



**Journey Kids Day Center**  
**FAMILY HANDBOOK**  
**PRESCHOOL 2023/2024**

# Journey Kids Day Center

## WELCOME

Dear Family,

We want to take this opportunity to welcome you and your child to Journey Kids Day Center. This is an exciting time for us as we begin our 4<sup>th</sup> year as a religiously exempt childcare at First Church of God. Our hope is to create an environment that is safe for all children to spend time learning and growing with their peers and our staff. We have some wonderful, trained caregivers working in our program who are excited to care for your child while you cannot. Journey Kids Day Center was created during 2020 as a response to the pandemic that created a need for childcare in our community and now it has evolved into an opportunity to serve age 3-4 in preparing them for kindergarten. One of the reasons for creating this ministry was to help families in our community have a Christian option for preschool in our community. We welcome you to check out our program, ask questions, tell us more about your child and his/her special needs. This handbook will hopefully provide you with all the information you may need but if anything is unclear, feel free to ask. We want you to feel comfortable with the decision you make for who will be caring for your child. We believe every child is a precious gift from God and want families to know we value the trust you have in us.

Thank you for choosing **Journey Kids Day Center**. We look forward to providing your child with a caring and safe environment.

Sincerely,

Jessica Willis  
Director  
540-382-6350  
journeykdc@gmail.com  
**Journey Kids Day  
Center**

## ABOUT US

### *Foundation*

The Journey Kids Day Center is a ministry of First Church of God and will be run in accordance with the Biblical beliefs that are held by the First Church of God. Our policies, procedures, and teaching will be based on these biblical beliefs. The By-laws of First Church of God will also be used as a guiding document and will be used as a final authority in our policies, procedures, and teaching.

### *Philosophy*

The vision of Journey Kids Day Center is to give parents a safe, stable and nurturing childcare option that loves, educates and engages their children through the development of Christian values and character, critical thinking skills, resiliency, lifelong learning and love for God, others and self. We believe children are gifts from God and it is our responsibility to help them grow into all He made them to be.

### *Mission*

Our mission is to disciple children. We will do that through assistance with education, Christian instruction and practice, character building, critical thinking skills and increasing resilience. We want to come alongside, support, and journey with families.

### *Certification*

Journey Kids Day Center is operated as a religiously exempt child day center in compliance with the Virginia Department of Education.

### *Hours of Operation*

Pre-School services are provided from 8:00 AM to 3:30 PM Monday-Friday.

A holiday schedule may vary

### *Holidays*

We are closed New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve Day and Christmas Day.

We will follow the public schools for weather related delays and closings

### *Admission & Enrollment*

All admission and enrollment forms must be completed, and enrollment fee and first tuition payment paid prior to your child's first day of attendance.

An enrollment fee of \$75.00 is due at the time of enrollment. This fee is non-refundable.

A \$150, non-refundable tuition deposit is required for each child enrolled. This deposit will be held without interest and will represent tuition payment for a portion of the last month of the child's enrollment.

Based on the availability and openings, our target age is 3-4 years of age.

Children are be admitted without regard to race culture, sex, religion, national origin, or disability. We do not discriminate on the basis of special needs as long as a safe, supportive environment can be provided.

Children with identified special needs will be considered on a case by case basis to ensure we can adequately provide desired outcomes for each child.

### **Family**

Parents/family are a child's first teacher. We value families as partners in the growth and development of children in our program. We encourage parents and other family members to be involved in the program, visit children's classrooms, participate in events, and provide feedback on the program.

### **Confidentiality**

Unless we receive your written consent, information regarding your child will not be released with the exception that required by our regulatory and partnering agencies. All records concerning children at our program are confidential.

### **Staff Qualifications**

Our staff is hired in compliance with the state requirements and qualifications as a base minimum. Our staff have been trained in CPR and First aid and basic childcare.

Employees participate in orientation and ongoing training in the areas of child growth and development, healthy and safe environments, developmentally appropriate practices, resiliency, critical thinking and professionalism.

We strongly discourage families from entering employment arrangements with staff (i.e. babysitting). Any arrangement between families and our caregivers outside the programs and services we offer is a private matter, not connected or sanctioned by **Journey Kids Day Center**.

