

St. Mark's Mother's Day Out Handbook

School hours: 8:30- 2:00
Days of operation: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.
Summer Session: 8:30-12:30

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Mission Statement

St. Mark's Mother's Day Out exists in order to provide a safe, healthy, and educationally stimulating environment for children based on a part time schedule.

A part-time childcare program is defined as one that provides care for eight or more children and operates for more than 15 but less than 30 hours per week. Traditionally, these programs are open during regular public school hours.

Philosophy

Our Center focuses on important skills to help children reach educational, social, emotional, physical, and creative milestones. The children have a chance to form friendships that can continue throughout their school years. They experience self-directed play, outdoor play, teacher led activities, music, art, lunch, and rest time. We provide a secure environment where children feel safe, cared for, and able to express themselves freely.

St. Mark's Church believes MDO is an important community service. Fees are charged to cover the cost of supplies and teacher pay.

Mother's Day Out isn't just for Mothers. Dads, Grandparents, or anyone who cares for young children can benefit.

Directions

St. Mark the Evangelist Catholic Church is located in northwest Norman, Oklahoma. To access the church from I-35, take the Tecumseh Rd. exit [#112]. Travel west on Tecumseh Rd. and cross N.W. 36th Ave. The church is 0.25 miles west of N.W. 36th Ave. on the north side of Tecumseh Rd.

Enter the door on the southwest side of the building in the old parish center. The sign above the door says Founder's Hall. The doors are near the playground area. You will have to ring the bell to get in.

What to bring each day:

- Sack Lunch and drink
- Extra clothing
- Disposable diapers, baby food, formula, or any other items needed for younger children (Please no glass jars)
- Nap Blanket

If your child is in diapers, please provide a container of wipes at the beginning of the month.

Everything you bring should be labeled with your child's name.

Security procedures

Security is one of our highest concerns. After arrival time the outside doors are locked so we can monitor who enters. It is extremely helpful if you do not arrive after 9:00. Otherwise, the doorbell interrupts the teachers' schedules. You cannot get into our area through the church office entrance. You must come to the southwest door and ring the bell so we can let you in. We will unlock the doors at 1:45. The doors are not locked from the inside so we will be able to exit in an emergency.

Background checks

Employees must pass a background check before they are hired to work with the children.

Drills and evacuation plans

Evacuation plans are posted in the rooms. Monthly safety drills will be conducted.

First aid and CPR

At least one person on the staff will be trained in basic first aid and CPR.

Sessions and Prices

Children are in class from 8:30a.m. to 2:00p.m.

Teachers are in the room before and after class for planning time. Parents are asked to respect this important time by not sending children into the room before 8:30 and by picking children up promptly. Late pick-ups will be charged \$1.00/minute.

The cost for a MDO session is \$17.00 per day per child. When you enroll you can choose how many days a week you would like to attend, depending on availability. You are then responsible for payment of those days even if you do not attend.

Enrollment Fee

Upon enrollment, there is a yearly, non-refundable fee of \$50.00 per child. For three or more children the fee is \$110.00 per family. This is will be added to the May tuition, otherwise, it is due at the time of enrollment.

Late pickup charge

Please pick up your child on time. If you leave your child at MDO after 2:00 an appropriate **late fee** will be charged. The late fee is \$1.00 per minute. This is due the day of your late arrival.

Payment

Based on your information we will figure out how many days you plan to attend for the month and give you a total. Payment is expected in advance during the first week of the month. A late fee of \$15.00 will be charged if payment is not received by the 5th of every month. ***If payment is not received by the 10th of the month, your child's spot will be immediately forfeited.*** If you change your days during the month your total will be adjusted on the next month's cycle. A two week notice is due if you plan to leave the program or reduce your days. Otherwise, you will be charged. Checks that have been returned by the bank will be charged a \$25.00 NSF fee.

Check in and out procedures

Children must be signed in and out everyday. The sign in sheet is located on the desk in the entryway. You will also receive your monthly statement on your child's sheet. This is a DHS requirement.

Visitors and volunteers

We have a lot of fun and enjoy sharing. Visitors are welcome at any time. Just be sure to check in with your child's teacher when you arrive. We love to have volunteers come by to do a craft, sing a song, read a story or share other talents. Let us know ahead of time, if possible, so we can help the children prepare. If you plan to be a volunteer we will schedule training for you and do a background check.

