



LOVING, SERVING, GROWING

## EPWORTH WEEKDAY CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES PARENT HANDBOOK

### Mission Statement

It is our mission to nurture and support in a safe Christian environment the children and families of the Epworth congregation and surrounding community by providing the highest quality affordable early childhood program.

### Philosophy

Epworth Weekday Children's Ministries (EWCM) is designed to meet the developmental needs of young children. It provides experiences that enrich and enhance each child's cognitive, language, social, emotional, physical, and creative development. Opportunities for solitary play as well as group activities are provided. Staff members serve as positive role models and provide care that is supportive, nurturing, warm and responsive to each child's individual needs. The adult's responsibility in a developmental program is to build a relationship with each child and assist the child in growing to his/her fullest potential by recognizing each stage of development and fashioning a curriculum that will nurture and facilitate growth during that stage.

The United Methodist philosophy serves as EWCM's foundation. This philosophy is based on accepting each child as a special and unique individual created by God; offering unconditional love, a feeling of belonging, and a feeling of awe and wonder, which encourages creativity, and an understanding of democratic limits for his/her own self-control and welfare of others.

We respect parents as the primary and most important providers of care and nurturing, and we believe parents and teachers are partners in children's care and education.

### Curriculum

Children learn by doing. They learn through play, experimentation, exploration, and testing. Learning should be a joyful, natural experience. We have chosen a curriculum based on the developmental needs of the children in each classroom and one that will foster individual growth through opportunities for exploration. Daily schedules are posted in the classroom. We incorporate current best practices in Early Childhood Education and then structure the curriculum to meet the needs of the children in the group. Our curriculum varies by age and is guided by the following underlying principles:

- Children learn through dynamic investigation.
- Children instigate their own learning.
- Learning comes from open-ended experiences.
- Adults are facilitators of children's learning.

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### **NAEYC Standards**

Epworth Weekday Children's Ministries was accredited through June 30, 2008 by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), a nationally recognized professional organization supporting the highest standards of early childhood education. EWCM continues to follow the NAEYC guidelines. The new NAEYC accreditation process requires extensive hours of additional work by our staff members. EWCM is currently in a Self-Study program and will apply for NAEYC accreditation when all additional paperwork is completed.

### **Registered Ministry**

Epworth W.C.M. is in the process of becoming a Registered Unlicensed Ministry with the State of Indiana.

### **Health, Safety and Child Protection**

The Marion County Board of Health completes unannounced annual visits and the Indianapolis Fire Department conducts inspections every 2 to 3 years. The Epworth United Methodist Church Trustees contracts annual inspections of all fire emergency equipment.

EWCM conducts monthly fire drills and tornado drills during tornado season are conducted. CPR is offered once a year and First Aid is offered every 3 years for all staff members to stay current with their training. A Child Protection class is mandatory for all staff. The law mandates that Child Protective Services 968-4379 be contacted if there is any suspicion of child abuse. All staff members have a national criminal history check on file. No unauthorized person is permitted into the school classrooms at any time. All visitors register in the Weekday Office and acquire a visitor's tag. The door entering the education wing from the church lobby and the two north outside doors are locked throughout the day. A magnetic keypad security system is used in the Education Wing throughout the day to enter and exit the building.

### **Annual Registration (See Calendar in Handbook for Specific Dates)**

Registration for the following year will begin the last week in January in the following priority order: 1) currently enrolled EWCM families 2) Epworth United Methodist Church members 3) alumni of EWCM 4) wait list, 5) community.

Registration is not accepted if accounts are not current.

### **Admission Requirements**

Enrollment in our program is open to all families. We operate on a non-discriminatory basis. Only the child(ren)'s parent or legal guardian may enroll a child(ren). (Proof of custody may be required). All forms provided for enrollment must be completed before a child may attend EWCM. All requested personal information is kept confidential. Parents are required to update all emergency data as needed, including address, home, cell, and work numbers and individuals authorized to pick up a child. Current immunization information must be submitted to the office upon the first day the child attends the program, and all immunizations must be current. EWCM must be informed of any custody situation in advance and will request that the proper paperwork be in the child(ren)'s file.

### **Admission and Withdrawal**

Parents wishing to enroll children in the program are encouraged to set up an appointment with the office to come with the child and tour the facility and meet the director. (Tours are scheduled at the parent's convenience; however, we encourage tours to be scheduled between 9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. Monday through Friday.) The purpose of the informal tour is to explain our philosophy, visit the classroom and answer any questions concerning EWCM policies, procedures and schedules. To complete the enrollment process, all enrollment papers must be completed and turned into the office, along with the Supply Fee, last month's tuition and the current month's tuition. All children shall be considered continuously enrolled from the time of enrollment until they are formally withdrawn. A

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parent must give a 30-day notice prior to the last day the child attends EWCM. This will provide an opportunity for the office to fill the opening. If a 30-day notice is not given before withdrawal, one month's tuition will be assessed to the account.

### Children with Special Needs

We welcome children with special needs. A child's special emotional or physical needs should be called to the attention of the Director prior to a child's arrival at school. Also, a full description of any unique requirements should be included on the Classroom Information and Emergency Form. Please arrange a meeting and a tour of the school with the Director to make sure that the school's training and capabilities can meet the child's needs.

### Tuition

Tuition is payable to Epworth W.C.M. (EWCM) and due between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of each month. A one-week grace period is given immediately following the spring break week in April. A \$10 late fee will be added to tuition payments received after the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month. A \$25 fee will be assessed to a family's account if a non-sufficient fund check is returned to EWCM. If tuition payment or fees become two months (60 days) past due, the family and office will arrange a payment schedule to bring the account to current status. A tuition schedule can be found in the class directory.

