



# JOURNEY LUTHERAN

## Early Childhood Center PARENT HANDBOOK

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136 South Washington Street, Oxford, MI 48371

Phone: 248-628-2011

Email: [Roxann@JourneyLutheran.Church](mailto:Roxann@JourneyLutheran.Church)

Web Site: [www.journeylutheran.church](http://www.journeylutheran.church)

Journey Early Childhood Center is designed to mesh appropriate materials and equipment with the developmental needs of children as they gain mastery over the important foundation skills that are the forerunner to reading, writing, and math. Journey is a developmental, hands-on, language-rich & music-infused program where art and literature abound in a happy, friendly environment. The Christian faith and its guidelines are modeled in our classroom, and we promote the importance of the family as the primary classroom for children.

Journey Early Childhood Center is a developmental Christian Preschool dedicated to the belief that children thrive in an environment where Jesus is the lead teacher. Our developmental approach allows children to look, touch, explore, smell, manipulate, experiment, and sometimes even taste things that come their way. Our program is rich in all the things children are hungry to learn. Our learning units are exciting explorations of the world and people around them. The teachers love questions even if they don't know why God made the color red. Getting to know about their world should be a delightful and exciting discovery. Our goal is to help children learn the joy of finding out about 'stuff'! Maybe God made the color red because it makes children smile.

## **Introduction**

This handbook contains the policies and procedures of Journey. It is meant to serve as a reference guide. It is not meant to cover every aspect of the early childhood program or every situation which might arise. Parents should feel free to contact the Director with questions concerning the contents of this handbook.

We reserve the unilateral right to add, delete, or amend the policies and procedures in this handbook.

This handbook is the exclusive property of Journey and is intended for the exclusive use of the parents/guardians of enrolled children. This handbook may not be copied or distributed to any third party without the express written permission of Journey.

Journey Early Childhood Center is licensed by the State of Michigan and is periodically reviewed to ensure that a safe environment and quality program is provided.

Journey admits students of any race, sex, color, and national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to the children at the preschool. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national, and ethnic origin in the administration or its educational policies and other programs. Its admission policies include a first preference for members of Journey Lutheran Church. Children who have attended Journey Early Childhood Center and their siblings will be given priority for enrollment.

Members and non-members of Journey Lutheran Church are invited to attend Sunday school, church services and church activities. Church times are listed on our web site. Please check the web site for special holiday times as well.

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# Proclaiming Christ's Cross

## Mission Statement

In the name of God the Father and under the direction of the Holy Spirit, Journey offers a developmental Christian pre-kindergarten program dedicated to sharing the love and salvation offered by Jesus Christ; that those entrusted in our care follow Jesus, learn & grow.

## Philosophical Statement

We are a Christian Preschool dedicated to the growth and development of the whole child. Because the development of self-concept begins at birth, respect for each child's individuality is crucial so they may come to know they are a unique and special part of God's creation. It is the desire of our staff that your child's contact with our school is a positive one. Our goal is to help the children of Journey feel safe, secure, and loved, that they may come to know the love and redemption of Jesus Christ. We are dedicated to work with families to help form a comfortable transition between home and school.

We will tell the children about the Triune God and their Savior Jesus Christ. We will use lessons from the Bible to teach the children about the wonders of their world and how God planned for us to live in a loving relationship with Him and the people around us. We will make a special use of the Word of God in our science studies as we talk about God as the Creator, and in our social studies as we talk about how we are all special in His eyes. We will speak to God each day in prayer before we eat, at chapel time.

## Contact Information

Director Roxann Marchesi (pronounced Mar-K-Z) Cell # 248-342-5875  
Pastor Matt Schuler Email: [SchulerMatt@gmail.com](mailto:SchulerMatt@gmail.com) Cell#313-702-8544  
Church # 248-628-2011

**We welcome you** to Journey. We are honored that you have allowed us to share this school year with your family. The Lord has made it possible for us to serve your community since January 1965. All staff must meet the state of Michigan's requirements for employment in the area of Early Childhood Education. In addition, our teaching staff is certified in CPR, First Aid and blood borne pathogens training. A criminal history check, fingerprinting and a Department of Human Services Central Registry clearance has been conducted on all staff members. Our staff has training in all developmental domains through a variety of methods which include college/university course work, seminars, conferences, on line/on-site training and reference books. We are a member of the Lutheran Education System.

## School Hours

Monday – Wednesday – Friday Morning Class.....9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.  
Tuesday – Thursday Morning Class.....9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.  
Lunch Bunch.....11:30 to 12:30  
Full Day.....9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

## **Parent / Staff Communication**

Informal and formal methods of communication take place in the form of newsletters, calendars, wipe off boards, emails, hardcopy information & conversation. 'Like' Journey Lutheran Church on Facebook to see photos that the Teachers take.

There are two scheduled conferences: a 'getting to know you' conference in the fall and a 'mid-year check in' conference in the winter. Conferences are not mandatory, and parents or teachers may confer at any time by phone, email or in person.

## **Daily Reports**

We don't typically write up daily reports unless there is a severe developmental delay or a behavior issue that we are working on improving. Know that if there is something we are concerned about, we will not wait for conferences. We will contact you – most likely via email. We expect you to do the same. MOST students are on their very best behavior at school.

## **Arrival & Dismissal**

A staff member will greet families at the North Door between 8:55 & 9:10am. You will have the option to drop off at the door or escort your child to their classroom. If you choose to drop off in the classroom, we ask that you don't linger because it can trigger separation anxiety. If parents want to visit with each other, you can do that upstairs in the community room. A parent or teacher will check your child in by placing your initials next to their name on the attendance sheet, at the sign in station located in the hallway, outside the classrooms. After the 15 minute drop off window – plan on bringing your child into their classroom. We prefer staff not leave the classrooms during class time.

When you arrive to pick up your child at the end of the class session the children will typically be outside in the play yard. If it is raining or below 20 degrees with wind chill or if we are not on the playground for some reason, you will pick up at the preschool entrance. When school is over the children will be released only to those persons designated on your child's information card. If the person picking up does not pick up regularly please alert the staff ahead of time and ask the person picking up to bring their drivers license so that we may check it with the information card. If a change needs to be made to the information card, please let a member of our staff know.

