

**Harbor View
Presbyterian Church
Early Care and Education Program**

Parent's Handbook

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Harbor View Presbyterian Church
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900 Harbor View Road Charleston, South Carolina 29412 843-795-8224

Dear Parents,

We are happy to welcome you to our Harbor View Presbyterian Church (HVPC) Early Care and Education Program. Our children's program is a non-profit weekday ministry of Harbor View Presbyterian Church. We have served the physical, emotional, and educational needs of hundreds of children since 1977.

Our program provides a secure environment in which your child can grow and explore. Your child's individual needs are very important to us. The goal of our daily curriculum is to help your child develop cognitively, emotionally, socially and physically at his or her own pace. We are blessed with a loving and experienced staff whose dedication to the children is exemplified by their many years of service in our program. Our staff members take time with your child in play, conversation, music, and homework. We want to make your child's stay with us enjoyable and happy. You can help with a loving departure in the morning and arrival in the afternoon.

This handbook has been prepared to help answer your questions and to help you better understand our program. Please read it carefully and keep it for future reference. If you think we need to add something or clarify an area, please let us know.

Sincerely

Janice S. Blum, Director
The Staff of HVPC Early Care and Education Program

A BRIEF HISTORY

Harbor View Presbyterian Church Kindergarten (HVPC) was founded in 1970 as a half-day 5-K program. Harbor View Presbyterian Church Child Care was founded in 1977 as a full day / part-time program. Over the years, teachers in these programs have dedicated countless hours to ensuring that the children entrusted to their care were enveloped in a safe and secure. This tradition continues today at HVPC Early Care and Education Program.

MISSION STATEMENT

We recognize that every age in childhood has its own joys and challenges and believe it is important to provide young children with the space and time needed for discovery and exploration. HVPC Early Care and Education Program (ECEP) is dedicated to providing a loving and nurturing environment for all of the children entrusted to our care. Our program is built around enhancing the physical, emotional, social, and spiritual growth and development of the children who spend their days with us. To this end, our program includes:

- Use of developmentally appropriate curriculum, activities, and guidance measures;
- Low child teacher ratios, which foster interactions filled with affection and respect.
- Daily schedules with opportunities for both quiet time and active play;
- Strong parent – teacher communication practices;
- Experienced staff who continually update their early childhood education training;
- Safe and stimulating center-oriented classrooms;
- Open areas indoors and outdoors that are appropriate for active play
- Nutritious and well-balanced lunches and snacks.

We strive to provide classrooms, playgrounds, toys and curriculum that are developmentally appropriate and fun to spend the day exploring. The children learn through the examples set by our staff of accepting other cultures and children with special needs. We appreciate the support our HVPC ECEP families have given us over the years and feel privileged to be given the opportunity to educate, guide, and inspire other young children through their first school experiences.

Harbor View Presbyterian Church Early Care and Education Program welcomes children and teachers of all races and ethnic backgrounds. Cultural diversity is respected in our program and is incorporated into educational opportunities. We share the beauty and joy of God's world with all children attending our programs.

PHILOSOPHY

Our philosophy involves providing the children with security, safety, love, nourishment and the sense of belonging to a family. It is our desire to nurture feelings of accomplishment, pride and positive self esteem in the children. Our main goal is to provide a loving, nurturing environment that challenges the children's natural curiosity. We appreciate the need for children to develop at their own rates. Objectives include providing a compassionate and empathetic staff that is trained in early childhood development; consideration of the uniqueness of each child and family; all available with smiles, hugs, laps, ears, shoulders and kind words for the children and their families.

DAILY ACTIVITIES

The Center opens at 6:30 a.m. and closes at 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

A detailed account of the daily schedule of each classroom is available from your child's teacher.

Our generalized daily routine is as follows:

The morning schedule varies depending on the children's ages, the time of their arrival and departure, and their personal needs. At 9:00, academic activities begin in all classes. In general, our days start with quiet play in the classroom centers. The children then move to activities that include a daily review of the calendar, weather, books, music and small group activities. Restroom breaks, snacks, and outdoor play are included every morning and take place in a flexible manner that is determined according to the children's needs and interests. Pre-planned parties are usually held during the morning.