### Processing Fee for Class Changes of Currently Enrolled Children

Upon the request of a family to change the classroom placement of a child who is currently enrolled in the program, the administration will try to accommodate that change. There will be a \$25 processing fee per child upon completion of the change.

### Information Change

Parents are to notify the office of any change in home or work phone numbers and addresses. This will enable the office to contact parents in case of an emergency. EWCM requires that someone listed on the Confidential Sheet as an Emergency Contact be available within thirty (30) minutes notice to come and pick up a sick child or a child that EWCM has determined needs to go home. It is required that all changes of phone numbers, places of employment, residence changes or changes in emergency contacts be turned into the office immediately. Please give the Assistant Director written notice of the change as soon as possible.

### Parking Lot

After parking the vehicle, it is mandatory to turn off the car ignition and bring all children into the school. ***Never leave any age child unattended in a vehicle.*** The parking lot can be very busy, and Allisonville Road is very accessible. ***Never leave a wallet or purse in a locked car. There have been break-ins.***

***Drive very slowly and cautiously at all times*** when entering and leaving the parking lot. Energetic, excited young children rarely think about moving cars. Be exceptionally alert when in the parking lot—drive defensively, always watching for small children. Many vehicles are very large and small children may be out of the driver's vision. Help others remember to drive cautiously if needed. If cones block the parking lot due to a funeral or other church related function, follow the traffic flow as directed.

**Suggestions:** Leave the front parking spaces in the lower parking lot for parents with infants and toddlers in strollers. When parking in diagonal space, pull through and park in the forward space so upon leaving you will drive forward rather than backing out of the space.

### Security Key Pad System

Each family submits a four-digit security code to the office. The ***four-digit code followed by the star key*** will unlock the magnetically locked door. If you experience a problem, contact the office at 251-

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1483. There is an intercom button located on the east wall. Push the button to communicate with someone in the office if you are having problems unlocking the magnetic door.

### **Drop-Off**

Parents are to enter and exit the door located on the north side of the building nearest the playground. An adult must accompany children at all times. An adult must sign in a child each day and specify in writing if some other person will be picking up or other plans have been made for a child if not going home with an authorized person. We require that each child wash his/her hands upon entering the classroom. Also, we require that all children have direct contact with their teacher upon arrival for early detection of apparent illness, communicable disease, or unusual condition or behavior that may adversely affect the child or the group. If any of these things are determined, the child must go home immediately.

### **Pick-Up (11:50-12:00 for noon dismissal and 1:50-2:00 for 2:00 p.m. dismissal)**

A child will be dismissed to only authorized adults listed on the Classroom Information Sheet. If emergency circumstances arise and an unauthorized adult must pick up the child, contact the office immediately 251-1483 and give the name, physical description and relationship of the person to pick up your child. EWCM staff reserves the right to ask this (unknown) person for a driver's license to validate the person's identity. Also, the director (or acting director) shall exercise his/her best judgment and discretion in determining when and under what circumstances it is necessary and appropriate to contact one or more of the individuals on the emergency contact list in order to protect the safety and well-being of the child.

Arrive at 11:55 a.m. for noon classes and 1:55 for 2:00 p.m. classes. This will allow time to pick up all children on time. We encourage parents to pick up younger children first as they become more anxious when parents begin arriving. We encourage all parents and children to leave the building after pick-up time in order for staff members to complete their "work duties."

### **Late Pick-up Policy and Fee Charges**

Children anticipate the joy of seeing their parents at the end of the class and can become anxious if parents are not there to greet them. Therefore, it is very important for parents to arrive on time. Also, our teachers have many tasks to complete at the end of class to prepare the room for the next day. Parents will receive two "OOPS" reminders to be on time. The third time will activate a \$5 late fee if parents arrive later than 12:00 or 2:00 p.m. for pick-up, and \$15 will be charged for each quarter hour a parent is late for pick up. Contact the office if you are running late, so we can assure your child you will be arriving soon.

### **Absences and Vacations**

We are concerned when children are absent. Contact the school at 251-1483 and inform the office when a child is absent. If leaving for an extended period of time, inform your child's educator and the office. Vacations and illnesses will be charged at the regular monthly rate.

### **School Closings Due to Weather**

EWCM will close due to severe weather conditions when Washington Township Schools (WTS) are closed. Local ABC affiliate, WRTV6, will announce EWCM closings. EWCM will open at regular hours if WTS is on a two-hour delay. We encourage parents to use wise judgment regarding driving conditions when 2-hour delays are announced. Please note the staff members that have school-age children may not be able to arrive on time. We may recruit parent volunteers to cover classrooms until our staff can arrive. **No refunds will be given or make-up days scheduled if school is cancelled due to weather.** However, if your child's class misses more than 5 days due to unscheduled closings, a tuition adjustment will be made at the end of the school year. If WTS announces early dismissal times because

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of approaching severe weather conditions, EWCM will also begin early dismissal procedures and the school office will activate the phone chain.

### **School Calendar & Holiday Closings**

A copy of the school calendar (based on 32 weeks of school) can be found in the class directory. Copies are available in the office, and one is posted on the bulletin board. EWCM follows the same holiday/vacation closings as Washington Township Schools with a few exceptions. Please note the closing dates on your school calendar.