### **Child to Staff Ratios**

Children are always supervised. All caregivers receive scheduled breaks which reduce fatigue and help to ensure alertness.

### **Communication & Family Partnership**

Please feel free to communicate with us about your child and any suggestions or questions you may have. We prefer email or scheduling a call or meeting as our staff will be busy. Please provide a phone number with which we may communicate with you about your child.

**Email.** We encourage you to provide an email address that you use regularly so that we may send you announcements, event invitations, newsletters, and general updates.

**Family Visits.** Family participation is encouraged. Visit our classrooms, volunteer, come along on a field trip, or eat a meal with your child. Signing in is required for the safety and protection of our children. Each visitor must wear a visitor's badge while on premises and sign-out upon leaving. Family events occur twice a year- Christmas and end of school year.

**Bright Wheel.** We use Bright Wheel App to communicate with parents throughout the day. We also use Bright Wheel App as our check in/out process.

## ***Publicity***

Occasionally, photos will be taken of the children at the center for use within the center or on our website/social media. Enrolling your child gives permission for photos to be used unless you indicate otherwise. We will not use names of children.

## **LEARNING**

### ***Learning Environment***

We have a flexible day routine that allows children to explore the world God made and develop positive peer relationships. We strongly believe that learning happens through play. Learning and exploring are hands-on and are facilitated through interest areas. Our program is designed to enhance children's development in the following areas: creativity, self-confidence, decision making, problem-solving, responsibility, independence, and reasoning.

For information about your child's day, please see copies of daily schedules and lessons plans posted in each classroom.

### ***Outdoor Learning***

Weather permitting; we conduct at least 15-30 minutes of supervised outdoor play at least 1 time a day for all children. Children are always accounted for. Please dress your child appropriately for the weather.

### ***Celebrations***

We will celebrate Christmas, Easter and other Christian religious Holidays as staff and Directors deem appropriate.

## **GUIDANCE**

### ***General Procedure***

**Journey Kids Day Center** is committed to each student's success in learning within a caring, responsive, and safe environment that is free of discrimination, violence, and bullying. Our center works to ensure that all students have the opportunity and support to develop to their fullest potential and share a personal and meaningful bond with peers and caregivers.

Thoughtful direction and planning are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Communicating consistent, clear rules and involving children in problem solving help children develop their ability to become self-disciplined. We encourage children to be fair, to be respectful of other people, of property, and to learn to understand the results of their actions.

### ***Discipline Policy***

We have created a discipline policy that reflects our philosophy of working with children. A copy of the discipline policy is included in your enrollment package for you to review and sign.

## **Challenging Behavior**

When a child becomes verbally or physically aggressive, we intervene immediately to protect all the children. Our usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to show them how to solve problems using appropriate interactions. When discipline is necessary, it is clear, consistent, and understandable to the child. We maintain a zero tolerance to bullying. If you have any concerns about this at any time, please report it to the Director of the Center.

If a child's behavior/circumstance is of concern, communication will begin with the parents as the first step to understanding the child's individual needs and challenges. We will work together to evaluate these needs in the context of our program.

On rare occasions, a child's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for care. Examples of such instances include:

- A child is a danger to others.
- Continued care could be harmful to, or not in the best interest of the child as determined by a medical, psychological, or social service personnel.
- Undue burden on our resources and finances for the child's accommodations for success and participation.

## **TUITION AND FEES**

### ***Important Notice***

All payment and fee processing will be completed by Director and/or Office Administrative Assistant or designee. He/she will oversee collecting tuition and other fees and contacting families regarding payment issues. If you have a question or concern regarding a payment or fee, please contact the Director and/or Office Administrative Assistant.

### ***Tuition Rates***

Monday-Friday:

\$32 per day for preschoolers that attend 5 days per week.

\$35 per day for preschoolers that attend 4 days per week.

\$40 per day for preschoolers that attend 3 days per week.

\$45 per day for preschoolers that attend 2 days per week.

Families contract for a specific weekly schedule as indicated on the *Enrollment Agreement Form*. Payment for this contracted schedule is required every week whether or not your child attends for the duration of your child's participation at the center. No credits are given for sick or vacation days, holidays, or closure due to inclement weather.