An afternoon naptime is encouraged for children 18-months to 5 years old. These children awake refreshed and ready for an afternoon of play. Children 6 years of age are not expected to nap but do have an afternoon quiet time in which they may lie quietly and rest. This quiet time allows them to relax and nap if they wish.

Naptime items you'll need to supply are a mat, pillow, and blanket combination called a "Nap Mat." All children may bring a small blanket and pillow and one soft toy. These items are to be packed in a backpack or tote bag large enough to hold all the items. This bag may be left on your child's hook for the week. Please take home all nap items on Friday for washing. Class specific requirements for naptime will be discussed during the orientation conference. **Please put your child's name on all items brought to HVPC ECEP.**

By mid-afternoon, the classes are busy again with activities, snacks, and outdoor play. Children arriving at our center after school are encouraged to do their homework by staff that will monitor and give assistance as needed. Late afternoon activities include music, story time and games.

FIELD TRIPS

Field Trips are planned throughout the year for children in the 3'S, 4'S and Schoolers Classes. The field trips are planned to complement our curriculum themes. Permission slips are sent home in advance of the field trips so parents can plan to help with driving and chaperoning. Being prompt with the cash payment and the permission slip, allow the teachers time to plan and prevent a hectic morning the day of the trip. The staff will not be able to call parents the day of the field trip for verbal permission to take their child on the field trip.

ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE Routines

Children arriving from 6:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. are to enter through the main entrance to the church. Parents are to sign in/out their child/children daily on the class clips boxes. Children arriving after 8:35 a.m. are to enter through the ECEP Entrance. The ECEP closes at 6:00 p.m. Please enter through the ECEP entrance and sign your child out. If you pick up your child from the playground, **please walk back through the building with your child to return to your car. Please do not allow your child/children to run down the driveway to your car.**

TUITION RATES

Tuition is payable in advance and may be paid on Friday prior to or on Monday of the current week. Tuition covers morning and afternoon snacks plus lunches.

Payments received after Monday of the current week will require an additional late fee charge of \$10.00. If payment is more than a week late, an additional \$15.00 will be added, totaling \$25.00 in late payments. Children cannot return to the ECEP once tuition is two weeks past due until all late fees and tuition fees are paid. If you need to change your child's schedule, please speak to the director.

REGISTER FEES AND FAMILY DISCOUNTS

A non-refundable annual registration fee of \$100.00/family is required for all students attending HVPC ECEP. The registration fee is for the fiscal year September through August and is nonrefundable. This fee is waived for active members of HVPC. An annual re-registration fee is due in April at the time of re-registration for current families.

We offer a 10% discount for families with two or more children in our program.

RETURNED CHECKS AND LATE PICK-UP FEES

There is a \$20.00 returned check fee. Late pick up fees are \$5.00 per child until 6:10, plus an additional \$10.00 per child from 6:11 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

To enter the ECEP the following items are required: payment of the registration fee, a completed registration form, a DHEC record of immunization, a Department of Social Service form, and two emergency cards. A tour of the facilities will be conducted during a scheduled visit. Visits to the Program allow your child and you to become familiar with the staff and facility. These visits help your child become secure in his/her new environment. As many visits as possible for parents and children help everyone to adjust to the new environment. The class head teacher will conduct an orientation conference before your child enters ECEP.

ITEMS FROM HOME

Books, records, videos, and other items pertaining to the class curriculum may be brought to class. Please check with your child's teacher and put your child's name on any items brought to ECEP.

The following items are not allowed: any small toys that will fit into pockets. Sharp objects, toy guns, swords, light sabers, Barbie Dolls, or action figures. Also, any other items not pertaining to the class curriculum. If your child comes to school with any of these toys or the like, the toys will be sent back home or kept in the director's office for parents.

CLOTHING

Children of all ages should wear comfortable, clean clothes suitable for indoor or outdoor wear and weather appropriate. Shoes with backs should be worn. Backless shoes are dangerous for running, please keep them at home. Each child needs a complete change of seasonal clothing that is left in the center to be used for emergencies. All clothing, backpacks, jackets, etc. need to be labeled with your child's name.