## **Late Pick Up**

Communication is key. If a child is not picked up 15 minutes after the end of the session and we have not been notified by you or been able to reach you by phone, we will follow this procedure:

We will call both parents. If we are unable to reach the parents we will begin calling the other contact numbers you listed on your Child Information card. If we are unable to reach anyone we will leave a message. If the child has not been picked up 30 minutes after class has ended and we still haven't been contacted by a parent, we must call protective services, and then the police. If late pick ups become a problem, you will be asked to find another program that better accommodates your schedule.

## **Parking Lot Information**

In the name of fenders and broken bones...please ENTER THE PARKING LOT FROM THE NORTH DRIVEWAY and exit from the south driveway. If you use the Pearl Street egress, please watch your speed. Many young children live on that street and residents have asked that we slow down while traveling through their neighborhood.

## **Daily Routine**

Our classes start by *welcoming* the students into the classroom; students wash hands & sign-in.

**Opening** (10-15 min.) is where we talk about what we will do that day, the calendar+

**Chapel** (10-15 min.) includes a Bible lesson, devotion or puppet skit, singing & prayer.

**Center Time** (60 minutes +) students explore classroom activities = free play

\* If we are unable to go outside a physical activity will be offered during this time.

**Clean Up** (5 min.) students & teachers put toys away.

**Snack** (15 min.) students pray, wash hands & eat snack.

**Circle Time** (10 min.) students hear a story, dance or play a game.

**Outside** (15 minutes+) students play outside on the playground.

**Lunch Bunch** (60 minutes – optional for morning students) eat lunch & play/large motor activities

### **Full Day Students Routine Continues**

**Nap/Quiet Time** (60 minutes) Rest or quiet activities

**Bathroom & Clean Up Cots** (15 minutes)

**Large Group Activity** (15 minutes) Story or game or dance or fingerplays & other

**Outside** (15 minutes +)

**Snack** (15 minutes)

**Center Time** (60+ minutes)

**Clean Up** (5 minutes)

**Story Time** (10 minutes)

**Bathroom & Pack up to go home** = Dismissal upstairs at the North Door

Times are approximate & subject to change due to the flexible nature of our early childhood program.

*The State of Michigan requires a minimum of 60 minutes of uninterrupted 'work time'/free choice of centers to develop friendship & social skills.*

## **Dress**

We do a lot of hard work at preschool and most of it is done on the floor or with messy art materials. Be sure that your child is dressed in PLAY CLOTHES. Sweatpants, stretch pants or easy button jeans and sneakers are good choices. No overalls or one-piece outfits that will make using the bathroom difficult. Please send your child to school in sturdy shoes with non-slip soles. During cold weather, legs should be covered. Also, be sure that your child has appropriate clothing for outdoor play – year-round. Please PUT YOUR CHILD'S NAME ON ALL THEIR BELONGINGS – i.e. coat, hat, boots, backpack, etc.

## **Winter Wear**

While it is our plan to go outside EVERY DAY, we will not go outside if it is below 20 degrees with the wind chill factored in. This typically happens in January – which is good timing because that's when we spend a great deal of time screening students for February conferences. We recommend that you get into the habit of bringing outside gear EVERY time you come to school. You will be doing it from now until middle school. You can check the The Weather Channel. We use the phone app set for Oxford, then look at the projected temperature for 11:00 am or 2:00 pm depending on the class & don't forget to minus the wind chill. There are other reasons we do not go outside during the school year, mostly due to Murphy's Law. It may seem odd that we wouldn't be outside on a nice day but please take into consideration the organized chaos that is preschool.

## Winter Wear Continued...

Please send your child to school with the following winter gear:

We will help teach your child 'how to' and what order to put their winter gear on – please have them practice at home as well. Here are a few tips to help your child get ready on their own, with less frustration. First, label all clothing. It's so easy to mix up boots and snow pants that are similar (most children bring black snow pants). When purchasing winter clothing keep in mind that your child will be putting these items on (for the most part) by themselves. **BOOTS:** Slip on style, no laces or zippers. **MITTENS** are so much easier to put on than gloves. Please don't send them with the snowmobile/ski mittens that zip half way up their arm. These do not promote independence – it is not possible for preschoolers to put these on. **COATS** with liners are particularly challenging – please avoid these. For some reason, children are fascinated with taking these apart EVERY DAY. Don't forget the **SNOW PANTS**. Our recommendation is to bring the winter gear in a separate bag (any plastic or reusable shopping bag will do). That way students can still fit art work and class projects in their back packs.

Also note that **BOOTS are NOT ALLOWED to be worn during class time**. Please consider the classroom like your living room. Children play on the floor. To avoid children sitting on damp, muddy or snow-covered carpet we insist that students wear shoes in the classroom. We have waterproof mats as you walk into the classroom and in front of the lockers. This is where the boots go.

## Parent Participation & Guidelines for Volunteers

Please consider donating your time. Children love having their parent, grandparent, aunt or uncle in the classroom. The staff loves having you there too! We need to know ahead of time that you will be staying. All supervised volunteers must have a public sex offender registry (PSOR) clearance BEFORE having contact with a child in care. Any individual who is registered on the public sex offender registry is PROHIBITED from having any contact with any child in care. Parents, as a courtesy, we want to inform you that we will run a PSOR check on you. If you volunteer, **YOU MUST sign in**, on the attendance page for your students class. The following are some guidelines to make your stay more enjoyable as well as helpful.

**#1** Get instructions from the lead teacher. If they don't give you any or if the instructions are unclear ASK.

**#2** You will NOT be responsible for discipline. Redirect, redirect, redirect...If discipline is necessary, the teachers will take care of it. You should never be alone with a child – Example: helping in the bathroom- let the staff do this.

**#3** Plan on working a center time activity like reading a story or playing a game with students.

**#4** Attend to the needs of individual children. Example: tie shoes. If a child is distracted during a group time ask them to sit near you.

**#5** If you help with snack set up, wash your hands with soap for 20 seconds before rinsing. Clear the tables & then use the 3 step cleaning process that is posted to sanitize the tables. We have a bucket & spray bottles that are numbered for your convenience (1 Soap & Water, 2 Rinse, 3 Sanitize). Double check for food allergies or special dietary needs BEFORE putting any food on the tables. There is a chart on the cabinet door.

**#6** Cleaning up after class:

**TABLES**= Wipe down all tables with Clorox wipes

**BATHROOMS**= Use a Clorox wipe in each bathroom to clean the sink, faucet & fixtures, focusing on things hands come into contact with. Then wipe the handle on the toilet & the toilet seat. Make sure bathrooms are stocked with paper towel & toilet paper for the next class. Pick up any towels off the floor & 'step' on the paper towels in the trash can to compress them. If it's the end of the school day, all trash cans must be emptied.

