



Preschool & Childcare Center
Parent Handbook

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HOPEful Beginnings Parent Handbook

Welcome to HOPEful Beginnings! This handbook contains information regarding the preschool/childcare program. It is very important that you read this handbook and keep it handy as long as your child is enrolled in the program. It will answer many of the questions you may have about our program.

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide a developmentally appropriate Christian environment where children are encouraged to let God love them, love Him in return, and love others in Jesus' name. Our goal is to come alongside parents as a team to help strengthen their children physically, socially, emotionally, mentally and spiritually.

THEME VERSE

Luke 9:48 – "Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me..."

GENERAL INFORMATION

HOPEful Beginnings is a full service licensed preschool and childcare center that is a part of the ministry of HOPE Church. Our program is licensed by the State of North Dakota and Grand Forks County Social Services.

CLASSROOMS AND ADULT/CHILD RATIOS

Infant Room A (Newborns & Beyond).....	Up to 8 children with 2-3 teachers
Infant Room B (Newborns & Beyond)	Up to 8 children with 2-3 teachers
Infant Room C (Crawlers/Pre-Toddlers)	Up to 4 children with 1-2 teachers
Infant Room D (Crawlers/Pre-Toddlers)	Up to 4 children with 1-2 teachers
Toddler A(18 mo. +)	Up to 10 children with 2-3 teachers
Toddler B(18 mo. +)	Up to 10 children with 2-3 teachers
Toddler C(18 mo. +)	Up to 15 children with 3-4 teachers
Toddler D(18 mo. +)	Up to 10 children with 2-3 teachers
3-year-old Preschool A.....	Up to 18 children with 3 teachers
3-year-old Preschool B	Up to 11 children with 1-2 teachers
3-year-old Preschool C	Up to 11 children with 1-2 teachers
4/5-year-old Preschool A.....	1 classroom up to 13 children with 1-2 teachers
4/5-year-old Preschool B.....	1 classroom up to 13 children with 1-2 teachers
4/5-year-old Preschool C.....	1 classroom up to 13 children with 1-2 teachers
4/5-year-old Preschool D.....	1 classroom up to 13 children with 1-2 teachers
4/5-year-old Preschool E.....	1 classroom up to 13 children with 1-2 teachers
4/5-year-old Preschool F.....	1 classroom up to 13 children with 1-2 teachers

HOURS OF OPERATION

Our center is open from 7am – 6pm, Monday through Friday.

CALENDAR

HOPEful Beginnings is always closed:

Labor Day

Thanksgiving Weekend (Thursday and Friday)

Christmas Holiday (Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and the day following Christmas day)

New Years Day

Easter Holiday (Good Friday and Easter Monday)

Memorial Day

Fourth of July

3 staff training days (specifically noted on the annual calendar)

*Depending on the weekday that holidays fall on, there may be additional days that the center is closed. Annual calendars will list exact dates for each year.

*Tuition remains the same for weeks that include holidays.

FINANCIAL PRACTICES

Families will be required to provide their bank account information so that an automatic electronic transfer can be set up for tuition payment transfers from a savings or checking account.

Payments will be withdrawn every other Monday and will be paid in advance for the upcoming two-week period.

In the event that the transfer is declined due to lack of funds, a \$50 service fee will be charged and the full payment will be due immediately. If payment is not received before the next tuition transfer date the child's enrollment will be cancelled and full payment will be due immediately. For any further assistance or questions please speak with the childcare center director.

Electronic tuition statements will be sent bi-weekly.

Since tuition fees are age-based, families will be notified in advance if their tuition statement will be changing.

There will be no refunds for days when children are absent.

A 30-day written notice is required when choosing to cancel enrollment, and the tuition will still be transferred for those 30 days whether or not the child is in attendance.

ENROLLMENT

Children will be enrolled on a first come, first serve basis, depending on openings available in each room. A non-refundable deposit is required at the time of the application to guarantee their spot is held. If no openings are available in a specific room, your name can be added to a waiting list and a deposit is not necessary at that time. We will contact you if an opening becomes available for your child. After the application is submitted, parents must attend a parent orientation meeting and complete all necessary paperwork before their child begins attending. The required forms include Immunization Records, Registration/child information form, copy of birth certificate, annual health records, parent consent forms, food program form, and enrollment form. All records are confidential. If information needs to be updated at any time, it is the parent's responsibility to notify the director in writing.

Children with special needs will be accepted on an individual basis depending on the ability of the center to meet his/her needs. HOPEful Beginnings will not deny enrollment on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, gender, age or disability.