### ***Tuition Deposit***

A Tuition Deposit equal to two weeks tuition is required at the time registration is confirmed. This deposit is applied to the last two week of care provided a two-week written notice is given. If a two-week written notice is not given when a child has

withdrawn from the program, the family will be billed last month tuition, which the two week deposit may be applied.

### ***Payment***

We allow you to choose if you would like to be billed weekly or monthly.

Weekly payment is always due on Friday prior to the week of care.

Monthly payment is always due the last day of the month prior to the month of care.

There will be no deduction for any absences, holidays, or closures due to inclement weather, power outages, or other situations beyond our control.

A non-refundable registration fee of \$75 is due annually on September 1 or prior to your child starting. This fee will not be pro-rated.

### ***Methods of Payment***

Several methods of payment are available for families' convenience. Families can pay by cash, money order, pre-approved checks, through Brighwheel.

### ***Late Payment Charges***

Delinquent payments can pose serious problems for our programs and as a result, the business does not have the latitude to allow families to accrue a balance. **Delinquent payments will result in the imposition of delinquent payment fees. Failure to pay childcare payments will result in childcare services being terminated.**

If payment is not received on time, a late fee of \$25 will be added to your tuition payment for each day that it is late. Repeated delinquent payments will result in your family being required to set up automatic payments or credit card payments.

### ***Returned Checks/Rejected Transaction Charges***

All returned checks or rejected ACH (automatic debits) or credit card transactions will be charged a fee of \$40.00. This charge may be collected electronically. Two or more returned checks or rejected transactions will result in your account being placed on "cash only" status.

### ***Late Pick-up Fees***

Late pick-up is not a normal program option and will only be considered as an exceptional occurrence. Late fees of \$1.00 per minute will be assessed beginning at 3:40 PM and will be due upon arrival. **Repeated late pick up may result in childcare services being terminated.**

### ***Other Fees***

- From time-to-time there will be additional fees associated with special activities. These fees are due prior to the event/activity.

## ATTENDANCE & WITHDRAWAL

### *Absence*

If your child is going to be absent or arrive after your normal drop off time, please call us at 540-382-6350. We will be concerned about your child if we do not hear from you.

### *Vacation*

While we recognize the value of family vacations, the center does not provide credit for vacation days.

### *Withdrawal*

A written notice, 2 weeks in advance, is required by the center when a child is being withdrawn. Failure to notify will result in forfeiture of your two week deposit.

### *Closing Due to Extreme Weather*

We will follow the Montgomery County Public schools in weather related closings

If it becomes necessary to close early, we will contact you or your emergency contacts as soon as possible. Your child's early pick-up is your responsibility to arrange.

## DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

### *General Procedure*

We open at 8:00 AM. Please do not drop-off your child prior to the opening. Parents are expected to accompany their children and sign them in through Bright Wheel App.

**For the safety and protection of the children, external doors will be kept locked at all times.**

We close at 3:30 PM. Please allow enough time to arrive, sign your child out, and leave by closing time.

### *Cell Phone Usage*

The times you spend in the center dropping off and picking up your child are the primary windows of time we have to communicate with you about your child. In order to make the best use of these opportunities, as well as to be attentive to your child and other children, we ask that you NOT use your cell phone at any time while visiting the center.

### *Authorized & Unauthorized Pick-up*

Your child will only be released to you or those persons you have listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. If you want a person who is not identified as an Emergency and Release Contact to pick-up your child, you must notify us in advance, in writing. Your child will not be released without prior written authorization. The person picking up your child will be required to show a picture ID as verification. Please notify your pick-up person of our policy.



In order to safeguard your child, we will need copies of any court ordered custody agreements. **Without a custody agreement, we are not able to prevent the release of your child to a parent.**

If a child has not been picked up after closing and we have not heard from you, attempts will be made to contact you, and the contacts listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. Provisions will be made for someone to stay with your child as long as possible, but if after 1 hour we have not been able to reach you or a person listed as an Emergency and Release Contact, we will call the local child protective services agency.