**FLOORS**= Broom sweep the snack area & vacuum classroom if needed.

**TRASH**= At the end of each day, all trash cans get emptied & the trash get put in the brown bin outside the fire door.

**FRIDAY**= At the end of the day, clean out the fridge. (Staff will do this)

**OTHER: CLOSE DOORS BEHIND YOU.** Children may wander. In an effort to keep children in a well-defined & supervised area we must keep classroom doors closed. The doors are equipped with a bell to alert us if a door is opened. Watch the doors especially at pick up & drop off.

**SAFETY FIRST** Be alert to the fact that one adult must be at the front of the line and one must be positioned at the end of the line whenever we are transitioning from one place to another. It is imperative that staff take a head count BEFORE and AFTER transitioning – substitutes can help with this while the teacher is leading the group activity.

### **When Volunteering**

To have the best day possible, please leave siblings, especially the two and under crowd with Grandma. One exception may be infants who sleep most of the time anyway. Toddlers require so much attention that it is difficult to focus on your preschooler.

### **Staff & Volunteer Screening & Supervision Policy**

Licensing requires a comprehensive background check on center employees and unsupervised volunteers. All supervised volunteers shall receive a public sex offender registry (PSOR) clearance before having any contact with a child in care. A copy of this clearance must be kept on file at the center. Any individual registered on the PSOR is prohibited from having contact with any child in care. Any volunteers, including parents, who have not completed a comprehensive background check will be supervised, at all times. All staff and volunteers must complete the Abuse & Neglect form.

### **Staff Training/Professional Development Plan**

Within 90 days of hire, all staff will complete Health & Safety Course I & II through MiRegistry. Ideally staff would complete Course 1 & 2 BEFORE working with children. If that is not possible, the Director must give a brief training/overview of the following topics: Course 1=Administration of medication, prevention & control of infectious diseases, immunizations, prevention of & response to emergencies due to food & allergic reactions. Course 2=Building & Physical premises safety, including identification of & protection from hazards that can cause bodily injury, emergency preparedness & response planning for emergencies, handling & storage of hazardous materials & the appropriate disposal of bio contaminants, precautions in transporting children, prevention of shaken baby syndrome, abusive head trauma & child maltreatment, recognition & reporting of child abuse & neglect and general child development.

New staff need CPR & First Aid *Training* within 90 Days of hire.

When the department of licensing & regulatory affairs or the department of education publishes a notice that a new health & safety or updated training/refresher activity has been published on MiRegistry, the licensee shall ensure that all personnel read and acknowledge the document or complete the activity within 6 months of the notice. Example: Refresher courses through MiRegistry.



## Oral Health Policy

We recommend that parent's brush their child's teeth prior to attending preschool in the morning And again, in the evening at home. Due to sanitary concerns and time constraints, we do not brush teeth after morning snack. IF your child stays for lunch and you would like them to brush after eating; please send their toothbrush & toothpaste in a storage container or ziplock bag. We will allow time for students to brush their teeth.

## Nutrition Plan / Snack Instructions

When it is your child's turn to bring morning snack in for the class their name will be listed on the 'Snack Calendar'. Please bring in a healthy, ready-to-serve **peanut/ tree nut free** snack at drop off (please do not interrupt class to drop off snack). We will serve water to drink. Send enough for your child's classmates and a few extra for incidentals. Send napkins, and whatever else is needed to serve the snack. Afternoon snack will be provided by the school.

To provide a nutritious snack for the children the use of sugar, salt, and caffeine should be kept to a minimum. Fruits, vegetables, cheese, and other wholesome foods will be used. Candy and chocolate are not acceptable choices. Special treats will be reserved for the bike day picnic & holiday parties only. We encourage families to bring nutritious snacks that are purchased from a licensed food provider rather than being homemade; we need to make sure food is safe for children who may have food allergies or sensitivities. When choosing a snack please read labels carefully. Keep in mind we are a **peanut/tree nut free** school. Pay close attention to the ingredients; do not pick items with allergy and ingredient alerts such as: "May Contain Peanuts or Tree Nuts", "Processed on shared equipment with nuts" or "Contains peanut or tree nut ingredients". Below is a list of approved snacks and brands that we know do not contain nuts. If you are unsure about a snack, please ask a member of our staff. A record of the snacks that have been served is located on a clip board on the snack counter in each classroom.

**Birthday Snacks:** Birthday snacks must follow the same guide lines, but you can bring in fancy plates, cups or napkins to celebrate. **DO NOT** bring cup cakes, ice cream, cookies, rice Krispy treats or other snacks that are not on our approved list. This type of treat will only be served on 'holiday party days', such as the Fall Fest, Christmas, Valentine's Day and Easter). We will do our best to assign your child a snack day close to their birthday or half birthday.

## Afternoon Snack

Afternoon snacks will be provided from our 'back-up snack stash' that parents donate. If it's ever on your heart to donate an extra snack – we are grateful.

## Approved Snacks

#1 Teacher Choice: Fruit or vegetables (cleaned & cut. Grapes must be quartered due to choking & no kabobs)  
Applesauce cups  
Bagels  
Cheese (sliced or cheese sticks)  
Cheez-It crackers = Sunshine brand  
Graham Crackers  
Goldfish Crackers by Pepperidge Farms  
Keebler Brand Scooby Grahams, Wheatables, Grahams or Club crackers  
Animal Crackers, Cheese Nips, Teddy Grahams  
Pretzels (really check these labels for trace nuts)  
Plain popcorn (already popped, because we don't have microwaves in the classroom)  
Yogurt – not go-gurt please – its really messy.

**Water** is available to children throughout program hours. Additional water is available when temperatures are higher or physical activity increases. Please **DO NOT** send giant/heavy water bottles in their backpacks. It's just too heavy for them to carry.

### **Lunch Bunch**

This is a bonus opportunity for students to socialize & play together. It is included in the full day program and optional for morning only students. It is popular, so I recommend planning ahead and paying in advance with tuition so that you can receive the discounted price. **BRING A LUNCH** and write your child's name on either the outside or inside of the lunch box/bag. Once students are finished eating, we will have a large motor activity.