CURRICULUM

We offer developmentally appropriate curriculum that is unashamedly Christ-centered and Bible-based. We strive to teach our lessons in a way that addresses growth in all areas of their lives. We support child-initiated as well as teacher-led learning and feel both are essential learning experiences. Our center prides itself on allowing kids to enjoy hands-on learning experiences... and we'll do our best to clean them up afterward. 😊 Our goal is to provide an environment that promotes the complete development of children, preparing them to advance to a school-age education program. The three curriculums we use are The Creative Curriculum, Sunday School Zone, and ABC Jesus Loves Me.

Infant Daily Schedule

The Infant program is set up on an individual basis, according to the schedule provided by the parent/guardian to the center and designated to enrich the infant's developmental skills. *Times are flexible: Infants receive bottles and naps as needed, diapers are changed/checked every 2 hours.

7:00-9:00	Breakfast/Bottles
8:30-9:00	Diaper Checks/Changes
9:00-10:00	Bottles/morning naps
9:45-11:00	Morning Activity/Play
	*Older Infants Indoor Play/Books/Music/Toys
11:00-11:30	Diaper Changes/Checks
11:30	Lunch
12:15-12:45	Playtime
12:45-1:00	Diaper Changes/Checks
1:00-3:00	Afternoon naps/Quiet Play
3:00-3:20	Diaper Changes/Checks

3:20-3:45	Afternoon snack
3:45-6:00	Indoor/Outdoor Walks/Play
5:00-6:00	Diaper Changes/Checks

Toddler Daily Schedule

Diapers will be changed every 2 hours.

7:00-9:00	Breakfast and Individual Small Group Play
9:00-10:45	Large Group Time – Stories, Songs, Arts and Crafts, etc.
9:30-10:00	Diapers/Potty
10:45-11:30	Indoor/Outdoor Large Motor Play
11:30	Lunch
12:00-12:30	Diapers/Potty
12:30-12:50	Quiet activities on cots
1:00-3:00	Nap time on cots
3:00-3:30	Diapers/Potty
3:30-4:00	Afternoon snack
4:00-5:00	Indoor/Outdoor Large Motor Play
5:00-6:00	Diapers/Potty, Individual/Small Group Play

Preschool 3 Daily Schedule

7:00-7:50	Free Play
7:50-8:00	Wash hands for breakfast
8:00-8:25	Breakfast
8:30-	Preschool Begins
8:30-8:50	Circle Time – Large Group
8:50-9:00	Music and Movement
9:00-9:25	Teacher directed activities – Large Group
9:30-10:25	Center small group/free play
10:30-10:55	Children’s Center/Large Motor Activities
11:00-11:30	Bible Time
11:30-11:40	Wash hands
11:40-12:00	Lunch
12:00-12:45	Children’s center or classroom/brush teeth
12:50-1:00	Clean up/story time
1:00-3:00	Nap/rest time, quiet activities
3:00-3:25	Afternoon Snack
3:30-4:30	Indoor/Outdoor Large Motor Play
4:30-6:00	Center small group/Free play

Preschool 4/5 Schedule

7:00-7:50	Free Play
7:50-8:00	Wash hands, prepare for breakfast
8:00-8:25	Breakfast, name sign-ins, puzzles, reading
8:30	Preschool Begins
8:30-8:50	Circle Time (Large Group) – Calendar, shapes, colors, numbers, theme
8:50-9:00	Music and Movement
9:00-9:25	Teacher directed activities – Small Group
9:30-9:55	Center Free Play
10:00-10:25	Indoor/Outdoor Large Motor Activities
10:30-10:55	Bible Time
11:00-11:25	Center Free Play
11:25	Wash hands, prepare for lunch
11:30	Preschool Ends
11:30-11:55	Lunch

12:00-12:45	Children's Center Large Motor activities, brush teeth
12:50-1:00	Story time
1:00-3:00	Nap/rest time, quiet activities
3:00-3:25	Afternoon snack
3:30-4:30	Indoor/Outdoor Large Motor activities
4:30-6:00	Center small group/Free Play

STAFF

All staff are CPR and First Aid certified. In addition to this training, all staff will have taken an approved basic child course within 3 months of hire.

Qualifications for our preschool teachers include having an Associates or Bachelors degree in Early Childhood Education, or a Child Development Credential.

INCLIMATE WEATHER

We plan to follow the Grand Forks Public School announcements. However, we reserve the right to make decisions based on our own needs if necessary. Please see the HOPEful Beginnings Facebook page for added confirmation. A text message and e-mail will be sent to all families with current contact information in the event of cancellation.

