

Hope

PDO & Preschool

Parent Handbook

303-741-1073

www.HopePDOandPreschool.org

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WELCOME TO HOPE PRESCHOOL!

We thank you for choosing Hope for your child's early learning experience. Our goal is to nurture each child's individual development socially, physically, spiritually and academically in an environment that is safe and happy. We take this as a sacred trust and look forward to serving your family in love.

MISSION STATEMENT

At Hope PDO and Preschool we focus on educating and recognizing the whole child as a unique individual. We do this by providing a safe, secure and fun environment; allowing and teaching children to learn at their own pace. We encourage the development of social/emotional, cognitive, language and physical abilities. Our faith-based program and loving, patient staff, in partnership with parents, promote an optimum environment to prepare each child for future success.

PHILOSOPHY

We concentrate on the whole child. All developmentally appropriate cognitive learning skills are represented in literacy, math, language, science, art and music. Children also participate in fine-motor and gross-motor development activities, as well as Christian education lessons. Pre-kindergarten classes also focus on kindergarten readiness.

PURPOSE

The purpose of Hope Preschool is to provide a program that benefits the child, parents, families and the community with a safe and interactive environment where children are provided with developmentally appropriate experiences and guidance that will encourage each child to reach their full potential. Our program promotes the emotional, social, intellectual, physical and spiritual growth of all children.

ORGANIZATION

Hope Preschool is licensed as both a preschool and toddler program. Our toddler program includes children from 1 and walking to 2.5 years of age. Our preschool program includes children aged 3 through 5. The Hope program is run by the director in coordination with the teaching staff. The program functions under the Hope Preschool Board, which is comprised of members of Hope United Methodist Church and the larger community. An active parent group

also functions within the program offering support for school activities. The school is a non-profit community service and is fully licensed by the State of Colorado. We meet or exceed all the requirements of the Colorado Department of Human Services Division of Child Care, as well as the Arapahoe County Health Department.

STAFF

The Hope Preschool staff provides a warm and secure environment for your child. We have a director, assistant director, office assistant, Early Childhood Qualified teachers and teacher aides. All are experienced in the field of early childhood education and participate in continued education and trainings throughout the year.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Hope PDO and Preschool is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m.

Children age 1 may attend 1-2 days a week.

Children age 2 may attend 2-3 days a week.

Children age 3 may attend 2-4 days a week.

Children ages 4-5 may attend 3-5 days a week.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

We follow the Cherry Creek School District traditional school calendar. School calendars will be provided at the beginning of the school year and can be found online.

SNOW DAYS/DELAYS

We follow the Cherry Creek School District's guidance for snow/emergency closures or delays. If Cherry Creek announces a delayed start, Hope PDO and Preschool will start 30 minutes late. If the school district announces an early release, we will remain open until your classroom's normal release time, but we encourage parents to pick up children early, if possible. All afternoon enrichment programs will be canceled.

ENROLLMENT

Children are enrolled for the school year September through May. Enrollment is open to children who are 1 year old and independently walking by July 31 through children not yet in kindergarten. This program admits children of any race, sex, color, national or ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs and activities made available to the children at the school, and is in compliance with the American Disabilities Act (7.702.41c).

SPECIAL SERVICES

Hope PDO and Preschool will do everything within reason to accommodate children with special needs. These children will be accepted after we have assessed if we are able to serve their needs and if space is available. Children with emotional, physical or developmental challenges will be accepted if: 1) The child will benefit from our program. 2) The staff can meet the individual needs of the child. 3) There will be no adverse effect on other children through direct behavior.

LIMITED MOBILITY

If a child has limited mobility at any time during the year, a meeting will be held with parents, the teacher and the director to create an action plan for the child.

WITHDRAWAL AND TERMINATION OF ENROLLMENT

Parents must provide two weeks' notice before withdrawing from Hope PDO and Preschool. The child may attend during this two-week period. No refunds will be made.

In certain instances, a child may be asked to leave the program. The preschool may terminate a child from the program if parents fail to comply with any school policy or procedure or if the director feels the school is unable to provide the necessary support for that child. Some reasons for termination can include failing to pay tuition by the 20th of the month or behavior causing significant risk or harm to the health and safety of other students or faculty.

REGISTRATION

The Hope registration fee is \$175 per child for processing and supplies. The registration fee is **non-refundable and non-transferable** and must be paid upon registration to reserve the child's place. Children will be registered for all classes in the following order, beginning in January: children of church members; children currently enrolled, their siblings and alumni families; and children of the community.

TUITION

Tuition is \$145 per month, per day and per child.