### **Nutrition Education**

The children are given opportunities to understand why eating healthy is important, and to learn to form healthy eating and activity habits. Nutrition information is shared with children through books & activities. Information is shared with parents through informational emails. Meal service information is in this parent handbook as well as snack calendars in each classroom, snack calendars are emailed in the weekly newsletter & a hard copy snack calendar is sent home via backpack once per month. Nutrition education also includes opportunities for our program to learn about the prevention of childhood obesity, basic principles of child nutrition and healthy eating habits and experiences. We share this information with parents as well. We believe eating healthy is important for children, and we can help your child learn about and enjoy lots of good foods each day. Our approved snack list is planned to provide snacks that meet federal and state rules and guidelines. Children can enjoy foods that will help them grow and learn to pick foods that will help them live a healthy life.

### **Show & Tell Instructions**

The students in the Monday/ Wednesday/ Friday class will have the opportunity to bring a show and tell item to school on their snack day. Have your child bring the item in a paper grocery bag or similar bag. Help your child choose an appropriate (non-violent) item to show. It could be something that is associated with the weekly theme, letter of the week or the child's choice. Help your child come up with three (**ONLY 3**) about the item and write them on the outside of the bag. Your child will be allowed to show the item to their classmates after attempting to guess what's in the bag. The purpose of show and tell is to increase your child's oral language skills as well as help develop a positive self image. Your enthusiasm and involvement in the preparation of the show and tell activities will help your child gain confidence and lead to greater success in oral language skills.

### **VALUING CULTURAL DIFFERENCES/Cultural Competence**

C 14: A written plan for integrating policies, procedures & practices that reflects a respect & valuing of children's culture & demonstrates Cultural competence.

The purpose of this plan is to actively respect & value our student's culture & celebrate cultural differences. Our goal is to develop positive attitudes towards cultural differences.

This is important to children, families and staff because it is vital that children learn how to respect & accept people whose culture and background differ from their own, In order to reduce the problems brought on by discrimination in society.

Some of the tools used in our program are books, posters & family photos in our class book. We consider parents and other family members valuable resources. Family members are invited to come to school to share information, traditions, culture and sometimes food.

This plan meets the needs of our students, their families and our staff by exploring and appreciating cultural differences in an inclusive environment. We respect each other and differences are valued.

This information is shared with parents in our Family Handbook and on Parent Orientation Night, when we give an open invitation for parents to share a family tradition or something from your family's culture or even be a guest reader. This information is shared with our students by inviting parents & family members to volunteer in our classroom.

## **Communication**

You will receive most school communications via email/weekly newsletter. It is the information highway to your child's preschool experience. You will be notified of any major changes in the classroom. For example, the use of special services like vision or hearing screening or any long-term change of classroom staff. Also included will be the snack calendar, family directory and information about field trips. There will also be a section called 'PARENT RESOURCES' with recommended articles, covering the most requested early childhood topics.

NOTE: Birthday Party Invitations – Please DO NOT plan on distributing birthday party invitations at school unless every child in the class is invited. Do not ask our staff to pass party invitations out for you. Use the student directory to email or contact parents & mail the invitations via the United Postal Service. Thank you.

## **Scholastic Book Orders**

You will receive Scholastic book orders once per month. Place your order & pay ON LINE ONLY. Please use the following class activation code 'HWD4T' for your initial account setup. When books are delivered the Director will sort them & send them home in your child's backpack.

## **Parties**

We have low key parties & celebrations. If you would like to volunteer at a party, we will have a special sign up. We must limit volunteers due to building capacity & fire codes. For this reason, we ask that you be considerate of the other parents who would like to volunteer & visit the classroom – please take turns.

Do not bring siblings with you when you volunteer. Toddlers require so much attention that it is difficult to focus on your preschooler.

## **Field Trips & Transportation policy**

A parent must agree to and sign the field trip policy before their child may attend field trips. When a field trip is planned, a parent or other responsible adult will be responsible for transporting and supervising your child during the activity. We DO NOT transport students. Information about the field trip will be sent home via email/newsletter & a hardcopy will be sent home in student backpacks. Payment will be accepted **in advance** (no add on's) by check made out to Journey Lutheran Church, cash (exact change) or online pay. It is preferred that you leave your payment in the 'Field Trip' bin at the sign in station, at drop off. You will meet the class and the preschool staff at the location of the activity. Our field trips are usually family oriented; siblings, grandparents and others are welcome. If you do not wish for your child to participate in the activity, then you should not plan to send your child to school that day.

## **No Smoking Policy**

THERE IS A NO SMOKING, NO VAPING POLICY DURING ALL SCHOOL FUNCTIONS, AT SCHOOL, ON SCHOOL PROPERTY & ON FIELD TRIPS. Journey is a non-smoking facility by order of the state of Michigan. Parents and staff are not allowed to smoke or vape on the church property or in the building.

## **Attendance**

Children who are ill should not come to school (under state licensing rules). Please text, email or call us as a courtesy, when your child will miss school due to illness or vacation. There will be no tuition adjustment made for absences. If a child's tuition is not paid and he or she does not attend class for two weeks without notification, the child's place in the classroom may be filled. If your child has a contagious disease or illness, please let us know so we can alert others. We are required to report certain illness to the Oakland County Health Department.

NOTE: Research shows that preschoolers who miss school, as little as 10% per school year, fall behind their peers. That's only about 9 preschool sessions.

## **Health – Staff & Students**

All children entering preschool must be examined by their doctor and submit the completed health form provided by the Michigan Department of Health (on our web site & most pediatrician offices have it). Examinations must be done no more than one year prior to admission. **ALWAYS MAKE A COPY** of the Health Appraisal to keep for yourself. You will need this for kindergarten entry and sports. **DO NOT** ask staff to make a copy. Please don't sign/send requests from other schools for this information. Our policy is that **YOU** keep a copy of this information and share it with other parties as you see fit.

## **Immunizations**

State rules and regulations require children to be up-to-date with their immunizations before they enter preschool. The immunizations will be entered into the Michigan Care Improvement Registry (MCIR) to verify if your child's immunizations are up-to-date. By getting this information early there will be time to take care of any oversights before school begins. If your child has not received a required immunization **PLAN AHEAD** - you will need to make an appointment with the Oakland County Health Department for a 30 minute education session on the risks of not receiving vaccines and the benefits of vaccination to the individual and the community. You can make your appointment for waiver education on line at [www.oakgov.com/health](http://www.oakgov.com/health). If you do not have internet access or have any questions about the education session, call the Nurse On Call at 1-800-848-5533. If you choose not to get the waiver or you have chosen for your child to **NOT** be included on the MCIRRegistry, you will need to make other arrangements for preschool.