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

Full day preschool enrollees may arrive between 7am and 8:30am, and breakfast is served between 7:30am and 8:20am.

Children enrolling solely in the morning preschool program must arrive between 8:15am and 8:30am, and breakfast is not served to preschool only children.

Children younger than preschool are not required to regularly arrive by the 8:30am start time.

In order to assure the safety of all children, parents are asked to initiate verbal contact with their child's teacher in order for us to know that your child has arrived. We cannot be responsible for a child that we do not know has arrived!

When picking up your children please first stop at the classroom and the teacher will check them out. On the iPad. Initiate verbal contact with the classroom teacher to be sure they are aware that the child is leaving their care. Your children will be released only to people listed on your authorization form. Please advise family and friends who occasionally pick-up that identification will be required.

Preschool children enrolled *only* in morning preschool must be picked up at 11:30am. Any preschool children still remaining in our care after 11:45am will be charged \$10 per 10 minutes for each child. Children who are enrolled full time must be picked up no later than 6pm and will be charged an additional \$10 per 10 minutes for each child that is in our care. Late fees will be billed on the next tuition statement.

If your child will not be attending any day we ask that you notify your child's teacher through the tadpole app. You are able to mark your child absent through the app or you can message your child's teacher.

ILLNESS

In effort to keep all of our kids safe and healthy, please keep your child home if they are sick. We have a separate form that addresses our policies for various specific illnesses that every family must read and sign before their child begins attending. We know that often your parental discernment is the best indicator in determining if your child should stay home, but here is a short review of our guidelines for families to refer to and follow:

- Must have been fever free *with no medication* at least for 24 hours (100.4 degrees constitutes a fever)
- Diarrhea and vomit free for 24 hours
- Pink-Eye: Children can be readmitted after seeing a doctor and seeking proper treatment
- Head lice or other infestations: Children can be readmitted when they have completed the prescribed treatment, are free of nits, and have been cleared to return by public health or your medical provider.
- Communicable Diseases (Hand Foot and Mouth, Chicken Pox, Fifth's Disease, etc.): Please notify the center if your child becomes ill with one of these highly contagious diseases. Together we can work as a team to help all families be on alert for similar symptoms and keep our center as healthy as possible. Always follow doctors order and consult the center director before planning to return.

MEDICATIONS

We will work with your family to keep your kids at their healthiest! Parents can come administer medications themselves or choose to fill out our authorization form to allow staff to administer them. Prescription medications must be given to the person it was originally prescribed for, and must be brought to the center in its original, properly labeled container.

DIAPERING & TOILET TRAINING

Parents are asked to bring their own preferred brand and size of diapers for your child's diaper cubby, as well as any diaper creams you would like us to have access to. Our teachers will let you know if you are running low and need to supply more.

Please let your child's teacher know if you are ready to begin the toilet training process so we can support you and work together on this major developmental step! Please send extra clothing to accommodate us during this transition time.

MEALS AND SNACKS (Full day childcare only)

HOPEful Beginnings will serve breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack to all of our fulltime children. Breakfast will be prepared in the rooms by the childcare providers. Our onsite center cook will prep the next day breakfast, prepare and serve the lunch in the classrooms, prep the afternoon snack, and administer all clean up in the center kitchen. All children will be encouraged to eat and try new foods, but not forced. We will do the best we can to meet varying dietary needs, but if your child has *any* food restrictions please contact the director to discuss how to best accommodate your child. Weekly menus will be posted. Refer to the daily schedule for meal times.

All children and staff will wash hands prior to snacks and meals being served, following the hand washing procedures posted at each hand washing sink.

When serving meals, the center cook as well as any applicable employee, will wear gloves and/or use tongs.

A designated staff person in each room will be responsible for sanitizing the food contact areas, i.e. tables, highchair trays, etc.

Lunch will be served family-style in each classroom. Food will be served and eaten on the hard surfaces in each classroom. Any food brought from home for a child (allergy or specific diet reasons) will be stored in the kitchen fridge, and warmed up in the kitchen. Staff in that specific classroom will be responsible for preparing that child's meal.

It is important to note that we are a tree-nut- free facility. We welcome treats for occasions such as birthdays or special events, but please respect the nut-free policy.

CLOTHING

Each child needs at least one complete spare outfit to be kept at the center. Please label all pieces of clothing to avoid confusion.

