

# **Zion Weekday Ministries Preschool Parent Handbook 2017-2018**

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**438 Bear Creek Road  
Sarver, PA 16055  
(724) 546-9008**

**[www.zionsarver.com](http://www.zionsarver.com)  
[weekdayministries@zionsarver.com](mailto:weekdayministries@zionsarver.com)  
All Checks Payable to Zion Weekday Ministries**

## Mission

Our mission at Zion is to:

Invite people to know Jesus

Grow those who respond into disciples

Serve ALL people in the name of Christ

While putting into action the fruits of the Spirit: gentleness, kindness, patience, faithfulness, joy, goodness, self-control and LOVE!

## Tuition Scale/Class Availability/Agreement Forms

There is a non-refundable activity fee (equivalent to one month of preschool) due with enrollment forms. This will hold your spot in our program. This is a one time only activity fee and will allow the program to provide extra special activities (field trips, parties, etc.) This fee will be one extra month of preschool (i.e. Preschool 3 \$85, Preschool 4 \$105). This ensures that our program will not do any fundraisers throughout the year. All checks should be made out to Zion Weekday Ministries.

Students currently enrolled will be given a one month period of preference; after that period has ended spaces are on a first come, first served basis. Once enrollment documents are received your classroom teacher will contact you to schedule an orientation meeting required of all families. Agreement forms will be filled out and signed at the required orientation meeting. Tuition fees are set to include holidays and other days off school. Due to this, full rates will be required of all students, we will not pro-rate or discount for these events. Also, if your child is absent for any length of time you are responsible for the month's tuition. Consideration will be given for long hospital stays or extreme situations.

Following is a list of all classes, times, cost and maximum size. There are sibling discounts available, speak with the director about this.

Story Time for Twos	Thurs 8:45-10:15	\$35/month	class size 6
	Thurs 10:15-11:45	\$35/month	class size 6
Preschool 3	Tues/Thurs 9:00-11:30	\$95/month	class size 10
	Tues/Thurs 12:30-3:00	\$95/month	class size 10
Preschool 4	MWF 9:00-11:45	\$115/month	class size 10
	MWF 12:30-3:00	\$115/month	class size 10
Pre-K	MWF 9:00-3:00	\$175/month	class size 10

## **Late Fee/NSF Fee**

A \$10 late fee will be assessed if your payment is not received by the last day of the month. A \$35 returned check fee will be assessed for any returned checks. This fee covers our bank fees. If you are continuously late in picking up your child from program, you will be charged the late fee as written in your agreement form.

## **Keystone STARS**

We are a Keystone STARS participant. We have chosen to participate in this program in an effort to provide your child with the highest quality program. This is a quality assurance and resource program. We are currently a STAR 4, the highest rating any facility can receive. Quality learning experiences benefit not only the families involved but all community stakeholders, schools, businesses, and residents. In our commitment to Keystone STARS we have also made a commitment to continuous quality improvement. We believe firmly in small subtle changes over time that will create the best environment for your child. In an effort to best achieve this you will be asked to complete program evaluation each year (school year and summer camp).

## **Registration Policy**

In order to save your child's place for any Weekday Ministries programs you must complete the registration form (signed and dated) and include a check, made out to Zion Weekday Ministries, for your child's program activity fee (equal to one month of preschool). To finish the registration process you must complete the enrollment packet including: Emergency Contact Form, Agreement Form, and Child Health Report (which will need to be completed by a physician). The registration fee is non-refundable. Preference will be given to families that are currently enrolled or have been enrolled in Weekday Ministries Programs. These families will be given one month previous to open enrollment to register for the next year, after that it will be first come, first served basis.

## **Parent/Child Orientation**

It is required that you meet with the teacher in the classroom prior to the first day to both allow the child to get acquainted in the new environment as well as to allow the parent and teacher to review your child's individual needs and your goal for your child in the coming year, as well as to discuss any concerns or question that there may be prior to the first day of the school year. This meeting will occur as scheduled during the month of August.

## **What to Bring to School**

This year families will be asked to provide a pencil box with the listed items inside. This box will stay at school, marked with your child's name. We are doing this in an effort to prevent the spread of germs, especially through the cold and flu season. If for any reason it is difficult for your family to provide these items, please speak with the director. Please do not include anything extra as it only causes problems with other students who may not have the same items in their box.

Pencil box should include:

- 1 box of crayons
- 1 package of markers
- 1 pair of scissors
- Glue stick
- Pre-K ONLY- colored pencils

**ABSOLUTELY NO PENCIL SHARPENERS**

A back pack should be brought to school each day with your child.