At school, if signs of illness or deviation in the child's normal behavior are observed, the parent will be called. **CHILDREN SHOULD NOT BE SENT TO SCHOOL IF THEY SHOW ANY EVIDENCE OF A FRESH COLD, RASH, FEVER, INFLAMMATION or CONTAGIOUS DISEASE.** A fresh cold is one that is less than three days old. If the child has a continuous runny nose he/she should not come to school. If a fever goes away with medication he/she is still contagious and should stay at home. If an illness or condition has been diagnosed as being contagious in nature please notify the school so that necessary steps may be taken to protect others, i.e. chicken pox, scarlet fever, lice, Covid, etc.

All allergies or chronic illness must be reported in writing on the health form and the information card. Chronic illness should also be reported via email to the director. Please, don't forget to alert us to food allergies **BEFORE** school begins.

We reserve the right to require that a child be sent home if, in the staff's opinion, the child may be ill. If you are called to pick up your child due to illness, we would appreciate it if you would come right away- we are required to separate ill students. This requires one of our staff to leave the classroom until the student is picked up. It is important to remember that we are not physicians, and our preschool is not equipped to care for or isolate ill children. The sick child will have exposed all well children and the staff.

Clarification: The program staff, not the parents, will make the final decision about whether a student may stay in the classroom. The decision will be based on the program's inclusion/ exclusion criteria and the teachers' ability to care for the child, without compromising the care of the other students in the program. We reserve the right to request a doctor's note to readmit a child when the child's health could be risk to others, or if guidance is needed about special care for the child.

Exclusion Criteria: Anything that prevents a child from participating comfortably in activities. If the need for care is greater than the staff can provide without compromising the health & safety of others. If staff deems there may be a risk of spreading illness or harmful diseases to others.

## **Health Care Policy**

Young children in a school or any group setting may be exposed to illness in which they eventually build up immunity. We take precautions by cleaning work surfaces daily, disinfecting toys and washing hands frequently.

Here are some practices we use to maintain a healthy environment: Frequent hand washing- Children and caregivers routinely wash their hands including before and after meals, after restroom use and outdoor play and whenever handling bodily fluids. Hand washing guidelines are posted in each restroom.

Cleaning and sanitizing equipment- Table surfaces are cleaned and sanitized before and after use and tables used to serve food are cleaned using a three step process with bleach solution. Other toys and equipment are sanitized quarterly or more often as needed. Controlling infection- Universal precautions are exercised whenever handling blood or other bodily fluids. Staff wears gloves and may wear other protective gear. A great health related resource is the Oakland County Health Division - [www.oakgov.com/health](http://www.oakgov.com/health)

## **Child, Volunteer & Staff Illness**

We prefer to be notified by email; but you can text or call if your child has contracted a communicable disease. We are required to notify both the Oakland County Health Department & preschool families if any students, staff or volunteers have contracted a communicable disease. We will notify you via email which class the communicable disease was reported in, the symptoms and the name of the disease as well as posting a sign near the parent sign in station.

## **Allergy Policy**

Food/Environmental or Other: If your child's allergies require an Epi pen/inhaler or other medications to be administered at school, the State of Michigan requires the medication to be stored on the premises, in its ORIGINAL container with the prescription label on it BEFORE the student can start school. If the Epi pen/medication will expire before the school year is over, it is your responsibility to make sure we have the new Epi pen/medication (in its original package with the prescription label on it) BEFORE the old one expires. Under state law, your child will not be allowed to attend classes without it.

## **Medication Policy**

We ask that parents administer medications at home, before or after school. We will only administer medication in the event of an emergency. If your child has sever health issues or allergies, a parent is required to fill out a

Medication Permission form & Medical Action Plan (MAP) before the student can attend school. All medication must be in its original container, clearly labeled with the students' name. This includes all nonprescription medications. Prescription medication must have the pharmacy label indicating the physician's name, child's first & last name, instructions, name, strength & expiration of the medication.

## **Other**

If your child has a combination of foods, they are allergic to OR if they are allergic to ingredients in any of the foods listed on our approved snack list; YOU will be responsible for sending snacks to school for your child (even if these allergies are non-severe/not requiring medication OR you are in the process of a food elimination diet. We recommend sending several at a time so that we can store them in a marked container with your child's name on it. If your child exhibits allergy symptoms from snack at preschool, you may want to look at the snack calendar to see what was served. We record all snacks on the calendar. This is kept on a clip board in the snack area of the classrooms. You are welcome to review this at any time.

## **PLAN FOR SERVING CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS (C15)**

The purpose of the special needs plan is to provide targeted care for children with disabilities or delays. We strive to provide high quality education & care developed to address each students' specific needs. Our program is designed to assist them in achieving their highest physical, emotional & social development.

This is important to children, families and staff because a plan creates more stability for everyone involved and builds structure. Our plan promotes educational advancement now and in the future.

Some of the tools and resources being used in our program are a low teacher to student ratio for specialized care. Education and training of our staff to help us provide the highest quality education & care. Built in routine and flexible environment to accommodate learning styles and abilities. Visuals, social stories and specialty tools like spring scissors to meet the needs of each individual student. We provide LOTS of sensory items, fidget toys & manipulatives to encourage exploration and curiosity.

This plan meets the needs of children, families and staff because we work together to find positive ways to promote socialization, learning and development. Our goal is for staff and parents to support each other, be consistent at home/school and request assistance and assessment from the public school district as needed.

This plan is shared with staff and parents in our Family Handbook. Individual plans will be designed by Staff, Parents and possibly experts, with input from the student. Each plan should focus on the students' strengths and abilities. A written plan will be shared with all parties, revisited and updated as needed.

## **Pesticide Application Notification/ Maintenance of Premises**

Occasionally, common areas (hallways, annex, kitchen, storerooms, and building entrances) of the church receive an application of pesticides. The classrooms are generally not sprayed. Before a pesticide application, proper notification will be posted & emailed to all families and a notification will be posted near the parent sign in area.