NAP AND REST TIME (Full day childcare only)

Naptime is an important part of our daily program. It is a time when children are given the opportunity to lie down, rest and re-group. All children participate in rest time. Children rest quietly on their cots. Caregivers may rub the children's back if needed. The length of quiet time depends on the child's individual needs. Caregivers strive for a warm, relaxed atmosphere where soft music is played. Infants follow unrestricted individualized napping schedules. Toddlers and preschoolers have an afternoon rest period. Children who are not asleep after resting on their cots for 30 minutes may get up and participate in quiet activities.

Children need a labeled blanket that comes with them on Monday and goes home to be washed on Friday.

FIELD TRIPS

We look forward to taking advantage of opportunities to take your kids out to enjoy real-world learning experiences! We will let parents know in advance if we are looking forward to any excursions so you can prepare your child. We always welcome parents to join us on these fun adventures and may even ask for extra help from time to time.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY

For specific field trips, children will be transported in HOPEful Beginnings vans that will be serviced on a six-month basis with a registered development. Overall checks will be performed on the vans by the driver(s) before leaving the center. All drivers are employees of the daycare and all drivers have appropriate and approved driving records.

The following are rules and guidelines that all children must follow when transportation is provided.

1. Children are to remain seated at all times
2. Seat belts are to be worn at all times until the driver instructs children to unbuckle/or assist to unbuckle.
3. Children must sit in designated seats, depending on their height/weight/age. They will be designated a booster seat, child seat or other according to the law.
4. Children are encouraged to talk amongst themselves, this is a social part of their day, however we do discourage loud/screaming voices.
5. Children are reminded that there is no food or drinks allowed during travel to ensure safety.
6. The windows on the vans/buses are to be adjusted by the driver to ensure the children feel comfortable in warm weather.
7. Children are not allowed to get out of their seat while the vans/buses are in operation. In case of an emergency, they may comply with the driver's directions to do so.
8. There is a mobile phone on the vans/buses for emergency calls.
9. If there is a behavior concern or safety concern, the driver will pull over to remind children of behavior requirements, and the driver will relay the information back to the Supervisor and Director of Operations and may then be relayed to the parent/legal guardian if necessary.

Our Policy follows the Vehicle Safety Act in regards to the Child Restraints and Booster Seats laws. The following is provided by the Vehicle Safety Act website:

For all children using our transportation vehicles, we require the child's height, weight, and the age of the child.

Booster Seats:

- Required by law for children under the age of 8, weighing between 18kg and 36 kg (40-80 lb) and less than 145 cm (4'9") tall. Once a child exceeds any one of the above criteria they may be ready to use a seat belt alone.
- The middle of the child's ear should not be above the back of the vehicle seat, headrest or booster seat.

OUTDOOR POLICY

Outside play is a regular daily activity in which all children in the program are expected to participate. If your child is not feeling well, please do not send him/her to the center. A staff person will not be able to stay indoors with them. We do not have adequate staffing to allow for this. Children who do not feel well enough to participate in group care should be kept at home.

We feel outside play is valuable to the children's physical well-being. Doctors have stated that fresh air is healthier for children than "stuffy closed up rooms". The staff will determine the length of time spent outdoors based on the weather and the children's interest. The National Weather Service temperature and wind-chill chart will be used to determine whether the exposure risk are too great.

Please provide your child with appropriate outdoor clothing each day. During the winter months you will need mittens, hats, warm jackets, snow pants and boots. Please remember to label them with your child's name.

We request that children (preschool and older) wear shoes at all times. Please remember this during the winter when children are wearing boots. We advise a shoe with a rubber sole to help prevent injuries on climbing equipment. We discourage sandals and flip flops.

AQUATIC POLICY

HOPEful Beginnings does not offer water activities.

SUPPORT FUNCTIONS

The support functions include a commercial kitchen staffed by 1 full-time cook, 1 part-time kitchen assistant, zoned heating and air conditioning, and in-house laundry for infant and toddler linen. The center is cleaned daily by a dedicated cleaning staff.

COMMUNICATION

Parents of infants and toddlers will receive a daily report via the Tadpoles app about their child's "ins and outs." (What went in and what came out! ☺) You can look for any other extra communication on that same app so you can be well informed about how your child's day was.

Preschool families can look forward to a monthly newsletter to let you know about upcoming special events, what we'll be learning about that month, reminders, etc. Our newsletters will be provided to each family through the Tadpoles app. If you'd like a paper copy, please contact your child's teacher.

