Parent Handbook
St. Luke’s Community House Child Development Center

Mission Statement
St. Luke’s creates a community where children, families, and seniors from different backgrounds can easily access the resources needed to live a fulfilling life.

Program Philosophy
St. Luke’s Child Development Center provides a safe and healthy learning environment for the children we serve. Our staff are trained to develop skills and behaviors in children that will enable them to succeed in school and in their lives. We believe strongly in partnering with parents and community organizations to ensure that the best services are being provided to empower and support our families.

About the Staff
St. Luke’s teachers are chosen because of their strong desire to provide a safe and healthy learning environment for children. They are certified in Adult and Pediatric First Aid, CPR, and AED. We have trained teachers with a variety of educational backgrounds. In addition, each staff member receives at least 24 credit hours of training per year to increase their skills and knowledge in child development and safety. All teachers undergo a background check, drug screening and tuberculosis screening, as required by Tennessee state law.

About the Directors
The Directors of the Child Development Center are essential to the quality care provided by St. Luke’s. Samantha Breault, Child Development Director, has a master’s degree in Education, Multiple Subject Teaching, from the University of San Francisco. Neysa Badili, Child Development Assistant Director, has a master’s degree in Educational Administration from Trevecca Nazarene University.

About the Facility
The St. Luke’s Child Development Center is a DHS-licensed childcare facility and is inspected on a regular basis. It is a smoke, alcohol and drug-free environment. Classrooms are spacious, providing room for children to

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experience multiple play areas. The 3, 4, and 5-year old rooms are equipped with computers. There are two fenced-in playgrounds and an outdoor classroom. The outdoor classroom features age-appropriate materials and equipment to enhance gross motor development, dramatic play, musical interests and a deeper understanding of nature.

**Enrollment Process**

The enrollment process at St. Luke’s is handled online at www.stlch.org/preschool. The first step in the process is to complete a waiting list application. When an appropriate slot becomes available, the parent/guardian is contacted and asked to complete the second step, which is the online enrollment form, and is required to pay the enrollment fee and first two weeks tuition. Shortly after the enrollment form is completed, the parents must participate in a pre-enrollment tour of the facility with a Director. Below is a list of the required forms and documents needed for enrollment.

- Financial Form (provided by St. Luke’s)
- Most recent year’s income tax return (provided by parent/guardian)
- USDA Eligibility Form (provided by St. Luke’s)
- USDA Addendum (provided by St. Luke’s)
- Copy of the child’s Birth Certificate (provided by parent/guardian)
- Child’s Immunization Form completed and signed by a physician (provided by parent/guardian)
- Child’s Proof of Physical signed and stamped by a physician (infants only)
- Influenza form (provided by St. Luke’s)
- Signed service agreement (provided by St. Luke’s)
- Photo Release form (provided by St. Luke’s)
- Read-to-Succeed Enrollment form for ages 2-5. (provided by St. Luke’s)

Parents are expected to carefully read this handbook, and the summary of the DHS licensing requirements, prior to the child attending school. Following the completion of the items mentioned above, parents will meet with our Accounting Assistant to determine childcare tuition.

**Hours of Operation**

- The Child Development Center’s hours of operation are Monday – Friday, 6:30 a.m. until 5:30 p.m.
Children will not be accepted after 9:00 a.m. unless they have a doctor’s excuse and the late arrival has been communicated to the teacher at least one day in advance. Also, children will not be accepted between 11:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m., so that disruption to the children’s naptime may be avoided.

Parents are expected to sign children in and out daily using their fingerprint on our kiosk located at the entrance. Parents are required to walk their children to their classroom each morning after checking in. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian, as well as a State requirement, to ensure the center has an up-to-date emergency contact who can be reached at any time in case of emergency. Parents of children who are not signed in or out will be charged a $5.00 fee per incident. Failure to comply on a regular basis can result in suspension from the Center.

A late fee of $1.00 for every minute past the 5:30 p.m. closing time will be charged to the parent’s account if a child is not picked up by 5:30. If continuous tardiness occurs, services may be suspended or terminated.

Parents are not permitted to be on the phone when dropping off or picking up their child. It is important that the teachers be able to communicate with parents during these times.

The Preschool will be closed on major holidays and for staff in-service days. Parents will be notified of these closures in advance and will be notified of last-minute closures (e.g. inclement weather) via the One Call automated call system. It is important to provide a current telephone number to receive these calls. We encourage parents to save the One Call phone number (1-877-698-3261) in their cell phones as “St. Luke’s Emergency Number,” so they will be prompted to answer the call and listen to the message.