## **Injuries/Accidents/Incidents**

Any injury occurring at preschool will be reported to the parent of the injured child. A Boo-Boo Report will be placed in the child's back pack. In case of serious injury, (such as a head injury) every possible effort will be made to notify one of the child's parents. If the parents or person listed for notification on the information card cannot be reached, the child will be taken to the doctor or hospital named on the information card.

Plan for Serving Children with Special Needs

The purpose of the special needs plan is to provide targeted care for children with disabilities or delays. We strive to provide high quality education & care developed to address each students' specific needs. Our program is designed to assist them .....

## **School Closings**

The decision to call off school due to the weather will be made by Oxford Public Schools. Please check your television, 760AM radio or the Oxford Schools web site [www.oxfordschools.org](http://www.oxfordschools.org) for local school closings. We will not be listed separately, so you will need to listen or look for Oxford Public School closings.

NOTE: The preschool may also be closed due to loss of electricity, water, fire damage, communicable disease outbreaks, large funerals, etc. You will be notified via email. These are considered acts of God and will be part of the month's tuition as usual.

If we need to close school due to natural or man-made emergencies OR if schools are ordered to close by the Emergency Management Division of Homeland Security, Journey will immediately activate an emergency school closing notification via email.

Our school calendar includes an extra week of school, that you are not charged for, to allow for inclement weather & emergency days.

### Emergency Procedures Evacuation & Relocation:

If we must evacuate children from the church to keep them safe, the staff will contact parents as soon as possible via group email & then individually, by phone to notify them of the relocation site for pick up. Only the individuals listed on your child's information card will be allowed to pick up your child.

## **Conferences**

We have a 'getting to know you' parent / teacher conference in the fall to address any concerns or expectations you may have for your child. It is important that parents complete **both** Ages & Stages Questionnaires (links are on our web site [www.Journeylutheran.church](http://www.Journeylutheran.church)) at least 2 weeks BEFORE conferences. We will discuss the results of the ASQ's at your conferences. You will complete these when you register & again in December/January. During the month of January, the lead teacher will observe and perform an informal screening on all students. You will find out the results of this screening at the February conference. Conferences are 10 minutes each. If you have additional concerns or questions, please let your child's teacher know ahead of time via email. Students will attend class as usual during conferences. We are happy to accommodate phone conferences. Conferences are not mandatory.

## **Screening**

The purpose of screenings is to determine if a child is developing within the normal range for his/her age. If a child is not developing within the normal range we can provide the parents with additional resources for assessment and assistance such as the Great Start program and Oakland Schools. We use the results from screenings for the purpose of planning developmentally appropriate and realistic classroom activities. Continued screening helps determine the progress of the child as well as to determine appropriate follow up from the previous screening. We use screenings to inform parents of their child's progress.

### **Tools for Screening include but are not limited to:**

The Ages and Stages Questionnaire, completed twice during the school year by the parents. Staff developed check lists, observational and anecdotal notes may also be used for assessments. Classroom activities are based on the results of child assessment needs.

Standardized tests are used by specifically trained individuals employed by Oakland Schools, Early on, Great Start, private physicians, psychologists and other health care professionals. These tests are used when parents are referred to community agencies for the purpose of determining a child's strengths and weaknesses. The sharing of this information between other professionals, parents and staff is used to assist staff in planning the classroom environment and activities for the child in order to improve development.

Scrapbooks (portfolios of your child's work) for each child are kept during the school year which document changes and progress over the year as well as any Ages & Stages Questionnaires or other informal screenings; these will be sent home in May. We do not keep any records other than the registration form & enrollment paperwork. That is all that we are required to keep, per The State of Michigan. Please don't send waivers releasing student records for kindergarten. If you want the school to have a copy of your child's ASQ's, informal screening, health appraisal, immunizations, or vision/hearing screenings, make them a copy – we don't keep copies of these.

If the staff notices a possible physical, emotional, or developmental delay that may require assessment we let you know right away; we do not wait for conferences. If there is any type of an on going issue or concern for a child in the classroom the teacher will consult with the parents for ideas on how to approach the situation. If needed or requested either by the parent or the teacher, a consultation will be scheduled between the teachers, director, and parents. This approach is helpful so that all of the child's caregivers are aware of what is discussed. It is also helpful to look at the situation from several perspectives in order to help the child. Sometimes a 'home visit' may be helpful if a child is having trouble making the transition between home and school.

You may request a conference with your child's teacher or the director anytime during the school year. Email for an appointment. Please do not speak of any concerns you may have while your child is within hearing distance. Children often misunderstand or misinterpret what they hear which may bring them a great deal of stress.

## **Confidentiality**

Access to student records is confidential and shared only with parents, staff and Great Start personnel. Each child has a right to confidentiality. All information pertaining to children in the program, including all reports, records, Great Start evaluations and data are confidential and used for internal purposes only. Information pertaining to children enrolled in the program will not be released to third parties without the express written permission of the Parent, unless required by statute, court order or licensing mandate.

## **Separation Anxiety**

Children may take a period of time to become accustomed to a new environment; sometimes longer than Parents might expect (3 months is an average for transition). Parents need to know that preschool does not smell, sound, look or feel like home and any information you can give us about your child on an on-going basis, in addition to the information on the 'Getting to Know You' form, is appreciated. Young children do not have the ability to comfort themselves as an adult does. They are in the beginning stages of understanding how to regulate their emotions. Please be assured that the teachers will comfort your child and assist him/her in a kind and gentle way during this time of transition.

Our advice on separation anxiety (child or parent): Parents should make a quick, definite goodbye and leave, not coming back since this confuses the child. PARENTS that are visibly upset and or crying also complicate this process. A preschool staff member will call parents if their child has been continuously crying after half an hour. Parents are welcome to call/text the Director or Teacher to check on their child as well. Let us know if



separation anxiety is a constant issue, we have experience with this and have plenty of ideas that may help. Often, we can send you a photo of your child engaged in an activity shortly after you leave.

## **Discipline Policy**

In the process of learning about the give and take necessary to get along in a social environment, children often end up in conflict with one another. Because the young child does not have the language skills necessary to verbalize anger, often he or she will hit or shove another child out of frustration when things are not going well.

It is our policy to help children learn more acceptable ways to deal with conflict. We will help them learn how to tell their classmates when they don't like what they are doing. When possible we will help them come to a compromise. This will be accomplished without making either party feel shame or blame. Our approach will be to help them understand that both sides have rights. For example, when one child takes a toy away from another, "You may not take the toy away from Amy, but you may ask her to tell you when she is finished with it so you can play with it next." Children who are having problems dealing with more assertive classmates will be encouraged to come to the teachers for help in learning to make a stand for them-selves.