### **Health Forms - Immunization Records Required**

EWCM is licensed by the Marion County Board of Health, which requires that all immunizations be current. Health forms must be completed and returned by the first day of school. If an immunization has been delayed, a written and signed note by the physician must be given stating the reason. Children may not attend school if health forms are not received by October 1. Please notify the office in writing of all updated immunizations that are received throughout the school year. It is the parent's responsibility to inform the school of any special health conditions of the child. Parents wishing to take a medical or religious exemption must contact the office to find out the proper procedure to qualify for this exemption. If EWCM is penalized or fined for non-compliance of immunization records due to a parent's neglect, that fine will be passed on to the parent responsible including an additional \$25 administration fee.

### **Medication**

Medication is not dispensed to children throughout the hours of 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The exceptions are inhalers and EpiPens. The inhaler/EpiPen must be in the original packaging with the child's name on the prescription. The parent must complete a Medical Release Form and/or Food Allergy Action Plan form before the child can begin school. EpiPens and inhalers are kept in a separate container in the office in a cabinet identified by a red cross on it.

### **Allergies: Food and Others**

EWCM respects the needs of all children enrolled in our program. When a child has a severe allergy that is life threatening, the classroom he/she attends will be declared a "free room" and the restricted item will be banned from the classroom. The restricted food will be clearly printed at the bottom of the class list. **It is the parent's responsibility to inform the school and complete a Medical Release Form and/or Food Allergy Action Plan regarding known allergies or sensitivities and treatment plan prior to the child beginning school.** EpiPens and Inhalers are kept in a separate container in the office in a cabinet with a red cross on it. Parents are encouraged to check with his/her child's teacher regarding any known dietary concerns prior to bringing any food product into the classroom. All Nursery School classrooms are Peanut Free.

### **Illness**

These guidelines are for the welfare of all of our children. In order to provide a safe and healthy environment, we rely on our parents to monitor their children with these guidelines in mind. Outdoor play is essential to a child's development. We believe that if a child is too sick to play outdoors, then they are too sick for group care. If a child appears to have any of the symptoms listed below, he/she should be in the care of someone at home. Keep a child home if a child:

- has a fever (101+ degrees) or has had one within the previous 24 hours
- has vomited or had diarrhea within the previous 24 hours
- has a thick, colored nasal discharge or unusual cough
- has been on antibiotics less than 24 hours
- has one or both eyes red, swollen, or has a discharge
- has a flushed face

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- has been diagnosed with head lice, ringworm or pinworms and not received treatment
- has an undiagnosed rash or open sores (doctor's statement may be requested by program)
- has an earache or severe headache
- is not well enough to go outside
- is fussy, cranky—"just not him/herself"
- is extra tired—rest may prevent the development of many illnesses

All children shall have direct contact with a staff member upon arrival for early detection of apparent illness, communicable disease, or unusual condition or behavior. A child will be sent home when any of the first ten symptoms are present. A child that is too ill to remain at school shall be supervised and cared for in a separate area in the office until the child can be taken home. If a child needs to be sent home and their parents are unreachable, we will call the emergency contacts listed on the Classroom Information and Emergency Form. It is important that the teacher/office be notified if a child has exposed other classmates to streptococcal infection or other communicable diseases. Also inform the child's teacher of any antibiotic a child is taking, and any potential side effect of that antibiotic. While a child's presence will be missed in school and classroom activities, it is for the health and protection of the child, other children and teachers that children are kept home when ill.

When a communicable disease or infestation (i.e. strep, chicken pox, roseola, lice, ringworm, tapeworm, etc.) is reported within a classroom, a notice will be sent home to the parents of that class, a notice will be posted on the door stating symptoms, precautions and incubation period and information will be posted on the Google group. (No personal names will be given.)

### **Accident Reports**

Safety is a EWCM top priority. Yet, there are times when a child will have an accident injuring himself/herself or between your child and another child (ex. running on the playground and bumping into each other). If the accident requires "more than a hug," the teacher witnessing or present will complete an accident report detailing what happened and the nature of the injuries. If any first aid is administered, the treatment will be described to you. The teacher in charge at the time the accident occurred will sign the accident report. We ask that the parent sign the report to confirm that he/she was notified of a child's injury. The original will be filed in the office, and the copy will be given to the parent. This system is aimed at ensuring communication at all levels whenever a child is injured.

### **Incident Reports: (See Discipline Policy)**

There are times when a child becomes angry, frustrated, over stimulated or emotionally stressed and loses his/her self-control and acts out in unacceptable behavior. Therefore, a commitment to safety means that when a child hurts himself/herself or others and "more than a hug" is required, the attending teacher will complete an Incident Report. A written description of the situation and the action taken will be completed on the Incident Report. The teacher in charge at the time of the incident will sign the incident report. We ask that the parent sign the report to confirm that he/she was notified of the incident. The original will be filed in the office, and the copy will be given to the parent. This system is aimed at ensuring communication at all levels in the event of an incident. If your child incurs an injury by another child, we ask each parent to respect the child's privacy and not request the name of the child. We will handle behavior problems in a professional and appropriate way.

### **Cleaning Dates for Classrooms**

During the year classrooms will have an additional cleaning session to enhance the hygiene and care of the classroom. All families are encouraged to sign up for a minimum of one session per year. Cleaning dates are posted in the directory. In response to parent request, one Saturday cleaning date has been added.

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**Family Folders and Directory: Privacy Guarded—No Soliciting**

Each EWCM family has a folder located outside the EWCM office. The family folders are to be used by the office and parent council to communicate with and inform parents of upcoming events. The office or parent council must approve any mass communication to be placed in the family folders.

EWCM provides a class directory for each family. The directory includes child's name, birth date, parents' names, address, and phone number for all EWCM classes. Privacy is to be respected and no solicitation lists are to be made from the information made available. Parents may contact the office by September 11 if they do not wish to have information published in the EWCM Class Directory.