### ***Right to Refuse Child Release***

We may refuse to release children if we have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger the child. To protect your child, we may request that another adult listed as an Emergency and Release Contact pick-up the child, or we may call the police to prevent potential harm to your child. Reoccurring situations may result in the release of your child from the program.

## **PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

### ***What to Bring***

- Bookbag, homework folder, appropriate play clothes, extra change of clothing in case of accidents. (No **toys** from home will be allowed due to health/safety concerns) See parent welcome letter for more details.

#### **Nap items-pillow, sheet, and blanket**

Please label all items brought from home with your child's name to prevent items from becoming misplaced or lost. We are not responsible for lost or damaged items. Soiled clothing will be sent home on an as-needed basis for laundering and return to the center.

### ***Toys from Home***

We request that you do not allow your child to bring toys from home into the center unless they are part of a show-and-tell activity.

## **NUTRITION**

### ***Snacks***

Please make sure your child has had breakfast before arriving at preschool. Please send a morning and afternoon snack and a cold lunch. **WE CANNOT HEAT UP FOOD FOR KIDS!**

### ***Food Allergies***

If your child has a food allergy, please notify us in writing so that we can ensure all snacks provided by the center comply with dietary restrictions.

Food allergies can be life threatening and each child with a food allergy should have an action plan for emergency care completed by the family physician.

## HEALTH

### *Immunizations*

Immunizations are required according to the current schedule recommended by the U.S. Public Health Services and the American Academy of Pediatrics. Our state regulations regarding attendance of children who are not immunized due to religious or medical reasons are followed. Unimmunized children are excluded during outbreaks of vaccine preventable illness as directed by the state health department.

### *Illness*

We understand that it is difficult for a family member to leave or miss work, but to protect other children; you may not bring a sick child to the center. We will be conducting daily health screenings upon arrival. The center has the right to refuse a child who appears ill. You will be called and asked to retrieve your child if your child exhibits any of the following symptoms. This is not an all-inclusive list. We will try to keep your child comfortable, but he/she will be excluded from all activities until you arrive.

- Illness that prevents your child from participating in activities.
- Illness that results in greater need for care than we can provide.
- Illness that poses a risk of spread of harmful diseases to others.
- Fever (100°F or higher under the arm, 101°F or higher in the mouth, 102°F or higher in the ear) accompanied by other symptoms.
- Diarrhea – stools with blood or mucus, and/or uncontrolled, unformed stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet.
- Vomiting – green or bloody, and/or more than 2 times during the previous 24 hours.
- Mouth sores caused by drooling.
- Rash with fever, unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease.
- Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge, until on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Head lice, until treatment and all nits are removed.
- Scabies, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Chickenpox, until all lesions have dried and crusted.
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough), until 5 days of antibiotics.
- Hepatitis A virus, until one week after immune globulin has been administered.
- Tuberculosis, until a health professional indicates the child is not infectious.
- Rubella, until 6 days after the rash appears.
- Mumps, until 5 days after onset of parotid gland swelling.
- Measles, until 4 days after onset of rash.
- Has a physician or other health professionals written order that child be separated from other children.

Children who have been ill may return when:

- They are free of fever, vomiting and diarrhea for 24 hours.
- They have been treated with an antibiotic for 24 hours.
- They can participate comfortably in all usual activities.
- If a child had a reportable communicable disease, a physician's note stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return to our care is required.

## **Allergy Prevention**

Families are expected to notify us regarding children's food and environmental allergies. Families of children with diagnosed allergies are required to provide us a letter detailing the child's symptoms, reactions, treatments and care. A list of the children's allergies will be posted in the main area and kitchen. We are trained to familiarize ourselves and consult the list to avoid the potential of exposing children to substances to which they have known allergies.

## **Medications**

Our center does not administer prescription or over the counter medication to children.

## **Communicable Diseases**

When an enrolled child or an employee of the center has a (suspected) reportable disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify the local Board of Health or Department of Public Health. We will take care to notify families about exposure so children can receive preventive treatments.