**Fee Payments**

When a parent/guardian pays tuition at St. Luke’s they are paying for the slot, not the number of hours or days attended. Therefore, even though a child may be absent, for example, tuition is still assessed and expected to be paid. When fees are not paid, the associated slot is given to the next child on the waiting list.

St. Luke’s has a documented fee schedule that is set according to the child’s age. These fees are set using Middle Tennessee childcare rate surveys. Therefore, our fees are considered competitive and current.

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In some cases, a parent/guardian may need assistance paying their childcare fees. Interested parties should see the Accounting Assistant or one of the Directors to apply for the SmartSteps program, which is intended to assist working parents. Finally, if a parent/guardian cannot obtain assistance from Smart Steps, an application may be made to the St. Luke’s Sliding Scale assistance program. Eligibility for the sliding scale assistance program is based on the family’s household size and income. This information is taken from the most recent income tax return(s) and the last eight weeks of current pay stubs. To remain eligible for the sliding scale program, parents/guardians will be asked to provide income details at routine intervals throughout the year. If updated income information is not received when requested, fees will revert to the full rates.

Fees must be paid prior to services being rendered, which is prior to Monday mornings of the new service week. Payments may be made using check, money order or credit/debit cards. No cash payments will be accepted. Credit and Debit Card payments may be made on the ProCare kiosk by the entrance or online via myProCare.com. Teachers may not accept payments. Checks and money order payments must be placed in the drop box in the Assistant Director’s Office. From time to time fee adjustments are made. St. Luke’s will make every effort to give prior notice, so that families can plan for an increase.

Failure to pay fees will result in the loss of the childcare slot. If fees become two weeks overdue, children will automatically be suspended from the program until full payment is made. When overdue fees are paid and if space is available, childcare can continue. Failure to pay after being suspended will result in termination from the program and any unpaid fees will be transferred to St. Luke’s contracted collections agency.

**Illness**

Children will not be accepted into care if they:

- Have a communicable disease or symptoms of a communicable disease.
- Have a fever in excess of 100.9.
- Are vomiting.
- Have diarrhea.
- Have lice.
- Have an undiagnosed rash.
- Have had an unexplained cough for 3 weeks or longer.

If a child is suspected to be ill, his/her temperature will be taken via a non-intrusive thermometer, which is not always 100% accurate. St. Luke’s will

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use its best judgement in assessing your child's health and will err on the side of caution since we are also considering the safety and welfare of the other children in the child development center.

Children with a Fever in excess of 100.9 must be fever-free without the aid of fever-reducing medication, for a minimum of 24 hours, before returning to the center.

Children who have been diagnosed with Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease may not return to the center for 72 hours after diagnosis, and the start of prescribed medication, and must present a doctor’s note upon returning to the center.

Children who have been diagnosed with Pink Eye may not return to the center for 24 hours after diagnosis and the start of prescribed medication and must present a doctor’s note upon returning to the center.

Children who have been diagnosed with Strep Throat may not return to the center for 24 hours after diagnosis and the start of prescribed medication and must present a doctor’s note upon returning to the center.

Children who have been diagnosed with Ringworm may not return to the center for 24 hours after diagnosis and the start of prescribed medication and must present a doctor’s note upon returning to the center.

Children who present with a rash must have a doctor’s note, indicating that it is not contagious. If the staff observe a suspicious rash after the child is dropped off, the parent will be contacted and asked to pick up the child and have the child seen by a physician. If the physician states that the rash is not contagious, the child may return to the center the same day with a doctor’s note, before 11:30 a.m., or after 2:30 p.m.

State Licensing requirements state that if a child is sent home due to Lice, a Dr.’s statement stating that the child is lice and nit-free is required before the child can return to the center.

If a child shows signs of the above symptoms after he/she arrives, parents will be contacted and be expected to arrange for the child to be picked up within one hour. If the child is not picked up in a timely manner, the parent is at risk of losing the child’s daycare slot.
The center is required to strictly enforce the 24-hour rule, which means that a child must be symptom-free for 24 hours before returning to the center (i.e. a child may not return to class the day after being sent home).

A child that has had an unexplained cough for 3 weeks or longer will not be allowed to be in our care until he/she is evaluated by a physician and medically cleared with a doctor’s note.