**Parent Involvement and Volunteers**

Parent participation enhances our school. We welcome parents to share a talent or skill such as cooking, painting, drawing, woodworking, playing an instrument, dancing, aerobics, or pictures from a recent trip or

teach a game indoors or outdoors. These activities would enhance and facilitate the learning process in our classrooms. Let your child's teacher know of your desire to participate and every accommodation will be made for you.

**Parent Council:**

Parent Council is a volunteer organization established to facilitate the communication between school and parents, discuss concerns and issues that impact the children and provide money through planned fundraisers for staff development, special projects and equipment for EWCM that is not within the annual budget. All parents are invited to attend Parent Council meetings. The dates are posted in the directory.

Some of the Parent Council volunteer projects are:

- Host Parent Orientation and the Teacher Appreciation Spring Dinner
- Outdoor Work Day: Rake, trim bushes, spread mulch, fill sand box, and other outdoor jobs
- Provide and set up training for volunteers to oversee vision screening
- Coordinate tee-shirt sale
- Coordinate Pizza Fundraiser and make and distribute pizzas
- Coordinate Scholastic Book Orders

**Parent Liaison (PaL):**

Each classroom will have a Parent Liaison (PaL). The "PaL's" serve as communicators between classroom educators, parents, administration and Parent Council. Responsibilities will include introducing themselves to the parents at Parent Orientation, attending two PC meetings per year, being available to assist the classroom educator as requested, assisting with preparation for the Children's Art Show at the end of the year and communicating with parents when needed regarding classroom matters and special events.

**Parent Teacher Communication**

EWCM welcomes questions or concerns regarding any situation with the school family. Communication is the greatest tool to work toward a solution. If language or a hearing impairment is creating a barrier, a translator will be sought by the school to help with communication. If a parent does not agree with how a staff member is handling a situation, we encourage parents to discuss it with the staff member. We want all parents to feel comfortable letting the staff member know their thoughts and feelings to find a solution that works for all. The administration is also open to receive parents' comments at any time.

If there is a concern that needs to be discussed, make arrangements to contact the staff member by phone at a time that is convenient to both parties. Drop-off and pick-up is not the best time to engage in a conversation with the teachers, as they will be focusing on the children in the morning and have planning and clean-up responsibilities at pick-up time. The director is also available and will make

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arrangements to discuss parents' concerns or questions at school at a time convenient for parents and director.

### **Parent-Teacher Conferences & Focused Portfolios**

Our program uses an assessment tool called Focused Portfolios to document and evaluate each child's development. Our teachers will carefully observe each child as he/she plays, works, interacts, and goes about his/her daily routines in the classroom. These observations will be documented and tied to specific developmental milestones that we have identified to be important to assess how each child is learning and developing. The portfolios will be shared with parents at private conferences lasting 20 minutes that are scheduled in January. School will be closed during that time and childcare will be provided during the conference time. (Check the calendar for specific dates.) Also, at the end of the year the portfolios will be shared with the parents.

The format of EWCM portfolios reflects the varying schedules and age groups in our program. The number of written pieces of documentation in the portfolio will be directly linked to the number of days per week that the child is enrolled at Epworth. This reflects the fact that this assessment process is based on observation. The more frequently a child is seen by our teachers, the more information they will be able to gather, document and evaluate. Also, the specific developmental areas that will be included in the portfolios will differ depending on the child's age. For children in the nursery school classrooms, more emphasis will be placed on assessing their language, social/emotional and gross motor development. For the preschoolers, more emphasis will be placed on the pre-kindergarten areas of social-emotional, language/early reading skills, mathematics, and fine motor skills. The areas highlighted by the teacher on the Developmental Milestones will be **only** those that the teacher has observed in the classroom.

### **Family Traditions, Cultures and Holidays**

In order to support children's cultural identities and strengthen important connections to the child's home, we invite families to share their traditions within the classrooms and complete the Parent Survey that will be passed out during Parent Orientation. In December the parents provide music as families enter the school. It is a wonderful gift shared by many. Please let the office know if you have a talent to share.

### **School Pictures**

School pictures will be taken in November. The photographer attempts to take pictures of all children. Photos are available simultaneously for viewing and purchasing. See calendar for viewing dates. The complete package may be returned with no cost. Class pictures are sold separately, and it is a fundraiser for our school.

### **Vision Screening**

Prevent Blindness of Indiana provides vision screening in the fall for the children enrolled in the Preschool 3/4's, 4/5's and Explorer classes. Parents receive written notification if a concern about a child's vision is revealed from the testing and encouraged to contact their physician for further assistance.

### **Speech & Hearing Screening: (Optional)**

Speech and Hearing screening is available to children enrolled in the Preschool 3/4's, 4/5's and Explorer classes. A parent's written consent is needed; and there is a fee of \$10. If a concern is revealed through screening, parents are encouraged to contact their physician, the elementary school in the township in which they reside, or a Speech Therapist in private practice. Contact the office at 251-1483 for further assistance.

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### **Super Saturday for Preschool 4's and Explorers**

This is a special Saturday morning in October for our 4/5 Preschool and Explorer classes. It is a "day at preschool" for the child and his/her dad, grandfather or special adult male friend. Check calendar for date.

### **Birthdays: A Time of Honor**

Epworth WCM wishes to honor each child's birthday in a unique and special way. Therefore, the teachers and children in the 3, 4 and 5 year old classes will create their own "ritual" to honor birthdays in their classrooms. The "ritual" will be developmentally age appropriate and **will not include items such as treat bags, candy, and sugary foods**. It may include a special poem, song or chant that the class composes. Also, a parent reading a special book, sharing a special talent such as singing, painting, magic tricks, playing a game or playing an instrument would add a very special dimension to honor the child in the classroom. In Nursery School a birthday celebration may be a simple hug. Children with summer birthdays in the preschool classes will be honored sometime throughout the school year.