**(BE SURE TO PUT YOUR CHILD'S NAME ON THE BACK PACK)**

The back pack should include:

- A spare set of clothes (including underwear and socks)
- A comfort item (especially if a child is having a difficult time transitioning)
- Weekly show and tell items
- A folder with your child's name on it

Your child should not bring toys from home. We have many items in our classroom and things can get easily mixed in and disappear.

## **Arrival/Departure**

In the interest of safety, all church doors will be locked at all times, except during arrival and departure. We have also installed a new security system and surveillance cameras on all entrances. For the fifteen minutes surrounding arrival and departure, the doors will be unlocked with the teacher greeting families as they arrive. At 9:00 doors will be closed as classes begin. If you should arrive and you find doors locked, there are phones located next to the door that can be used to contact office personnel to allow you to enter the building.

## **Curriculum**

Our program provides a mix of child-directed activities to encourage creativity, thinking skills, and authentic problem solving skills. Teacher directed activities prepare students for kindergarten and focus on the necessary skills for a jump start to school. We will focus on the PA early learning standards through daily activities using language, math, science, physical skills and creative arts along with encouraging personal-social growth and learning while encouraging healthy lifestyles. Appropriate research-based approaches to learning will always be used. We will also focus on a monthly mission project, reaching out to help others as well as learn about others. Each class level has its own goals based on developmental appropriateness. Bible stories will be introduced monthly in the classroom, but Christian values and language will always be used in our classrooms.

## Assessment

Assessment drives instruction in our program. In order for our teachers to know what skills and content to teach next we will be evaluating students almost daily in various means. We will use observations and checklist primarily. We currently use Teaching Strategies Gold, an online assessment system. This system allows us to upload data directly from our classrooms via Ipads.

## Story Time for Twos

This group is designed to help make that first step into school. It gives children an opportunity to meet and interact with peers and play in a more structured environment. During this class, children will listen to a Bible story, complete an art activity or craft, and play a large group game.

## Preschool 3

Preschool 3 focuses on learning to get along with others, understanding classroom rules and routines, as well as to beginning to develop some sit time as we complete table activities and listen to stories. Each day in preschool, these children will begin their day with play. From there they move into journal time where pre-writing skills (pencil holding, making lines, circles and tracing names) and creativity are encouraged as they dictate their story to the teacher. Then students move into circle time which begins with movement activities, such as songs from our Color Me Healthy set or some quick yoga moves. Then we will discuss the calendar, weather, our daily concept (shapes, colors, letters or numbers) and read our story. Students then move into break time, where they use the restrooms, have a snack and enjoy large motor play either inside or outside depending on the weather. After our short break, we move into an art activity and centers, which focus on the key areas of learning and change daily. Finally, we end our day with music and movement which alternates between songs, hand bells, and rhythm band. It's a busy day in Preschool 3!

## Preschool 4

Preschool 4 is focused on learning about the world around us while fostering friendships and beginning to prepare for kindergarten. Students will begin the year with independent journals and move to writing prompt journals by March. After we finish journals, we will begin circle time with movement activities including yoga, games focused on listening skills, or songs with lots of movement. Then students will complete calendar activities, listen to a story, and complete a ground language activity. Students will then have a bathroom break to prepare for snack and outside play time. When we return to the room, students will complete an art activity, music session and begin learning centers. Centers will focus on the key developmental indicators and children will be encouraged to move through these independently.

## Pre-K

Pre-K students will complete all activities with Preschool 4 as well as the addition of kindergarten readiness skills. These students will move through letter recognition and into sight words. They will complete more math focused activities and practice crucial skills. These students will also have the opportunity to participate in project based learning, working on units based on students' interests to go deeper in to chosen topics.

## Drop-In Care

Drop-In Care is always an option for any child currently enrolled in our program. If your plans change and you no longer need care, you will be responsible for paying the full fee for the planned day. Your child will need a packed lunch for that day along with items for nap (sleeping bag, special sleep item (teddy bear, blanket, etc.) and pillow). You will be expected to pay on the day of care at the time of drop off. We will not bill at a later date for this service. While your child is in drop-in care, they will be given breakfast (if dropped off before 8am). Your child will enjoy a modified version of preschool in the morning (if it is not their preschool day) which will include carpet/story time, an art activity, table activities, free play and a snack provided by the program. Lunch will begin at approximately 12:00. After lunch, kids will enjoy some outdoor play time if the weather permits, then have a restroom break in preparation for nap time. Nap time begins at approximately 1:00 and ends at 3:00 (2 hours will be given). After nap time, kids will wake up, have another restroom break, then enjoy a snack provided by the program. Kids will enjoy free play time until they are picked up by parents.