St. Luke’s is not able to provide medical care. Parents are required to inform teachers of a child’s diagnosed communicable disease, for example: Chicken Pox, Measles, Strep Throat; Hand, Foot and Mouth, etc., so that other parents may be notified.

**Medication**

If a child has medication that needs to be administered by the childcare staff, these specific guidelines must be followed:

- Parents must complete the medication permission sheet in the child’s classroom. The sheet must include the date, name of medication, dosage, side effects, time to be given and parent’s signature.
- Medication must be in the original bottle with the child’s name, name of the medication, physician’s name, and directions for giving it clearly typed on the label.
- Staff cannot give over-the-counter medicine without a physician’s statement of written directions (e.g. Fever reducer).
- Medication must be placed in the lock box located in the Assistant Director’s office, except for a child’s Epi-pen, which will be placed in a locked cabinet in the child’s classroom.
- Permission to apply the following items must be given by the parent/guardian:
  - Sun screen;
  - Bug spray;
  - Diaper ointment.
- Permission is documented on the electronic forms completed during the application process.

**Personal Safety of Children**

Tennessee law and the Department of Human Services mandate that teachers report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect. Teachers are trained to recognize possible indicators of such abuse and neglect and in the procedures of how to report.

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DHS licensing regulations require that centers provide a personal safety curriculum for preschool children ages three and up. This curriculum includes a prevention of child abuse component. Program Directors can discuss this with any parent that may have questions.

Children will not be released to any individual; parent or guardian included, whose behavior may place the children at immediate risk. The child may be released to an alternative authorized individual on the child’s pickup list. If an individual becomes hostile or aggressive towards any of St. Luke’s staff, management will be immediately notified and in some cases the police may also be notified, due to safety concerns.

A child can only be released to an individual who is on the parents' approved pick-up list and whose name and fingerprint is registered in our ProCare kiosk system.

**Discipline Policy**

Learning boundaries is a very important part of a child’s development. Sometimes, discipline is necessary for children to understand that these boundaries exist to help children grow into responsible adults. St. Luke’s uses the Conscious Discipline Model which integrates social-emotional learning, discipline and self-regulation.

In each age group, boundaries and consequences of unacceptable behavior are clearly stated in age appropriate language. Staff use positive behavior reinforcement and discipline methods that encourage self-control, self-direction and cooperation. No staff will use any form of corporal punishment, food or bathroom deprivation, shaming or ridiculing as methods to discipline.

Consequences for inappropriate behavior are as follows:

- The child will be redirected to other activities of interest.
- If redirection continuously fails, the child will be directed to a “safe place” where he/she will be given an opportunity to calm down. If the child appears to be out of control and unable to calm down on their own, or become extremely defiant, parents may be called to pick their child up.
- Suspension from services.
- St. Luke’s has a zero-tolerance policy for any aggressive or violent behavior that may cause injury to a teacher or another child. These behaviors include (but are not limited to) slapping, kicking, spitting, hitting someone with an object, throwing objects, biting and any other behavior causing an injury.
Children presenting medical, behavioral, learning or emotional problems that challenge their ability to participate in and benefit from the St. Luke’s program may be recommended for evaluation by an appropriate professional or organization, such as the TEIS (Tennessee Early Intervention System), MNPS (Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools) Special Education Program, or Vanderbilt’s R.I.P. program. These evaluations will be used to assess the child’s needs to be successful and to identify the best service provider(s) to meet those needs.

**Outdoor Play**

State licensing requires every child to have outdoor play time. Children should be dressed appropriately. Layering is advised when weather conditions are expected to change dramatically during the day.

**Dress Code**

Children learn through play and exploration and they will get dirty. Food, washable markers and paints can sometimes stain clothing. Outdoor equipment can be rough on delicate materials. It is important that parents dress children accordingly. Parents should avoid sending their children to the Center in clothing that shouldn’t get dirty. Children are required to have an extra change of clothing. If a child has a mishap and needs to change clothing, and there is no extra clothing available for her/him, the parents may be called to bring extra clothing, or to pick up the child.

**Television, Radio, Videos, and Computers**

Programs, movies, computer games, and music with violent or adult content (including “soap operas”) shall not be permitted in the children’s presence. Programs/movies/computer games shall be developmentally appropriate for the viewers. Parents shall be informed of movie showings and video/computer games and their ratings. If television, video tapes/DVDs, video/computer games, and/or movies are used, they shall be limited to one (1) hour per day. All programs shall be designed for children’s education and/or enjoyment. No infant or toddler will be permitted to have screen time.