Sometimes children need to be reminded several times when they engage in unacceptable behavior. When other methods have failed, the child will be redirected to another activity, after which the teacher will talk to the child about what is acceptable behavior. When play gets too out-of-bounds, the child will be redirected in another area of the classroom or engaged in another task. Consistency is very important when dealing with young children, therefore, when a child has been redirected, the staff will follow-up to see that the direction has been followed.

The teacher may ask the parent for suggestions on how to extinguish behaviors that interfere with their child's social development. A cooperative effort between home and school will be sought in order to help the child abandon an undesirable behavior. Discipline will be handled in a positive, loving manner. The staff will be mindful of the child's self-esteem and make every effort to be sure the child understands it is the deed not the doer that is being censored.

At all times the staff will remember the model presented by Jesus Christ as he guided, motivated, and reprimanded his flock, and follow His example to the best of their ability.

## **Photo Policy**

We love to take pictures of the children doing what they do best at preschool. Sometimes we just display the photos and then send them home with the children. Sometimes we use the photos for crafts or parent gifts. Occasionally we even use the photos to advertise the preschool. We never include last names when displaying photos or for advertising purposes.

## **Tuition**

Monthly payments are **due the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month**. Make checks out to **JOURNEY LUTHERAN CHURCH**. Please put your child's name and class on the memo line of the check so it will be recorded properly (example: MWF, TH or Full Day). If you pay by cash, please put it in an envelope marked with your child's name and class. Put your payment in the tuition box located near the check in station - do not hand the payment to staff. OR pay online [www.journeylutheran.church/tuition](http://www.journeylutheran.church/tuition). Instructions: Use the drop-down menu to select preschool tuition. Make sure you check the box to cover the bank fees. I do NOT get immediate notification of online payments. Notification comes once per week on Thursday afternoon. Payments begin August 15th through April 15th; with no payment made in May. A non-refundable registration fee must be paid by the parents of all children enrolling in the school. The fee must be paid at the time the parent registers the child.

All tuition money is used to operate the Preschool. Tuition is determined by the cost of maintaining the preschool and the teacher's salaries. In order to maintain a quality program, tuition must be paid even when your child misses' school due to illness or vacation. We are a non-profit organization, which means the operating budget matches the income budget. It takes every tuition dollar to meet the budget requirements. Therefore, if a family becomes behind in tuition payments, two or more months, your child may be asked to be excused from the program until tuition is made current.

NOTE: The number of times your child attends school each month will vary. The amount of your tuition payment will not. Tuition is calculated by totaling the sessions per school year and dividing by 9 months.

NOTE: Your child's tuition may be tax deductible if you are working while your child attends preschool. Ask the accountant who prepares your taxes for more information. Journey Tax ID#38-22-15945

### **Parent Notification of the Licensing Notebook**

Information Provided to Parents: Our center maintains a licensing notebook containing a summary sheet, all licensing inspection reports, special investigation reports and all related corrective action plans (CAP) from the previous 5 years. The notebook will or the be available to parents for review during regular business hours; located at the check in station. Licensing inspection and special investigation reports are also available online at [www.michigan.gov/michildcare](http://www.michigan.gov/michildcare).

### **Withdrawal from School**

If it is necessary for you to withdraw your child from preschool, be certain to inform the director 2 weeks in advance. You will be responsible for tuition up to the time the director has been notified. If a child shows no sign of adapting to the preschool program, the director will determine if the parent should be notified about withdrawing the child for a few months or a year. This would occur only upon recommendation of the teacher and after consultation with parents.

### **Grievances or Problems**

If you have a grievance or a problem, we urge you to first email your child's teacher. Most problems can be resolved in this manner. However, if a solution cannot be reached, please email the the director. You may make an appointment or phone conference. If the problem still exists, the parent may contact the Pastor.

### **Evaluations**

In May you will be asked to evaluate our program. Suggestions made in Christian love are always encouraged and welcome. We have made many changes over the years because of great suggestions we have received from parents!

## **Our Favorite Play Dough Recipe**

Bring to a boil:        2 cups water  
                                 1/3 cup salt  
                                 3 tablespoons of oil  
                                 Food coloring or we recommend the die/color used for cake frosting

Stir together:         2 cups flour  
                                 1 Tablespoon powdered Alum

Pour hot liquid mixture into the dry mixture and work together, first with a spatula and then knead with your hands. Wait until it is cool enough before you allow children to help you knead the dough. Knead until you cannot see any evidence of flour and the dough is smooth.

Have a good time! P.S. Warm play dough is great for arthritic hands, frazzled nerves and out-of-bound kids!

## **Field Trips & Special Events**

Please read the field trip rules & specific instructions for each field trip. Specific information about each field trip will come out at least 2 weeks before the event, via newsletter & hard copy (hard copies sent home in backpacks). Make sure whoever brings your student has read them as well. We ask for payment about a week in advance because these are large group events planned for over 100 people. If you need to plan ahead financially, our most expensive field trip as of 2022) is \$11 per person. Ask your teacher or the director any specific questions you may have.

## **Parent Orientation**

This happens before school starts, in August. It's typically a 1 hour meeting where we introduce the staff, explain how communication, drop off/pick up & snack work. General information is shared to help you get the most out of the school year.

## **Meet the Teachers & Make a Friend**

This 'Open House' style activity happens before the 1<sup>st</sup> day of school. We usually give a 2 hour time frame for parents to visit the school with their child. The goal is for you to help your child become better acclimated with the classroom with the added emotional security of having you there. You will complete a classroom scavenger hunt with your child & YES there is a prize at the end.

## **Picture Day**

This happens during regular class time – think of it as an 'in house' field trip. Walt Meadows Photography sets up a studio in our 'bonus room' & we play games called don't laugh, where'd you go? & high five Mr. Walt; until everyone gets THE BEST PHOTO EVER taken. Then we take a class/group photo. DO NOT hesitate to order the biggest package of photos. Walt Meadows does not disappoint. Our staff is present to help comb hair, straighten clothes & wipe noses.