If it is your child's preschool day, Drop-In Care is an additional \$15 for the day. If it is not your child's preschool day, Drop-In Care is \$40 for the day. Only one day of Drop-In Care may be used per week, otherwise you must pay full week rates (subject to change upon speaking with the Director).

## Music and Arts

Art and music education are very important parts of our programs. Our music program features hand bells, rhythm band, and songs. Students will have the opportunity at least once per year to put on a performance for families demonstrating these skills! Art is also a very important area in which we can cross curriculum. We will have an art show at least once each year highlighting our students' favorite pieces.

## Outdoor Play

Research shows that children are healthier when they have daily outdoor play time. We will go outside everyday weather permitting. If we cannot go outside, we will have indoor gross motor play. Please dress your child for outside time every day.

## Field Trips

All classes will participate in at least one field trip per year. Due to growing numbers, transportation is the responsibility of the parent or guardian. Parents or other family members must attend field trips with child as well.

## Attendance

Your child's presence is very important each day. Please alert your child's teacher in advance for planned absences. All absences should be emailed, text messages are not acceptable.

## Release of Children

Staff will only release to persons listed on Emergency Contact Forms. It is important to keep these documents up to date; you will be asked to update every six months. You will be required to show ID until staff become familiar with pick-up persons. All custody documents should be submitted to director

upon enrollment. These will be followed as required by the state. Please alert director to any changes. Staff will NOT release to anyone who appears to be under the influence. Emergency Contacts will be called to transport the child home safely.

## Closings and Delays

All closings and delays will be listed on WPXI Channel 11 and KDKA Channel 4 News as **Zion United Methodist Preschool-Sarver**. If you have further questions, you can always call the office after 8am. We will not be calling to alert you of the change this year, you will need to check the websites.

## Communication

Communication between educators and families is crucial, especially at this early age. Teachers are always available before or after class for quick questions. In an effort to further support communications, students will be sent home with a daily “What I Learned in Preschool Today” sheet describing our activities as well as a monthly newsletter outlining special projects, field trips, and important information for families. If a problem should arise, you are welcome to request a meeting with any staff. It is our policy that conferences take place with at least two staff members or a Weekday Ministries Board representative. So please be patient as it may take a week or so to align schedules for this meeting. This meeting must be made through the director.

Families will be invited to participate in two conferences per year. The first conference will take place in the fall as our Getting to Know You meeting. During our first Getting to Know You meeting, your child will be screened using our Ages and Stages program, along with any other pieces teachers feel necessary to know your child. The second conference will take place in the winter/spring time to discuss your child’s progress, as well as prepare for the next year’s transition. These will be scheduled individually with your child’s teacher.

## Snacks

Snacks will be provided by families this year. A snack list will be handed out at the beginning of each month with your child’s name on their day to provide snack. Any specific dietary concerns, i.e. allergies or special diets, must be discussed with the director at enrollment. If it is considered too costly or difficult to accommodate your child’s dietary need you may be asked to provide your child’s snack each day. Parents are required to provide a packed lunch for any child in the program through lunchtime.

Below is a list of appropriate snacks that you may bring on your designated snack day:

- Fresh fruit (prepared)
- Fresh vegetables
- Cheese and crackers
- Prepackaged Snacks
- Yogurt
- Applesauce

Please do not send cupcakes, fruit cups or any unhealthy snacks such as cake, cookies or candy unless otherwise approved for a special occasion.

## Discipline Policy

Many methods of classroom management will be used throughout the year. We believe in a positive reinforcement (complimenting the child doing the right things, instead of correcting the one doing the wrong thing) and redirection whenever possible. Stickers and sticker charts for behavior will be used at various times of the year especially when there are specific problems. We can use these to track students' progress to reach a goal. A strike system may be used, in which students will be reminded of a rule or behavior violations three times before utilizing the time out chair. If the time out chair is used, students will have to speak with their parents to explain that they had to be placed in the time out seat and the reason. Occasionally we will use a quiet spot to calm down if emotions or actions are out of control. This is used more often when kids are throwing temper tantrums or having problems sharing or taking turns. At the quiet spot, the teacher will sit with the child and talk them through their behavior and the appropriate responses to problems.