Computers which allow internet access by the children shall be equipped with monitoring or filtering software, or an analogous software protection, which limits children’s access to inappropriate web sites, e-mail, and

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instant messages. Other activity choices shall be available to children during television/movie viewing or computer use.

**Toilet Training**

The two-year-old classroom (Roos Room) provides the structure needed for toilet training. This will be done according to the child’s readiness.

**Withdrawal from the Program**

Parents must provide a two week’s notice to the director when voluntarily withdrawing a child from the program.

The Director can request the withdrawal of a child from the program if:

- The child’s behavior becomes unmanageable;
- A parent physically or verbally assaults a staff member(s). Verbal assault can include, but is not limited to; harsh tone, yelling and/or making threats.
- Non-payment of child care fees.

All alternative options will be used prior to the expulsion of a child due to behavioral issues. If a child is asked to leave the program at the request of the Director or Assistant Director due to behavior, options for assistance with the child's behavior will be presented to the parents.

Children who have needs beyond the competence of the center, or who present risks to themselves or others that are beyond the control of the center, will be dis-enrolled with adequate notice.

The following steps will be followed before requesting the withdrawal of a child from the program:

- Parents will be notified of the problem;
- Parents and staff will meet to discuss the problem;
- An appointment will be made with a social worker when applicable;
- Parents will be asked to seek alternate childcare.

**Items to be Supplied by the Parent:**

Parents of children ages 6 weeks–2 years should provide the following items each day:

- Diapers
- Wipes
- Diaper ointment (optional)

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• For children learning to walk, a sturdy pair of shoes with a non-slip bottom.
• A favorite blanket for nap time. The center provides mats and sheets.
• 2 complete changes of clothes: pants, shirt, socks and underwear.
• A lightweight jacket or winter coat (depending on the weather), along with hat, gloves and appropriate footwear.
• Children in the infant room have the option of signing up for meals (baby food) and formula (equivalent to Similac Blue). Parents of babies who are breast-feeding are asked to bring pre-made bottles labeled with the child’s name. Parents may bring other items that may be helpful in providing comfort, such as pacifiers or special blankets. Note: Only babies in the Guppies and Cubs rooms (infant rooms) are permitted to use pacifiers and bottles in the classroom.

Parents of children ages 2-5 years should make sure their child has the following items each day:
• 2 complete changes of clothing (i.e. pants, shirt, socks and underwear).
• A lightweight jacket (depending on weather).
• A favorite blanket for nap. The center provides mats and sheets.

The items listed above are required and not optional.

**What Not to Bring**

Please do not bring the following items to the center.
• Toys from home.
• Candy (Unless it is being provided to the class for a special occasion).
• Food (excluding children in the infant room). Breakfast, lunch, and snacks are provided to children twelve months or older. Baby food and formula are provided for infants. If a child has special dietary needs or if a parent would like to join their child for lunch, teachers should be notified so that proper arrangements can be made.

**Meals**

The center serves breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack to all children ages one and older. These meals meet State and USDA guidelines for quantity and nutritional value. Weekly menus are posted in each classroom. The children sit together at the table, which allows them to interact with each other while learning basic table manners. Parents of children one year old and older are not allowed to bring food into the

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classroom, except for teacher-approved special occasions such as birthdays or holidays. If a child is on a special diet or has food allergies, accommodations can be made by parent’s request.

Meal times are as follows:
- Breakfast: 8:00 a.m.-8:30 a.m.
- Lunch: 11:15 a.m.-11:45 a.m.
- Snack: 2:30 p.m.-3:00 p.m.

*Young infants in the infant room will be served formula and/or baby food, on their own schedule, as specified by the parents. Older infants in the infant room will begin to transition into a center-wide feeding schedule, eating solid foods. Once children turn 1 year old, breakfast, lunch, and snack will be provided by the center.

**Special Events**

There will be numerous opportunities throughout the year for parents to come together to meet with teachers and experience the classroom. Parents will be notified of events in advance so that arrangements can be made to participate. These events include parent orientation, parent/teacher conferences, Read-To-Succeed programs, community thanksgiving, holiday programs, pre-k graduation, etc.

**Field Trips**

Due to DHS transportation regulations, the center has chosen not to transport children to and from field trips. We do, however, have in-house field trips such as the zoo, Community Helpers, puppet shows and others that coincide with our weekly themes.

**Birthdays**

Birthdays are a very special time. Parents may provide a special treat for the child’s class to celebrate. Teachers should be notified in advance of any special plans.