## **Bike Day Picnic**

This is such a popular, well-loved event that we do it twice a school year. How we do it has varied during covid; so please be patient with us & watch for further details. A parent, guardian, grandparent or other responsible adult MUST always accompany your child. You are welcome to bring siblings & other family members – the more the merrier. This is an outdoor event, so pray for good weather. We fence off a section of the parking lot for students to ride their bikes & play on the playground. About 15 minutes after class starts, we will blow a whistle & invite you to eat in the community room. This is a potluck so bring a dish to pass (no sign up for this). Coffee, water, paper plates, napkins & cutlery will be provided.

## **Olympic Day Fund Raiser**

This is our ONLY fund raiser of the school year. It takes place, early October. Journey is a not-for-profit preschool; so, our goal is to raise money to purchase new educational toys & equipment for our classroom & playground. Basically, students collect donations from friends/family & 100% of it goes to the school. We usually have a poster of wish list items we are hoping for. We celebrate during center time with a gym circuit of activities, dance party music & a fun snack. Everyone gets an Olympic medal & a school T-shirt. We order the wish list items right away so that students can enjoy the new toys & equipment all school year.

## **Oxford Fire Department Visit**

Activities are a little different each year depending on what fire department staff are available & what equipment they can bring. Typically, 2 or more fire fighters come to school to talk about fire safety, read a book, play a game & show us a fire truck. This happens during class time & parents do not need to attend.

## **Field Trip to Westview Orchards in Romeo**

In October, we will meet at the orchard for a wagon ride to pick a pie sized pumpkin, eat donuts/cider, pet farm animals & play on the playground. DON'T be late for this one – the wagon will leave without you! This field trip is rain or shine. They recommend spending 90 minutes on the farm, but you can stay as long as you'd like.

## **Parties & Other Celebrations**

In general, we stick to the same routine for the day so that students know what to expect. We will have party music, special crafts, games & a fun snack. A theme related 15/20-minute movie will happen towards the end of class time. A party sign up for supplies & volunteers (2 per classroom maximum) will be at the sign-in station about 2 weeks before the party. You are not required to volunteer or donate supplies – it's optional.

## **Trunk-N-Treat**

I think the parents like this even more than the kids do, because you get to see everyone's costume! Meet us in the parking lot a little early for pick up the day of the Halloween parties. It's fun if you decorate your trunk, but you don't have to. Please bring enough candy/treats for the students in both the north & south classrooms (we will let you know how many students, in advance). We will have bags for the students to collect their treats in.

## **Superhero & Princess Day**

We invite students to wear their favorite Superhero or Princess Costume to school. We will have themed activities to celebrate.

## **Friendsgiving**

This takes place right before Thanksgiving Break. The theme for the day is 'Thankful for Friends'. The Teachers make chicken nuggets & tater tots for snack & we have a fun dessert.

## **Programs = Christmas & End of the School Year**

This is not a regular day of school. A parent/guardian or other adult must accompany each student. Meet us in the church sanctuary. You are welcome to invite siblings, family & friends. Students will sing songs, recite finger plays & ring hand bells. After we will serve cookies, coffee & water in the community room. You may leave whenever you are ready – there is no class on this day. Festivities last approximately 30 to 45 minutes.

## **Pajama Day**

Students are invited to wear their pajamas to school. It's okay if they don't want to – not everyone is comfortable wearing pajamas in public. Teachers will serve popcorn for snack during a 15/20-minute movie.

## **Dentist Visit**

Dr. Ferri from North Oakland Dental Group in Oxford comes to school to talk to us about dental health. We play a game about food that make your teeth happy, and a fun Colgate cartoon is shown (approx. 10 minutes). Dr. Ferri leaves us with treat bags that include a new toothbrush.

## **Pizza Party Field Trip to Antoniou's Brick Oven Pizza in Rochester**

*YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS THIS FIELD TRIP!!* Antoniou's is a crowd pleaser; Owners Mike & Pooh are just the sweetest host & hostess. Don't hesitate to order yourself or anyone else a individual pizza – this is a once in a lifetime opportunity to put on all your favorite toppings. Seriously, once you smell the pizza cooking – you will want one. We meet at Antoniou's for a tour of the kitchen, make pizza dough, kneed the dough, and then put toppings on our pizza masterpieces. We get to sit in the banquet room together & color placemats while we wait for our pizzas to cook. YOUR Teachers will deliver the piping hot pizzas to your table. It will be the best pizza you ever had because... YOU MADE IT! Of course, you are welcome to bring siblings friends/family. We've even had a few older siblings that 'missed school' to come on this field trip again. I recommend ordering a pizza 'to-go' for dinner while your there. They will give you re-heating instructions.

## **Beach Day**

You guessed it! We encourage students to wear their bathing suit or shorts to school. It's silly because we do this during winter. It's okay if your child doesn't want to wear beach clothes. We will have beach music, themed crafts, games & popsicles for snack.

## **Painted Pot Visits**

Gina from the Painted Pot in Rochester comes to school to assist students in creating keepsake pottery. She fires them in a kiln & then brings them back a few weeks later. This will happen in the spring, so think Mother's & Father's Day or Grandparent gifts – mugs, plates, flowerpots & platters. This is an optional activity starting at \$20 per item. It is NOT a fund raiser.

## **Donuts with Grown-up's**

Students bring their favorite grown-up to school for chapel time, a craft, photo together & of course DONUTS! The grown up should plan on staying for about an hour right at the beginning of class. Once we are finished with our donuts & coffee – grown-ups can leave & our staff will continue with regularly scheduled programming in the classrooms OR grown-ups can take their student home/out to lunch – just let the teachers know ahead of time.

## **Oxford School Bus Visit**

Towards the end of the school year, we will invite an Oxford School Bus driver to bring a bus to the Journey parking lot. The bus driver will let us sit on the bus & talk to us about bus safety (we will not be leaving the parking lot). Then we will practice crossing in front of the bus. Of course we will take pictures – you wouldn't believe how excited the kids get.

## **Field Trip to Independence Oaks in Clarkston**

We meet at the Lewis Wint Nature Center at the park. Naturalists will talk to use about a variety of topics & then take us on a short nature walk. Students will have the opportunity to explore the hands-on centers, inside.

You will receive a parking pass that is good all day, so you can bring a lunch & play with friends on one of their playgrounds. OR come back later in the day with the rest of your family.

### **Bowling at Collier Lanes**

Occasionally we can squeeze in a field trip to Collier Lanes. If you've ever watched preschoolers bowl – it's entertainment at it's finest. You can invite whoever you want – only the kids bumper bowl, 4 to 5 per lane – parents assist if needed.