Parent-Teacher conferences will be scheduled twice a year (preschool only) to review each child's progress and developmental success. These meetings will encourage ongoing communication and help strengthen and refine our goals for your child's growth and learning. Toddler conferences will be held at the 30-month age mark. Additional conferences may be added throughout the year if needed, but please keep in mind that pick-up and drop-off times are not the best times to address concerns with your child's teacher. We would love to set up a meeting with you in a setting where your teacher can devote their full attention to you.

ACCIDENTS & INJURIES

An incident will be documented via the Tadpoles app and parents will be notified through the app of the incident. Parents will be notified by phone as quickly as possible if the child has any injury that places him/her at risk. When discussing accidents, we will always keep your child's identity private if they are involved in an activity the results in the injury of another child. In the same way, we will not disclose the identity of the other child involved if your child is the one injured. We will speak to all families involved, but this helps protect the children and we ask that you honor that.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

Our ultimate goal is to keep every child safe and to foster a fun, positive learning environment for everyone present. We also know that children are growing and learning, and discipline situations often open the door for teaching moments that allows for emotional and spiritual growth. With that in mind, teachers will use discernment in each situation and use methods such as re-directing their play, modeling alternate appropriate options, one-on-one discussion, and small group conflict resolution. Occasionally children may be asked to take a break from their interactive play and be given personal space to regain self-control before re-joining the group activities. Teachers will discuss any severe or recurring behavior concerns with the child's parents so they can work together towards improvement. The center reserves the right to discontinue enrollment of any child whose behavior is consistently unacceptable, or endangers his/her own safety or the safety of others.

At HOPEful Beginnings we are committed to offering a safe and nurturing environment for our children. Kids will be kids, and discipline is sometimes necessary to maintain appropriate behaviors in the groups. HOPEful Beginnings employees will never resort to violence when working with a defiant child. Force is never to be used when disciplining a child. Language must always be respectful and constructive in an effort to correct the behavior.

Diverting the child's attention and discussing the problem, removal from the situation, verbal warnings (1-2-3) are all appropriate ways of working with behavior issues. At no time should a child be singled out and belittled, especially in front of his/her peers. A group warning followed by an individual discussion away from group is a more effective way of communicating that an individual child's behavior is inappropriate.

A child should never be 'grabbed' and pulled from a group for discipline. A child may not be punished for lapses in toilet training.

If a child fails to change his/her behavior after all of these suggestions, it may be necessary to remove the child from the group for a supervised “cool-down” period. Staff will insure adequate supervision for the group, and accompany the child to a quiet location in the center. If a child is unable or unwilling to walk to the cool down room he/she will be carried by staff to the cool down room. Time spent away from the group should be minimal, and if the cool-down period continues for more than 5-10 minutes, an alternative should be sought out so that staff may return to their group.

CONFIDENTIALITY

We take your personal information seriously, and will not share your family’s information with anyone before asking your permission. We do, however, enjoy sharing photos of our experiences, and sometimes even fun quotes and observations of the great things your kids share with us during the day! If for any reason you are uncomfortable with your child’s photo being used in our newsletters or any publications, please let us know in advance. We will not list any names alongside children’s photos on any publicly dispersed literature.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Our staff has an emergency procedure plan so that all staff members are well equipped to remain calm and effective in the event of tornadoes, fires, lock downs, evacuations, and medical emergencies. In the event that we need to close the center mid-day, parents will be notified with a text message and e-mail.

SECURITY

HOPE Church cares very much about the security of the children we care for at HOPEful Beginnings. Security cameras in each room and high traffic entrances are installed. Our key fob system allows only those with a key fob that has HB access to enter our facility during our center hours. Each family will receive 2 key fobs. Additional key fobs can be purchased for \$5.00. If you lose your key fob, please let the Director know ASAP so the fob can be disabled.

The **MANAGEMENT OF HOPEFUL BEGINNINGS** is dedicated to excellence in the delivery of childcare in the Grand Forks areas. We seek counsel of parents as well as social service agencies and childcare, health and education professional to establish and fine-tune our program and facility standard.

To report a licensing rule violation, reports may be made at the local county special service office, to any county social service officer or to any of the state’s regional human service centers. Reports can be made in person, by telephone or in writing. Written reports can be made using a state reporting form called a “1296”. These forms are available from all county social service offices, childcare resource and referral offices, regional human service centers or at www.state.nd.us/eforms.

Parents are encouraged to spend time with their children at the Center and are welcome to drop in to check on them at any time. HOPEful Beginnings is happy to have your family here. We hope you and child(ren) have a wonderful experience

(Parent Signature)

(Date)

(Director Signature)

(Date)