**Parent Involvement**

Classroom Involvement- The center has an open-door policy. Parents are welcome to “drop in” anytime. Please keep in mind that classes have a basic schedule and visitors should plan on children being involved in activities when they visit. Parents are encouraged to read to the child’s class, participate in outdoor playtime and/or join the class for lunch.

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Parent Committee

There is a Parent Committee for the Preschool program. This committee meets quarterly to discuss recommendations, suggestions and/or to plan special events. We encourage all parents to participate and be actively involved.

Parent Communication

Our parents receive daily reports through the Hi Mama App. The notes and pictures provide detailed information on what the child participated in, the child’s eating habits, how the child napped and any health or behavioral issues that occurred. Parents are encouraged to talk to teachers daily about their child and share any pertinent information regarding their child. Parents will regularly receive newsletters that will provide information on new programs, program changes and center events.

Parent/teacher conferences are offered twice a year. However, on-going communication between the teachers and parents is encouraged to ensure the best experience for the child.

Grievance Policy

Communication is the key to building strong parent/teacher/child relationships. When a concern arises, parents must remember:

- Teachers truly care about your child. Concerns should be shared with the teachers immediately and parents should avoid allowing issues to build over time.
- Talk to teachers directly when possible. Parents should communicate their recommendations and suggestions as they arise.
- Expect a conversation follow-up from your teacher or a director to make sure concerns were addressed.

Parents have the right to present operational grievances about the program. The communication chain for communicating concerns are as follows:

1. Communicate your concern to the Teacher;
2. If resolution is not met, communicate your concern to the Child Development Director or Assistant Director;

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3. If resolution is not met, communicate your concern to the CEO;
4. If resolution is not met, communicate your concern to the Chair of the St. Luke’s Board of Directors;
5. If resolution is still not met, move to the Department of Human Service’s Grievance Process.

**Transportation**

St. Luke’s does not provide transportation in its Child Development Center.

**Gold Sneaker Program**

St. Luke’s is participating in the Gold Sneaker Program and will adhere to the following policies:

- **Policy 1.1:** Children ages 12 months or older attending a full day program shall be offered at least 60 minutes of physical activity per day, either indoors or outdoors. Children attending less than a full day program shall be offered a proportional amount of such activities. For children ages three and older, this physical activity must be a balance of free play, teacher-directed activities, and music and movement.
- **Policy 1.2:** Viewing of television, videos and other visual recordings shall be limited to no more than 60 minutes per day of educational programs or programs that actively engage child movement. Children attending less than a full day program shall be limited to a proportionate amount of such viewing.
- **Policy 1.3:** Children shall not be allowed to remain sedentary or to sit passively for more than 60 minutes continuously, except for scheduled rest or naptime.
- **Policy 1.4:** Child care facilities must ensure physical activity is a positive experience for children and is never used negatively or to control behavior.
- **Policy 1.5:** Ensure appropriate infant and child feeding patterns, including breastfeeding. Staff will be sensitive to breastfeeding mothers and infants, and their eating patterns. Each infant will have a feeding plan on file, which is completed by the parent(s) and facility as a team to address their unique feeding patterns.
- **Policy 1.6:** Ensure appropriate infant and child feeding patterns, including adequate time for meal consumption. Adequate time for meals and snacks will be allowed for all children and will be included in classroom schedules.
- **Policy 1.7:** Ensure appropriate infant and child feeding patterns, including appropriate portion sizes. Appropriate portion sizes will be
assured through staff training and adherence to portion sizes as found in child care licensing regulations.

- Policy 1.8: All eating opportunities should consist of a respect for the child and promoting a positive attitude toward food. Food shall never be used as rewards for children.
- Policy 1.9: Child care facility campus shall be tobacco-free.

**Emergency Evacuation Plan**

If it ever becomes necessary for the staff and children to evacuate the center due to an emergency, they will immediately relocate to Nashville Prep (formerly McCann Elementary School), located at 1300 56th Avenue, Nashville, TN 37209. Parents will be notified by staff, as soon as the children are safe and secure.

It is very important that all contact information be current and correct. Address and/or phone number changes should be reported immediately. Updates can be made with a teacher, Director, Assistant Director or the Accounting Assistant.

**Handbook Receipt and Agreement:**

I have received a copy of St. Luke’s Parent Handbook. I understand the policies and procedures contained herein and agree to abide by them.

_____________________________          _____________
Signature of Parent/Guardian         Date