerns were addressed.

Parents have the right to present operational grievances about the program. The communication chain for communicating concerns are as follows:

1. Communicate your concern to the Teacher.
2. If resolution is not met, communicate your concern to the Child Development Director or Assistant Director.
3. If resolution is not met, communicate your concern to the Chief Programs Officer.
4. If resolution is not met, communicate your concern to the CEO.
5. If resolution is not met, communicate your concern to the Chair of the St. Luke's Board of Directors
6. If resolution is still not met, move to the Department of Human Service's Grievance Process.



## **Gold Sneaker Program**

St. Luke's is participating in the Gold Sneaker Program and will adhere to the following policies:

### *Policy 1*

Children attending less than a full day program shall be offered a proportional amount of the physical activity time as required by TDHS licensure rules. Physical activity for children ages three years and older must be a balance of structured and unstructured play, both indoors and outdoors (weather permitting) utilizing age-appropriate activities.

### *Policy 2*

Providers shall provide education (i.e., via parent meetings, provider newsletter articles, sharing of educational video resources, etc.) to families twice each year that addresses the importance of limiting screen time according to current American Academy of Pediatrics policy and the development of a Family Media Plan.

### *Policy 3*

Children shall not be allowed to remain sedentary or to sit passively for more than 60 minutes continuously, except for scheduled rest or naptime. Childcare director shall take Go NAP SACC Self Assessments (Infant and Child Safety Physical Activity & Screen Time) to compare their physical activity practices to best practice standards.

### *Policy 4*

Childcare providers must ensure physical activity is a positive experience for children and that it is never used negatively or to control behavior

### *Policy 5*

Providers shall ensure appropriate infant and child feeding patterns, including breastfeeding. All educators shall be trained to: advocate for breastfeeding, safely prepare expressed breastmilk for feeding, feed infants according to their individual needs, and store expressed breast milk properly. Providers shall publicly display their support for breastfeeding infants and mothers by posting signage or other publicly facing information (i.e., participate in Breastfeeding Welcomed Here through the TN Department of Health or Team Nutrition resources for new and expectant moms about breastfeeding).



### *Policy 6*

Childcare educators shall ensure appropriate infant and child feeding patterns, including adequate time for snack and meal consumption and age-appropriate portion size. Childcare educators shall provide education to families twice each year (i.e., via parent meetings, provider newsletter articles, sharing of educational video resources, etc.) that addresses nutritional learning experiences, with a focus on adequate time for snacks and meals and age-appropriate portion size. All eating opportunities shall consist of a respect for the child and promotion of a positive attitude toward food. Childcare educators shall apply evidence-based early food preference learning strategies such as introducing healthy foods, repeatedly pairing new healthy food choices with foods children already like and modeling consumption and enjoyment of healthy foods. **\*\*There is a lactation room available if needed\*\***

### *Policy 7*

The childcare provider campus shall be free of all tobacco and tobacco-related products, including smoking, smokeless and electronic products. The campus is inclusive of all vehicles used to transport enrolled children, all outdoor spaces, and all indoor locations, whether or not children are present. Childcare employees and volunteers may not use tobacco or tobacco-related products while off-campus at provider-related activities (i.e. fieldtrips, walks, and all other outdoor activities). Employees who use tobacco products while off campus are required to change clothes and wash hands thoroughly prior to interacting with children. "No Smoking" signs shall be posted conspicuously at each childcare provider entrance, as required by state law.



## **Withdrawal from the Program**

Parents must provide a two weeks' notice to the director when voluntarily withdrawing a child from the program.

The Director can request the withdrawal of a child from the program if:

- The child's behavior becomes unmanageable (see discipline/expulsion policy)
- A parent physically or verbally assaults a staff member(s). Verbal assault can include, but is not limited to; harsh tone, yelling and/or making threats.
- Non-payment of childcare fees.

All alternative options will be used prior to the expulsion of a child due to behavioral issues. If a child is asked to leave the program at the request of the Director or Assistant Director due to behavior, options for assistance with the child's behavior will be presented to the parents. Expulsion and removal from the program, will always be the last option.

Children who have needs beyond the competence of the center, or who present risks to themselves or others that are beyond the control of the center, will be dis-enrolled with adequate notice.

The following steps will be followed before requesting the withdrawal of a child from the program:

- Parents will be notified of the problem
- Parents and staff will meet to discuss the problem
- Parents and teachers will partner together to find reasonable solutions and make referrals to other agencies
- Parents will be asked to seek alternate childcare.



## Handbook Receipt and Agreement

I have received a copy of St. Luke's Parent Handbook. I understand the policies and procedures contained herein and agree to abide by them.

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Child's Name

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Signature of Parent/Guardian

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Date