Age groups

Children are placed according to chronological age and developmental stage. As an opening becomes available, children who are currently enrolled and developmentally ready will be considered first for moving up to an older age group. Most of the time we will move children to an older class at the beginning of a new school year or during the Christmas break.

The children are divided into groups as follows:

1's Room (1st birthday – 2nd birthday)

2's Room (2nd birthday - 3rd birthday)

3's Room (3rd birthday - start of preschool)

We will have one assistant daily who helps with all of the children when we are at full enrollment.

We will always add enough teachers to meet or exceed state requirements for staff to child ratios.

Paperwork

It is mandatory for you to fill out all paperwork before leaving your child with us. We need current contact information for you and anyone who may pick up your child in an emergency. Please let us know if your child has any medical conditions or allergies.

Immunizations

Any child who attends MDO must have a copy of their immunization record on file with us and immunizations must be current. You can contact the Department of Human Services or your child's doctor for information on immunizations. Please keep us updated on any changes to your child's record.

School Schedule

We are open each Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday that Norman Public Schools are in session. We are not open when Norman Public Schools are closed. We will be closed the following days:

Monday, September 1: Labor Day

Thursday, October 16: Fall Break

November 26-27: Thanksgiving

December 22-January 1: Christmas Break

January 19: MLK, Jr. Day

Monday, February 16: President's Day

March 16-19: Spring Break

Our last day will be May 21

We do have a summer program. It usually runs from the 2nd week of June through the 1st week of August. Dates are subject to change.

Class Schedule

A daily activities schedule is posted in each class room. The children are given choices during activities. We encourage them to participate but they can choose to do another activity. We do encourage you to arrive on time. We will begin our lessons no later than 9:00. Late arrivals are a distraction to the children engaged in an activity. Please call if you plan on arriving later than 9:00.

Bad Weather/ School Closings

When Norman Public Schools closes for bad weather we will close as well. Please check the news for school closings on bad weather days. NO EXCEPTIONS.

Emergency Treatment

If your child becomes seriously ill or is injured while in our care we will seek medical treatment for them. **We will NOT transport your child to an urgent care facility, or the hospital.** We will call an ambulance for treatment if injury is severe enough and no one on your child's emergency call list can be reached. We will contact you immediately in an emergency. **Please be sure to leave updated contact numbers with us.**

Sick Children

Please keep your child at home if:

- They have a fever.
- They have vomited in the last 12 hours.
- They have diarrhea.
- They have heavy nasal discharge.
- They have a red or sore throat.
- They have lice, scabies, impetigo, or ringworm.
- They have chickenpox, measles, or mumps.
- They have an eye infection (pinkeye).
- They have an unexplained rash.
- They have unexplained pain.

Do not bring a child who has any type of contagious illness to MDO. We want to prevent spreading illness to the other children and teachers.

Seek medical advice to make sure your child is well before returning to MDO.

The teachers will notify you (or an emergency contact) to pick up your child if they develop an illness after they are left in our care.

Participation

When you bring your child to MDO we hope they will participate in all of our activities. We will not force a child to do an activity they do not wish to do but we will encourage them. Your support in encouraging them is greatly appreciated.

Unhappy Children

If a child is having a bad day, not feeling well, or dealing with separation anxiety, it can be difficult to see his/her parent go. We will do all we can to help the child enjoy their day. If they are very unhappy and show no signs of improving we will contact you to come pick them up.

Tips for helping your child adjust

You are welcome to visit our class with your child for short periods of time before leaving them for their first full-day visit. This may help your child adjust to our environment.

Many children have difficulty with separating when they first come to MDO. Generally it is best for the parent to say goodbye and leave the child as quickly as possible. Children usually settle down once their parent is gone. You are welcome to call and check on your child later to make sure they are all right.

Sometimes a change in a child's home environment (for example a death, birth, or move to a new house) can affect them at school. Please let us know if we can do anything to help.

Special Instructions

If you have special instructions please have them written out and ready to give to the teacher when you drop off your child. This saves time and limits confusion at check in.

If you need to discuss something with your child's teacher, please make an appointment to see them before or after school so they are not taken away from class time with the children.

Remember to label everything you bring to school with your child's name. This simplifies the teacher's job, as it is very difficult to keep track of who brings what and the children are often unable to identify their things.