Included among the reportable illnesses are the following:

- Bacterial Meningitis
- Botulism
- Chicken Pox
- Covid-19
- Diphtheria
- Hemophilus Influenza (invasive)
- Measles (including suspect)
- Meningococcal Infection (invasive)
- Poliomyelitis (including suspect)
- Rabies (human only)
- Rubella Congenital and Non-congenital (including suspect)
- Tetanus (including suspect)
- H1N1 Virus
- Any cluster/outbreak of illness
- Tuberculosis

## **SAFETY**

### **Clothing**

Please dress your child in practical clothing that allows for freedom of movement and is appropriate for the weather. Your child will be involved in a variety of activities including painting, outdoor play, sand, weather, and other sensory activities. Our playground is used as an extension of the center, and daily programs are conducted outside whenever weather permits.

Sandals and flip-flops are not appropriate for center play and make it difficult for your child to participate in some activities.

### **Injuries**

Safety is a major concern in childcare. First aid will be administered by a trained caregiver in the event that your child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee). You will receive an incident report outlining the incident and course of action taken. If the injury produces any type of

swelling or needs medical attention, you will be contacted immediately. Our center is equipped with a first aid kits meeting the state regulations.

In the event of a serious medical emergency, the child will be taken to the hospital immediately by ambulance, while we will try to contact you or an emergency contact.

### ***Respectful Behavior***

All children and families will be treated with respect and dignity. In return, we expect the same from all of our families. We will not tolerate hostile or aggressive behavior. If this occurs, we reserve the right to ask you to control your behavior or to remove your children from our care.

### ***Smoking***

The poisons in secondhand smoke are especially harmful to infants and young children's developing bodies, therefore the indoor and outdoor center environment and vehicles used by the center are non-smoking areas at all times. The use of tobacco in any form is prohibited on the center's premises.

### ***Prohibited Substances***

The use of alcohol or illegal drugs is prohibited on the center's premises. Possession of illegal substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances is prohibited.

Any adult who appears to be inebriated, intoxicated, or otherwise under the influence of mindaltering or polluting substances is required to leave the premises immediately.

### ***Dangerous Weapons***

A dangerous weapon is a gun, knife, razor, or any other object, which by the manner it is used or intended to be used, is capable of inflicting bodily harm. Unauthorized, unsecured weapons are not permitted under any circumstance. The safety of our children and staff is of utmost importance and we reserve the right to prohibit any person excluding law enforcement from having a weapon on the property.

### ***Child Custody***

Without a court document, both parents/guardians have equal rights to custody. We are legally bound to respect the wishes of the parent/guardian with legal custody based on a certified copy of the most recent court order, active restraining order, or court-ordered visitation schedule. We will not accept the responsibility of deciding which parent/guardian has legal custody where there is no court documentation.

### ***Suspected Child Abuse***

We are required by law to report all observations of child abuse or neglect cases to the appropriate state authorities if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Our center will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect.

## **EMERGENCIES**

### ***Lost or Missing Child***

In the unlikely event that a child becomes lost or separated from a group, all available staff will search for the child. If the child is not located within 15 minutes, the family and the police will be notified.

### ***Fire Safety***

Our center is fully equipped with fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, exits and lighting. Our fire evacuation plan is reviewed with the children and staff on a monthly basis.

### ***Emergency Transportation***

In the event your child needs to be transported due to a medical emergency, if no other authorized person can be contacted and the need for transportation is essential, an ambulance will be called for transportation. A proper escort will accompany and remain with the child until a family member or emergency contact arrives.

## **CENTER POLICIES**

Our center policies not included in this handbook are reviewed and updated as needed. They are available for review upon request to the center director.

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# Family Handbook Acknowledgement

Please sign this acknowledgement, detach it from the handbook, and return it to the center prior to enrollment.

This handbook may be updated from time-to-time, and notice will be provided as updates are implemented.

Thank you for your acknowledging the policies and procedures we have established for the safety and welfare of all children in our care. We look forward to getting to know you and your family.

I have received the **Journey Kids Day Center Family Handbook**, and I have reviewed the family handbook with a member of the **Journey Kids Day Center** staff. It is my responsibility to understand and familiarize myself the Family Handbook and to ask center management for clarification of any policy, procedure or information contained in the **Journey Kids Day Center Family Handbook** that I do not understand.

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Recipient Signature

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Date

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Center Staff Signature

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Date