It is school policy that no written or verbal birthday invitations be passed out or discussed on school property. This is to prevent a child feeling rejected if some of his/her classmates are invited to a party and he or she is not. We encourage parents to be very sensitive to the "act of kindness and thoughtfulness" regarding birthday celebrations and when they are to begin i.e. immediately following pickup from school would not be appropriate. **Note: Parents are not to bring treat bags, candy or sugary foods.**

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

All children need to bring a bag to school with one extra set of clothing labeled with the child's name. During inclement weather hats, mittens and boots should be included. Special artwork and papers will be sent home in the bag. A two-handled large bag that opens at the top works well.

**Nursery School** Children need to bring a small nutritious snack and lunch. Water will be provided. Feel free to send bottles, diapers, large beach towels for nap and/or items to help a child feel comfortable during naptime i.e. pacifier, blanket, special stuffed animal.

**Explorer's & Enrichment Classes:** Children need to bring a small nutritious lunch. Water will be provided.

### **Toys**

EWCM has a wide variety of toys, games and other resources to offer children throughout the day. Personal toys are not permitted in the school, as they can cause disputes and can be broken or lost. The exception to this is show-and-tell or sleep-toys which should be labeled with the child's name. EWCM is not responsible for lost or broken toys. **Do not bring toy guns or war toys.**

### **Snacks and Lunches: (Bring Small Lunch Box—refrigerator space is limited!)**

Nursery School parents will provide their child's healthy nutritious snack, lunch and drink (if juice, we suggest 100% fruit juice). We encourage parents to send **small** healthy snacks and lunches that are low in sugar and salt content and avoid artificial flavorings. Educators will advise where the snack and lunches should be placed. A prayer or action of Thanksgiving will be given before eating.

**LOOK CAREFULLY:** Please note and observe signs posted outside each room indicating if it is a peanut free and/or tree nut free sign due to children with allergies.

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**Nursery School Snacks:** Label the snack container/sack with a child's name, and educators will give directions on where it should be placed each day. Bottles for younger children should also be labeled.

**Preschool Snacks:** Preschool classes will have community snack. Parents will be requested to bring in a healthy nutritional snack such as, cheese and fruit/vegetables two times per year (maximum) to share with the children in their child's classroom. The school will provide a dry snack and water.

**Lunches:** Bring a **small** lunch in a LABELED small lunch box with an ice pack if needed. Label all containers and cups with your child's name. This will assist educators in returning items to correct bags. Pack lunches that are **nutritious, small, and simple**. For younger children, **cut all food into bite-size pieces**.

***Suggestions to Bring:*** *Saltine crackers, graham crackers, muffins, low-sugar cereal, yogurt, sliced cheeses, applesauce, pastas, macaroni and cheese, cottage cheese, rice, graham crackers, meat cut into cubes or thinly sliced, dried meats such as salami or pepperoni sliced thinly, whole grain bread, slightly cooked vegetables, ½ banana, orange sections, fruit, milk. (Grapes need to be cut in half due to choking hazard.)*

***Do Not Bring the Following Foods to School: candy, gum, and carbonated soft drinks. If these foods are brought, the child will be asked to return it to his/her lunchbox and eat it for a snack at home. Not all classrooms have microwaves—do not bring foods that must be heated. Note: Some “Lunchable” type pre-packaged lunches are extremely high in sodium and fat.***

### **Cubbies**

Each classroom has a personal storage place for children's items that we refer to as “cubbies.” The cubbies are located inside or outside of each classroom. **These cubbies are to be used only for the children's artwork, projects, personal belongings, or educator/parent/school correspondence.**

### **Labeling Articles**

Label your child's name with a permanent marker on all items of clothing, lunch boxes/bags, cups, coats, blankets, pacifiers and any other personal item brought to school. The school reserves the right to label items with a permanent marker if not done so by parent. There is a **Lost and Found** box in the hallway for items that have no owner.

### **Clothing: (Bring a Set of Extra Clothing Labeled with Child's Name in Bag Every Day)**

Children should wear clothing suitable for play. Shoes should be closed toe and closed heel for large muscle activities. Our curriculum allows for motor play, cooking, experimenting with paints, and other similar activities. Please do not inhibit a child's creativity by dressing her or him in something “special.” If a parent would be sad or upset that a child spilled something on an outfit, it is not the correct outfit for EWCM. Label all clothing. Send an extra set of “labeled” clothing with the child in his/her bag. **Remember to provide hats, mittens and boots when appropriate**—we will go outside daily providing it is not raining or extremely cold with a wind chill below 26 degrees. Leave children's necklaces or hoods with strings at home as they can become caught on playground equipment.

### **Breastfeeding**

Special arrangements will be made to accommodate parents who want to breastfeed their children who are enrolled in the program. The teacher will coordinate times with the parent.

### **Diaper Changing Facilities**

There are diaper changing facilities available to parents who need to change a child who is not enrolled in the program. A diaper changer is available in the bathroom off room 105.

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### **Naps and Rest Times:**

- Young Toddlers and Toddlers sleep in cribs that are sanitized each day. In order to help children feel more comfortable and safe, we encourage parents to bring a child's favorite sleep items.
- Twos and Young 3s sleep on cots 3 inches from the floor that are sanitized daily. Parents should bring a large towel or beach towel to be placed on top of the cot and child's favorite blanket, stuffed animal and/or "lovey."
- Children in the Preschool 3/4's, 4/5's and Explorer Classes who are at school more than 3 hours will have 15 to 20 minutes of quiet activity in the afternoon reading books or other planned quiet time.