Procedure for Releasing Children

Should it be necessary for someone different to pick up your child, please notify the teacher and director. Please write down the name and description of the person and state that they have your permission to pick up your child. ***We will check identification before we release the child to someone we are not familiar with.*** You may list people who are approved to pick up your child on their enrollment paperwork.

Clothing

Please dress children in play clothes as some of our activities are messy. We have craft time and outside play when the weather permits. Please dress your child so they will be comfortable if we go outside. Label coats and sweaters.

Our environment

It is important to have a safe and friendly environment. One way to assure the safety of the children and teachers is to have a large, open room. Our space is made up of one very large room that has been divided into classroom areas for the one and two year old classes. This allows those age groups to have their own age appropriate space, but also encourages interaction between the children and teachers throughout the day. The three year old class is located in Room 1, just across the hallway. We can always see each other and communicate quickly if someone needs assistance.

Food

You will need to send a sack lunch for your child. Teachers are not free to prepare food for your child's lunch. Please make sure all food is ready to eat and cut up if needed. We do have a microwave in our room if needed but it is generally easier to send food that does not need to be heated. Label all of your child's lunch items. Do not send glass containers.

Bringing a lunch from home helps ensure each child will have food that they like. This also cuts down on the risk of an allergic reaction from foods a child is not accustomed to. Remember to inform us of any allergies or food restrictions.

Please bring snack items once a month. Ask your child's teacher for the monthly snack calendar.

Medication

We prefer not to give medication to the children during MDO. Please give any needed medication to your child before or after school. If your child must have medication during school, please discuss it with the director and bring your doctor's orders.

Personal Toys and Belongings

Children should leave their personal toys at home or in the car. This prevents toys from getting lost or broken and keeps younger children from playing with toys that are not safe for them.

We understand that some children may have a security item that they need to keep with them. If your child has difficulty without a security item, you may send it to MDO labeled with the child's name.

We do not allow weapons of any kind (toy guns, slingshots, etc.)

Discipline Policy

MDO teachers use discipline to protect a child from injury to themselves or others. Distraction, redirection, and time out are used. We model proper behavior so the children know what is expected of them. Verbal and/or physical abuse is not used.

Reporting Suspected Abuse

We are required by law to report any suspected abuse to the authorities.

No Smoking Policy

Smoking is not allowed in our building or in our playground area.

Donations

Please check our Wish List that is posted on the bulletin board in the hallway. With so many toys on the recall list recently, please do not bring used items unless you have checked the Safety Recall List first. We have the right to refuse

items brought in. Please advise a teacher or Director if you plan to donate used toys or furniture.

Suggestions

If you have questions, comments, compliments, or suggestions please let us know. Feel free to write down comments and leave them in the suggestion box at the sign in desk.

Frequently Asked Questions

What if I forget my child's lunch?

We have some food in the center. If you forget to send a lunch, don't panic. You can drop it off later or we will find something for them to eat. Lunchtime is at 11:30.

Where will my child sleep?

We have rest mats assigned to each child in the 2 year old and 3 year old classes. Each child will need to bring a nap mat. The bedding will be sent home on a weekly basis.

The younger children sleep in playpens.

What if my child won't nap?

We will have a quiet time for all the children so that any who wants to sleep can. Not all of the children will nap. Those children who do not nap will be engaged in another activity once all the "nappers" have fallen asleep.

How long has St. Mark's had a mother's day out program?

Our program started August 18, 2003.

Is it open to anyone in the community?

Yes. However, parishioners of St. Mark's receive priority.

What should I do if my child is upset when I leave?

You can call and check on them on our direct line at 366-8102. Usually children calm down quickly. If your child is very upset for a long time we will contact you.

Are the classes structured?

Yes. We have an activity schedule for each room. We also remain flexible as needed. You will receive a daily report that outlines your child's day.

Are the same teachers present everyday?

Yes, as much as possible. We have one teacher assigned to each room and unless they are sick or have an appointment that can't be avoided they will be

there. We also have assistants who help in all of the rooms and will be familiar with all of the children. Assistants will be in the center as needed.

My child is still working on potty training. Is that OK?

Of course! All children develop at their own pace. Some are trained at 1½ and some are still learning when they are almost 4. We will work with you and do our best to help you and your child in the process. We have a child sized restroom in our room. We remind the children throughout the day to take potty breaks. Sometimes being around other children who use the potty helps reinforce potty skills. Eventually children learn to use the potty in their own time. We don't believe in adding any pressure so we don't require children to be fully trained before they join any of our classes.