FOOD AND FOOD ALLERGIES

Children arriving between 6:30 a.m. and 7:15 a.m. may bring breakfast. Snacks are provided for the children both in the morning and afternoon. If you wish to bring food to ECEP **for your child's class to have for a snack**, please check with your child's teacher at least one day in advance as to quantity and types of foods allowed. A lunch is served daily between 11:30 a.m. and 12:15 a.m. Please notify your class teacher before 10:15 a.m. **if your child will arrive after 10:30 a.m. to insure a lunch is prepared. Children arriving after 12:00 p.m. should eat lunch before arrival. No lunches are to be sent from home except on posted bag lunch days. The center should be notified of all food allergies immediately. Depending upon the allergy, you may need to supply lunch and / or snack foods.**

HVPC ECEP will provide healthy, nourishing foods for your children. If you have any suggestions for foods, let us know. We welcome new ideas and help with lunches and snacks.

BIRTHDAY PARTIES

Your child's birthday is very special to us and we like celebrating this happy occasion! You may bring refreshments for your child's birthday party. Please talk with your child's teacher before bringing anything to class. Please do not send birthday cakes. It is difficult to serve them to the little ones in the allotted time. Please do not send party invitations to be handed out at school unless you are inviting all of the classmates. We do not want to have sad children because they did not receive an invitation to a party.

SIGNING IN AND OUT CLIP BOXES

Children must be brought to their teachers by a parent/guardian/adult not another child. Each class has a sign in/out clip box for the parents/adults to sign in/out the children each day and to leave messages. We will only release children to those individuals who are listed on the emergency consent forms. Anyone that is authorized to pick up a child will need to show a photo **ID**.

DISCIPLINE

The ECEP teachers regard discipline as a means to teach appropriate behavior. We guide children's behavior in an age appropriate manner; such as redirecting their attention, demonstrating problem-solving techniques, or reviewing class rules. When appropriate, children may be placed in "thinking time" to regroup and collect themselves before returning to their class. Teachers keep parents informed of behavior concerns through the use of daily notes, phone calls, and the Program's Observation Record for Inappropriate Behaviors and/or Developmental Concerns form. Teachers meet with parents to discuss behavior modification strategies as needed. HVPC ECEP reserves the right to discontinue the enrollment of any child who repeatedly hurts himself/herself, other children or teachers, or destroys property. Our staff members do not resort to corporal punishments at any time or under any condition. Consistent disregard of the Early Care and Education Program's rules by your child will result in dismissal of your child.

SPECIAL CONFERENCES

Specific concerns of parents and teachers may be addressed during the school year by scheduling a conference. Parents or teachers may request these conferences. By scheduling a conference, your child's teacher will be able to give full attention to your concern. **Please do not try to talk with a teacher during class about a specific concern. The teachers need to give their full attention to the children in their classes and cannot do this and talk with a parent.**

DEVELOPMENTAL CONFERENCES

During the spring of each year, conferences are scheduled with parents to review their child's progress during the current school year. Letters are sent home in advance to inform parents about dates and their child's class sign up sheet.

ORIENTATION CONFERENCES

An orientation conference is scheduled with parents to introduce them to their child's teachers and classroom. These conferences provide parents and teachers a time to share information about their child/children. Parents are encouraged to share specific goals they have for their child/children as student(s) at ECEP.

OPEN HOUSE

Information about open house is sent home in July. Open house is a time to meet your child's teachers and sign-up for extracurricular activities before the new school year starts.

PHONE CALLS

Parents may call anytime to check on their child/children. If you wish to have a phone conference, please call the director to set up a specific time the teacher may call you. If you have an emergency and cannot get through on the **ECEP line 795-8224**, please call the Church numbers: 795-4072 or 795-4077.

WRITTEN INFORMATION

Our most constant forms of communication are written letters, memos, signs, and forms to be filled out and returned. This type of information is placed in your child's cubby, backpack, or folder, depending on the class. Please check your child's cubby, backpack, or folder **daily** for information.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

Information about your child's day is recorded on their "daily/weekly highlights" sheets. Please check these daily. If you need additional information, please write a note to the teacher requesting the information. **Parents are requested to sign the daily Highlite in some classes as a means of parent involvement with the Highlite process. After one month of unsigned highlites, class teachers will stop doing daily/weekly Highlites for your child.**

OPEN DOOR POLICY

Parents and family members are always welcome to visit and participate during the daily activities, class field trips, lunch, parties, or playtime ... Please let your child's teacher know in advance, if you wish to join us or just pop in!