### **Field Trips**

4/5 Preschool, and Explorers: Field Trips are determined by the students' natural curiosity, interests and curriculum in order to provide an enriching experience to enhance community awareness and understanding of the world around them. General guidelines for field trips are as follows:

- Advance notice of the time, date, location and field trip information will be sent home to parents
- All children attending the field trip must have a parent's signature on the Classroom/Emergency Form in order to attend the field trip.
- Transportation for most field trips for 4 year olds and Explorers will be by school buses pre-arranged by the school. (Note: School buses do not have seat belts.)
- A parent may choose to drive his/her own child alone to any field trip.
- If parent drivers are needed, a copy of a current driver's license and current auto insurance coverage must be on file with the classroom educator.
- Parent Chaperones must read and abide by the Guidelines for Parent Chaperones. Teachers will provide a copy of the guidelines to chaperones.
- Expense for field trips will be assessed to each parent's account in October based upon the number of field trips each class has scheduled. Parents will be informed of the cost at Parent Orientation.
- If parent drivers are needed, it is preferred another adult will accompany the adult driving on the field trip. If only one driver is available, the driver must be equipped with a cell phone and know how to use it, have the phone number of the school and another driver in the caravan programmed into the cell phone, stay within a caravan, and travel with a maximum of three children. Parents of the children riding with the single driver must give written permission. There may be only one single driver per classroom per field trip.
- All drivers and passengers in cars must wear a seat belt and follow requirements of the Indiana state law regarding children's car seat safety regulations.
- A driver with a cell phone will be designated as the trip contact person. This contact person will notify the school of any delays or needs while away from school. The driver may not use a cell phone while the vehicle is moving. The vehicle must be parked before using a cell phone.
- Cell phones should be used for emergencies only while on a field trip.
- Educators and drivers must have copies of current emergency numbers for all children participating in the field trip. Teachers must have a classroom information sheet for each child on the field trip
- If all requirements cannot be met as stated above, the field trip will be cancelled by administration.

### **Playground Policy for After School Use: (Playground Open after 2:00 p.m.)**

- The playground is open to EWCM families after 2:00 p.m.
- All children must be supervised by his/her parent while on the playground.

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- All children must stay inside the fenced in area.
- Children are not to climb on or over the fence, on any low tree branches or on rooftops of the playground structures.
- Playing at the creek is prohibited. The creek can rise very quickly after a rainfall. Children must remain on the parking lot side of the bridge and be accompanied by their parent when outside the fenced area.
- For the safety of the children, these guidelines must be followed. EWCM reserves the right to request individuals who are not following the guidelines to leave the Epworth U.M.C. property.

### **Tornado and Other Severe Weather Conditions:**

During Tornado warnings children will be taken to the lowest level and will sit along the wall in the hallway. The Toddler and two-year-old children will be taken to Room 02 off the hallway in the lowest level.

In the event of extreme severe weather such as tornado warnings, ice storms, blizzards, etc., parents will be asked to “sign-out” children if picking up earlier than the normal dismissal time. No parent will be permitted to take neighbor children or relatives unless that child’s parent has notified the office.

### **Discipline Policy**

At EWCM we understand that we are in partnership with parents to teach children “socially acceptable behavior” i.e. the self-respect and safety of everyone involved is preserved. We know it can be challenging for a young child to control his/her emotions and behavior. We know throughout the stages of early childhood development that each child experiences times of heightened emotion, frustration, defiance or withdrawal. We expect young children to be egocentric and just beginning to learn that others have feelings. We anticipate loud, active, egocentric behavior within a normal range, and celebrate the imaginative, creative child that challenges our best-laid plans. As a professional staff, we accept each child’s uniqueness and attempt to know each child individually and to be empathetic to his/her needs.

We believe that children need limits in order to feel secure about themselves and their environment. The purpose of discipline is to help children learn acceptable behavior and develop self-control. The basis for our Discipline Policy is an organized classroom and prepared staff members. At EWCM we strive to develop a positive relationship between the teacher and the child. We also believe that if an interesting and challenging program is offered to the child, then discipline problems are at a minimum. **If inappropriate behavior does occur, we begin with a positive approach.**

#### **The following is considered unacceptable behavior:**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| Leaving the area or group without permission  | Becoming Disruptive                      |
| Running in the classroom or hallways  | Using toys and materials inappropriately |
| Aggressive Behavior   | Throwing toys, rocks, sand               |
| Abusive or inappropriate language   | Lack of cooperation                      |
| Hurting self or others, such as hitting, biting, spitting, kicking and pulling hair |  |

#### **The teacher has these prime responsibilities when dealing with inappropriate behavior:**

1. **Redirection** - Encourage child’s appropriate behavior and/or redirect his or her activities
2. **Conscious Discipline techniques** will be used to help a child regain self-control—stop, take a deep breath and relax and the child will be empowered with problem solving techniques.
3. **Encourage a child to go to the “Safe Place” in the room to regain self-control**
  - A. If child is unable to gain self-control, the teacher will encourage the child to go to the “safe quiet place” in the room.
4. **Child will go to a “Safe Quiet Place” away from the area (i.e. the library in the office)**