Children in these young years may enter more challenging behaviors such as biting, hitting, lying or difficulty sharing. Teachers will be in communication with you during these difficult times to work with you to resolve these behaviors. Sometimes it is beyond the scope of a classroom teacher to appropriately resolve these behaviors. In such cases, you will be referred to an outside agency (such as LifeSteps) to have your child evaluated for more specialized services. We will continue to work with your family throughout this process. However, should your child's behavior be considered a serious risk to other students, we reserve the right to remove your child from our program until proof of action to resolve the problem can be produced. The steps for managing difficult or serious risk behaviors are as follows:

1. Parent/Teacher meeting to discuss problem behavior
2. Referral of child to outside agency
3. If not action is taken by family (i.e. outside evaluation or assistance), removal of child from program.

## Clothing/Personal Items

All children enrolled in Zion Weekday Ministries programs should come dressed in washable and comfortable clothing and footwear. We are busy inside and out each day and it's important that your child has appropriate clothing to participate in these activities. Children enrolled in all day programming (i.e. Wrap or Pre-K) will be required to maintain a supply of seasonally appropriate extra clothing and nap items. These nap items will be sent home each Friday to be washed, and returned on Monday. All items MUST be labeled with your child's name. If you choose to provide any creams, lotions or chapstick, these items must be labeled with your child's name.



## **Potty Training**

It is not necessary that your child is potty trained in order to participate in preschool programs. We have appropriate materials to address these needs. However, parents must provide all diapers, pull-ups and wipes for your child. These items should be sent in your child's book bag daily. We will work with you throughout the process of potty training.

## **Withdrawal**

Parents may withdraw their child at any time. Written notice is required. You will also be required to pay the full month's tuition for the month of which you withdraw. Two weeks advance notice is required of any children participating in our Before & After Care programs. You will be responsible for payment until this written notice is received, even if your child has not been in programming. Our program would be happy to copy all records for transfer to another facility; simply submit your request in writing and we will comply within a week.

## **Scholarships**

Scholarships are now available thanks to the concern and generosity of Zion United Methodist Church congregation. Both full and partial scholarships are available and reviewed by the Zion Weekday Ministries Board of Directors on a case by case basis. Please ask the director for an application if you are interested. These are open throughout the school year as we understand unexpected situations arise that may change family finances. Applications will be reviewed at the next board meeting following submission.

## **Staff Requirements**

Our staff consists of highly qualified, safe and reliable individuals. All staff must have an FBI background check, Mandated Reporter clearance, criminal record clearance and a child abuse history clearance. The lead teachers must have a bachelor's degree and at least 2 years experience working with children. Assistant teachers will have at least 30 credit hours in a child related field, along with at least 2 years of experience working with children. As we are a participant in PA Keystone STARS program, all staff must maintain 24-32 hours of professional development each year.

## **Illnesses**

For everyone's safety and health, please keep your child home if they have had the following in the past 24 hours: vomiting, diarrhea, fever, and sore throat, severe coughing, evidence of lice, body rash with fever. Your child may not return until they have been symptom free without OTC medicines for 24 hours.

If your child becomes ill, please alert us. We will post all communicable diseases that children may have been exposed to outside each classroom in an effort to prevent the spread. This posting will include the name of the disease, signs and symptoms and care guidelines.

The parent or guardian is responsible for obtaining a physical from the child's doctor. We will follow the same physical schedule as the school systems, so get an extra copy when you take your child in for their wellness check-up. This must include documentation of immunizations. We are not responsible for the fee associated with the physical forms.

It is important that we have the most up-to-date information for each child. You should notify us in writing with any changes in address, phone number, work place, emergency contact or health information.

We are mandated reporters on child abuse or neglect. Therefore, due to legal requirements we will notify the PA State hotline if there is reasonable cause to suspect physical, sexual or emotional abuse, neglect, or maltreatment of any children enrolled in our programs.

## Health and Safety

In all of our best interests, Zion Weekday Ministries has adopted many policies and procedures to maintain a clean and safe facility. The first defense for every individual is proper hand washing. Due to this, we ask that you have your child use the restroom and wash their hands **before** dropping off for preschool. This will help each classroom keep germs out and maintain continuity as preschoolers are on a restroom schedule. Children must wash hands after toileting, before eating, and after playing outside. We encourage children to wash their hands often throughout the day.