ABSENCES

The Program is to be notified when a child is out because of illness or a change in schedule. If a child will be away from the program for more than a calendar week, **half of the weekly fee is required to maintain a place** in the program unless a free vacation week is used. **No reduction of fees will be made for absences of less than one week.** If a child attends one day and is out the rest of the week, the full week's tuition is due. **Summer removal of your child/children will count as a use of your free vacation weeks.**

CLOSINGS

ECEP is closed throughout the year for holidays and teacher training. A School Calendar is sent home each July for the new school year. Reminders are sent / posted before scheduled closings.

The center will be closed whenever we are without electricity, sufficient running water, or when weather conditions prevent Charleston County Public School from being open.

If the program is **closed for a full week as a result of an** emergency situation, Monday through Friday, there is no charge for that week. If the program is closed for a full week, Monday through Friday, as a scheduled holiday closing, there is no charge for the week. **If the Center is closed for less than a full week – scheduled or unscheduled your regular weekly fee is due.**

IN THE EVENT OF INCLEMENT WEATHER:

- **We follow the Charleston County Public School's closure decisions. Please listen to the local news!**
- **If the opening of the Charleston County school's is delayed by 2 or 3 hours, ECEP will open at 10:00**
- **Please use your own discretion as to the safety of the roads!**

FREE VACATION WEEKS

Children enrolled in the center and paying weekly fees for **six or more months** will receive **two free vacation weeks**. These two weeks can be taken at the parent's discretion. Free vacation weeks must be used within a calendar year and be taken from Monday to Friday, not as part of one week and part of the next week. These vacation weeks do not need to be taken consecutively. A two-week's notice is appreciated to help with staff scheduling. Children removed during the summer months will need to use their free vacation weeks to reserve their place within the ECEP, resulting in no free vacation weeks for the November and December holidays.

LEAVING THE EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION PROGRAM

One week's notice by either the center or the parents is required for termination from the program.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

HVPC ECEP is eager to tap into the rich and diverse cultural heritage of our families and community to provide the children with enriching and enlightening experiences. Please consider ways in which you can share some aspect of your family traditions, career, or cultural background with ECEP.

GRIEVANCES

Any concerns may be addressed to the Early Care and Education Program director or the HVPC Early Care and Education Committee Chairperson. Please make all concerns in written form. Information for the ECEP Committee is to be given to the HVP Church Secretary.

Parent Ideas

Parental feedback and ideas are greatly appreciated by the staff. The staff does monthly planning and would be happy to have new ideas to implement into their developmentally appropriate curriculum or program policies.

HEALTH AND SAFETY INFORMATION

- ***Tornado and Fire drills are held every month.***
- ***Any suspicion of child abuse or neglect by parent, family member or of our staff will be reported to the proper authorities as required by state law.***
- ***Children will not be released to any individual who appears impaired by drugs or alcohol. If this situation arises, the numbers on the child's emergency card will be called to pick up the child.***

Children should not be brought to the ECEP if they have **severe colds, an undetermined rash or spots, terrible coughs, fever, severe headache, upset stomach, or other symptoms of illness.** If children are brought to ECEP with any of these symptoms, they will not be allowed to remain. Parents will be notified to pick up children immediately if signs of illness occur during the day. Please refer to your copy of the "Mildly Ill" information for more specific requirements. **Upon returning to ECEP, please tell the class teachers what type of illness your child had and if medicated. A notice will be posted when children are exposed to a contagious disease in the center. Children may not return to the center after contracting a communicable disease until a doctor has released the child and all symptoms are gone. A doctor's written release may be required for some communicable illnesses. A child should not come to the center within 24 hours of having a fever.** Pink incident forms are sent home to parents for any type of hurt your child may have had during the day at ECEP.

If the following criteria are met, the staff will administer medication (this includes over the counter medication to a child).

- **A doctor must prescribe the medication for your child.**
- **The medication must have a current date on it.**
- **Parents must fill out a childcare medication form completely, according to your doctor's instructions.**
- **Your child's name must be on the medication.**