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- A. If child continues in the inappropriate behavior and cannot gain self-control and the safe quiet place within the room is ineffective, the child will go to the safe place in the library
- 5. **Behavior Report/Incident Report** (3 Incident Reports will require a Behavior Intervention Meeting)
  - A. If the child's behavior continues to be inappropriate
  - B. OR the severity of the situation denotes an un-resolved situation
- 6. **Behavior Intervention Meeting to Work as a Team to Develop & Implement an Individualized Plan that Supports the Child's Inclusion and Success in the Classroom**
  - A. If the child's behavior continues to be inappropriate, a behavior intervention meeting may take place as we acknowledge the extreme importance for intervention in the early years in establishing acceptable patterns of behavior
  - B. Those in attendance will be the parents, the child's teachers and a member from administration
  - C. This may be called by any of the individuals listed above.
  - D. Evaluation by a professional trained in understanding children with special needs may be recommended. A release form must be signed by the parent before any staff member of EWCM can share any information verbally or written concerning a child who attends EWCM.
  - E. An Individualized Behavior Plan will be written for the child that all agree upon and a follow up will be scheduled within 3 weeks to review the progress (or sooner if needed.)

**In addition to the above, EWCM will use three methods to track inappropriate behavior and communicate with parents:**

1. Daily reports may be written and sent home to the parent. If the teacher deems necessary, a copy will be kept for the school file.
2. Observation Form—inner program documentation of observed inappropriate or challenging behavior. These may be completed any time by a teacher and are used solely to track behavior patterns. These are turned in daily to the lead teacher and then to the office. All forms will be kept in a confidential file.
3. The Behavior Report/Incident Report—These are the Incident Forms and are in duplicate. The original is placed in the Incident Report file, the child's file and the copy is given to the parent.

*If we do not have the parental support and cooperation, our best efforts may not work.* In extreme cases if a child continually hurts others, herself/himself or damages property, we will work with the parents to find a new program that can meet the child's needs.

#### **Behavior Intervention Policy:**

At EWCM, our vision is to provide the best education to all children. We strive to help every child be successful and to achieve the highest potential. We implement the Behavior Intervention Policy when needed to support a child's inclusion and success.

The basis for our Discipline Policy is an organized classroom and prepared staff members. At EWCM we strive to develop a positive relationship between the teacher and the child. We also believe that if an interesting and challenging program is offered to the child, then discipline problems are at a minimum. **If inappropriate behavior does occur, we begin with a positive approach.**

A Behavior Intervention meeting may be called in three different manners:

1. The lead teacher may call for a Behavior Intervention Meeting at any time prior to the third Incident Report as she deems necessary.

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2. Either parent may call for a Behavior Intervention Meeting at any time prior to the third disciplinary action as they deem necessary.
3. A Behavior Intervention Meeting is mandatory after the third Incident Report.

Under the first two scenarios, our first goal will be to determine and identify the behavioral difficulties that the child is having. The child's primary teacher will document the circumstances surrounding the behavior and the current actions that are being taken to correct this. Parents will then be asked to provide information concerning any changes in the home and will give input if they have noticed this behavior and what actions they are currently taking to correct it. An individualized plan of action will then be discussed and agreed upon by all members present. It may be determined that an evaluation by a professional trained in understanding children with behavioral or special needs may be needed. If problems continue, an additional intervention will be scheduled. A release form must be signed by the parent before any staff member of EWCM can share information verbally or written concerning a child who attends EWCM.

The approach will vary slightly in the case that a mandatory Behavior Intervention Meeting has been called after the third Incident Report. Our first goal will be to determine if our program is appropriate to meet child's needs. If it is determined that the program is not the best fit for the child, the director will work with the parents to find a new program that can meet the child's needs. We will follow the steps listed above if it is determined that our program can meet the child's needs.

**In addition to the above, EWCM will use three methods to track inappropriate behavior and communicate with parents:**

1. Daily reports may be written and sent home to the parent. If the teacher deems necessary, a copy will be kept for the school file.
2. Observation Form—an inner program documentation of observed inappropriate or challenging behavior. These may be filled out at any time by any teacher and are used solely to track behavior patterns. These are to be turned in daily to the lead teacher then to the office.
3. The Behavior Report/Incident Report—These are the Incident Forms and are in duplicate. The original is filed in the Incident Report file, the child's file and the copy is given to the parent.

EWCM expects parental support and cooperation, in all aspects of discipline. In extreme cases if a child continually hurts others, herself/himself or damages property, we will work with the parents to find a new program that can meet the child's needs.

The Behavior Intervention Policy's purpose is to establish procedures for the parents, teachers and administration to utilize when planning to meet the needs of the children with unacceptable or inappropriate behavior. A parent, the child's teacher and a member of administration will be in attendance at a Behavior Intervention meeting and agree in advance on the time and date.

### **Biting Policy:**

Biting is a common and a developmentally appropriate behavior in young children, especially from 9 - 30 months. Generally children over the age of 3 have developed more appropriate ways to communicate. Experts in the field of child development report that biting occurs chiefly as a result of a child's incapacity to communicate. Children may become upset by a new experience and may bite as a response. While biting during the toddler years is developmentally appropriate, it is upsetting to parents and caregivers when it occurs. The goal of our policy is to replace the child's undesirable behavior with more effective ways of communication and to ensure the health and safety of everyone in our program. The following is a plan of our proactive strategies:

- For infants and toddlers, positive teething activities will be provided to comfort and sooth their gums

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- When children bite out of frustration or anger, behavior will be redirected to some other activity and/or children will be shown an alternate way to communicate what they want. We will encourage the use of language (verbal and sign) to express wants and needs.
- Parents will be notified if their child is bitten at school. However, in order to protect the privacy of all our families, parents will not be informed of the child's name who bit.
- If a child bites frequently, staff will utilize a more intensive approach, which involves carefully observing the child to determine precipitating events and maintaining a log to help track the behavior. EWCM may add an additional adult to the classroom to shadow the child who is biting. The Behavior Intervention Policy may be activated. (See Page 11 of Parent Handbook.)
- Biting incidents will be communicated to the parents of the biter to ensure staff and parents are working together to understand and prevent this behavior.