For your child's safety, we conduct a monthly site safety checklist, checking over every individual classroom and piece of equipment. In addition to this, we clean restrooms twice daily and classroom sanitation weekly. Any toy that has been in a child's mouth is placed out of children's reach to be cleaned that day. Weekly, all cloth items are taken out of the center to be laundered. All classrooms are vacuumed at least once per day and garbage is removed at the end of each day. All tables and hard surfaces are sanitized with bleach before and after eating.

If your child is injured while in our care, we will follow our procedures for care. If there is a mark that lasts longer than 20 minutes, we will alert you of the injury. You will receive a "boo-boo" report that you will need to sign and return. If your child is hit in the head we will call to alert you, even if there is no mark or strange behavior. We log all injuries and illnesses to be vigilant of equipment or areas that may be a safety risk.

## Emergency Procedures

In the case of a severe emergency of accident, we will:

1. Administer first aid
2. Call emergency medical transportation
3. Contact parent and child's doctor

## Emergency Plans

According to PA State regulations, the center has planned for emergency situations should they arise. Out of concern for safety of students and staff, not all plans will be released to the public. However,

should there be a situation in which we need to leave the building; our meeting spot is located at the playground/pavilion area. In the event that children are relocated, you will be contacted as early as possible using a phone tree system. All students and staff will be relocated to Buffalo Elementary on Sarver Road. In the event of a snow storm, you should look on WPXI or the website for information. All other weather emergencies will be handled with care and phone alerts to parents as necessary. Our Emergency Plan provides for response to all types of emergencies. Depending on the circumstances of the emergency, we will use one of the following protective actions:

- *Immediate Evacuation:* Students are evacuated to a safe area on the ground of the facility in the event of a fire, etc. In case of inclement weather, we may then proceed indoors at the Pastor's home.
- *In-place Sheltering:* Sudden occurrences, weather or hazardous materials related, may dictate that taking cover inside the building is the best immediate response.
- *Evacuation:* Total evacuation of the facility may become necessary if there is a danger in the area. In this case, children will be taken to a relocation facility. We currently have 2 available, they are:
  - Emergency Relocation Facility A at the Pavilion/Playground area.
  - And Emergency Relocation Facility B at Buffalo Elementary on Sarver Road.

If it ever becomes necessary to relocate, a sign will be posted on the door stating which facility we have gone to (A or B).

**If you're not sure how to get there, please ask for directions before there is an emergency.**

- *Modified Operation:* May include cancellation/postponement or rescheduling of normal activities. These actions are normally taken in case of a winter storm or building problems (such as utility disruptions) that make it unsafe for children, but may be necessary in a variety of situations.

Please listen to WPXI Channel 11 for announcements relating to any of the emergency actions listed above.

We ask that you not call during an emergency. This will keep the main telephone line free to make emergency calls and relay information.

I realize that emergency circumstances may require changes to your plans, but I urge you to not attempt to make different arrangements if at all possible. This will only create additional confusion and divert staff from their assigned emergency duties.

In order to assure the safety of your children and our staff, I ask your understanding and cooperation. Should you have additional questions regarding our emergency operating procedures, contact Amy Shick, Director.

## Parent Involvement

Parents are strongly encouraged to actively participate in their child's education. Please watch the newsletters for these opportunities. Many opportunities to extend classroom learning to home will be offered in communication sheets and newsletters. Families are encouraged to attend all field trips with students. Parents also help with program leadership through the Weekday Ministries Board of Directors.

## Weekday Ministries Board of Directors

All Zion Weekday Ministries programs are governed by a board that meets quarterly at 6:00 pm in Room 11. The board consists of Zion United Methodist Church leadership: pastors, director of education, board of trustees chair person, Administrative Board chair person and Council on Ministries chair person. The board also maintains a parent representative of each program: Story Time for Two's, Preschool 3, Preschool 4, Pre-K, Half Day Kindergarten, and Before & After School.

The board is designed to represent the needs and desires of the church, balanced by the needs and desires of the families using the program. Board parents serve a 2 year term. If you are interested in serving on the board, speak with the director for further information.

Any concerns regarding programming that cannot be resolved first by speaking directly with classroom teachers or the director may be taken to the board. This must be done first in a letter to the board (signed and dated), then the board will meet with concerned parent/guardian during the first 20 minutes of the meeting.

## Transition

Each year of preschool will begin with an orientation meeting with the director and/or preschool teacher to begin the transition process. All families are invited to attend our Back to School Picnic to allow families to meet their teacher and peers before the school year begins.