#### **Grievance Policy as stated by the EWCM Board:**

Clear and positive communication is essential in the operation of any organization, especially a school for young children. This policy applies to families, staff, board members and school administrators. Should a misunderstanding arise over the operation of the school; actions of a staff member; or decisions made by the administration—the involved parties should proceed in the following manner:

1. Arrange a meeting with the staff person to discuss the situation or use the communication form (available on bulletin board) to make the person aware of your concern and then request a meeting.
2. If this situation is between two staff members or a parent and a staff member, and a meeting and discussion does not lead to resolution, arrange a meeting with the Director. If this situation is between a staff member or parent and the Director, a third party, (a member of the EWCM Council) shall be present. If the discussion does not lead to resolution, then proceed to step 3.
3. If the matter is not resolved in this meeting, request a meeting with the EWCM Board Personnel Sub-Committee. Contact can be made through the Church office on the first level.
4. If the matter is not resolved at this time, it will be the option of the Personnel Sub-Committee to refer the matter to the Staff Parish Committee of Epworth United Methodist Church.

In all situations of miscommunication, it is advised that the parties involved respond in a timely and positive manner with prayerful consideration being the first option. When possible, in-person communication is often the most effective way to communicate a concern. As noted earlier, pick-up and drop-off times are not the best times for staff members to hold these conversations as they are transitioning children to and from the classroom.

#### **Evacuation Procedure from the Epworth U.M.C. Premises Due to Unsafe Environment:**

In the event that EWCM would need to evacuate children from the premises of Epworth United Methodist Church (EUMC) due to an unsafe environment based upon the joint decision of EWCM and the State/City officials from the Police and/or Fire department the following steps would be taken:

- Buses would be dispatched to EWCM.
- EWCM Phone Tree would be activated to inform parents of situation and a Google message would be posted.
- Message would be placed on answering machine updating information.
- EUMC front office (251-1481) would be updated with information, and EUMC staff would assist.
- Educators would have emergency information, class list and would board bus with children.
- State/City Officials would determine what school would be the safest place for our children and advise drivers to take children and staff to the safe place i.e. Eastwood Middle School located on 62<sup>nd</sup> Street east of Allisonville Road or Allisonville Elementary located on 79<sup>th</sup> Street west of Allisonville Road.
- Upon arrival at the "safe school" and with the children safely inside, it will be determined by the State/City Officials if a lock down is to be activated i.e. no one goes in or out until the

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situation is secure and safe. If parents arrive at EWCM before boarding buses, children will be released to parents via the sign-out method.

- A child will not be released to anyone other than a parent or authorized person whose name appears in the Emergency Section of the Classroom Information & Emergency Form unless written authorization from the parent or verbal message has been received from the child's parent prior to children being evacuated from the building. This will help ensure accountability for all children.

### **Threat Involving Fire Arms:**

In the event of an extreme threat when evacuation is not possible, we will follow these guidelines:

- Administrators will contact 911 and stay in contact and follow the commands of the authorities i.e. Washington Township Sheriff's Department or Indiana State Police.
- All outside doors will be locked. Administrators will cover the windows on doors of Room #105 and Room #101
- Educators will lead children from Room 100, 102, 110, 111 to interior Room #101. Children in Room 107, 108 and 109 will be taken to Room #105. Teachers will have emergency forms, flashlight, car keys, class list, 2-way radio, and cell phone if possible.
- EWCM Phone Tree will be activated to inform parents of situation and a Google group message will be posted if possible.
- If possible, a message would be placed on school answering machine updating information.
- EUMC front office will be updated with information and requested to assist.
- If in a lock down state (declared by the authorities), no one would be allowed to enter or leave the building.
- If not in a lock down state (declared by the authorities), parents may enter the building as directed.
- Children will be released to the parent via the sign-out method. A child will not be released to anyone other than a parent or authorized person whose name appears in the Emergency Section of the Classroom Information & Emergency Form unless written authorization from the parent or verbal message has been received from the child's parent prior to children being evacuated from the building. This will help ensure accountability for all children.

### **Web Site:**

EWCM information can be found on the church website at [epworthindy.org](http://epworthindy.org).

### **Google Group:**

In order to increase frequent and updated communication with our families and to save paper, we have set up a Google group as our primary means to communicate with our EWCM families. This is a secure site and can only be viewed by members. We invite all the EWCM families using the email account provided on the enrollment card.

On the Google group under the tab, DISCUSSIONS, the office will send postings, reminders and notifications throughout the year.

- If you do not have a Google account, you will need to create one using the family email that you provided EWCM.
  1. Type into your web browser: Google Groups. A sign-in screen will appear. On the right hand side of the screen, below the sign in information, the option to Create an Account is shown. You would choose that option. The next page allows you to provide your email address, create a password and nickname. After agreeing to the terms and conditions, the next page is an account creation confirmation. At the bottom of the screen is the command to continue. You select that command and your home page

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appears. On the home page, the Epworth WCM group will appear in the section on the right listed as My Groups. If it does not appear, proceed to the next step.

2. Invitation email contains a link in the middle of the email titled: Google Groups Information.
3. When you choose that link, it takes you directly to the Google group home page to allow you to accept the invitation. However, if you do not have a Google account, you will need to set one up as detailed above.

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