1 Day - \$145/month
2 Days - \$290/month
3 Days - \$435/month
4 days - \$580/month
5 days - \$725/month

Tuition is due on the first day your child comes to class each month. A \$20 late fee will be assessed if payment is received after the 10th day of the month. Tuition is due whether your child is present at school or not.

Parents may pay tuition using cash, a check or our online system through Early Learning Ventures. A convenience fee may be added to online payments.

Checks should be made payable to Hope UMC and include the student's name in the memorandum. One check may be written for siblings and for multiple months. You may also turn in post-dated checks to be deposited monthly. If you pay by mail, please allow plenty of time to have your payment in our office by the first of the month. Receipts can be found in the ELV system or in the office.

UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL (UPK) COLORADO PROGRAM

Universal Preschool (UPK) Colorado ensures that every child in the year before they are eligible for kindergarten is eligible for up to 15 weekly hours of state-funded, voluntary preschool beginning in the 2023-24 school year. Families of children who turn 4 years old by October first, in the year before they are eligible for kindergarten, can apply for UPK Colorado.

- In order to qualify for UPK, families should apply through Colorado Department of Early Education, and then choose to match with Hope Preschool.
- Families also need to register and enroll their student at Hope (subject to availability).
- UPK enrollment at Hope will depend on classroom availability, Hope's ability to meet the child's needs, available funding and Hope's continued participation in UPK.
- As long as Hope Preschool continues to participate in UPK, and the child is enrolled in UPK through CDEC, tuition for Hope Pre-Kindergarten classes will be as follows:
 - 3-day program - Free
 - 4-day program - Free
 - 5 day program - \$100/month
 - Enrichment programs - Regular tuition
- Eligible pre-kindergarten families who do not enroll in UPK will self-pay at regular Hope tuition rates.
- If at anytime during the year Hope Preschool decides not to participate in UPK, families are responsible for the full tuition amount.
- Questions about UPK can be directed to Hope Preschool or the Colorado Department of Early Childhood at cdec_upkcolorado@state.co.us or 303-866-5223.

REQUIRED FORMS

No child will be admitted to classes at Hope PDO and Preschool until they have completed our online registration through Early Learning Ventures. This online registration includes emergency contact information, child profile details, general authorizations and a parent handbook acknowledgement.

Children also must have a CURRENT COLORADO IMMUNIZATION CARD and a SIGNED AND DATED STATEMENT OF HEALTH STATUS FORM, either turned into the Hope office or uploaded online.

Health Status forms must be signed by a doctor and updated each year, typically during the child's annual well visit. All children also must have an updated proof of immunizations or a vaccination exemption form. If a child is unvaccinated and there is an outbreak, they may not attend school during this time frame. They may return to school when the outbreak is over.

Parents are responsible for keeping the school informed of changes to their address and other emergency contact information (phone numbers, employment changes, etc.), as well as updating this information in ELV.

BACK TO SCHOOL

WHAT TO EXPECT BEFORE SCHOOL STARTS

You will receive a welcome email from the director in early August, followed by a welcome phone call or email from your child's teacher by mid-August. Your teacher will inform you of the upcoming Open House and answer any other questions you may have. At this time, it is important to share any important information about your child, such as allergies.

BACK-TO-SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE

Hope Preschool will hold a Back-to-School Open House on August 31st, the Thursday before Labor Day, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. for families to visit their classrooms and meet their teachers. We will also hold two virtual information meetings to go over school policies and our ELV system.

THE FIRST FEW WEEKS

The first few weeks in any new environment can produce anxiety for your child. Our staff is trained to be sensitive, alert and aware of your child's reactions to this new environment and will make every effort to help your child adjust as easily as possible.

For younger children or children new to Hope, there are a few things you can do as a parent to help ease the adjustment period:

- Take time to get to know the teachers and staff involved in the care of your child. Since your feelings may be indirectly communicated to your child, it is important that you feel confident in the staff's abilities and comfortable bringing your child to the center.
- Take advantage of the Back-to-School Open House to meet your teacher and aide.
- Talk with your child positively about preschool and all the fun things he/she will get to do there. If you anticipate a problem with separation, discuss this with the staff and decide on a procedure to follow in advance.
- We suggest that after check-in and an exchange of greetings, you say to your child "Good-bye. I will pick you up later. I know you'll have a good day!" And then leave. This method may seem abrupt, but it will minimize separation anxiety for your child. This is preferred to "sneaking out" because it is better that your child be well informed and can say goodbye.

- During the first few weeks, you may feel some apprehension after leaving your child. This is a perfectly natural response. We know how very important your child's well-being is to you and encourage you to call the school during the day to find out how your child is doing. The directors and staff are eager to keep you informed.
- A re-adjustment period may occur after a long weekend or vacation. Your continuing positive attitude will facilitate any such transitions.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE PROCEDURES

When arriving each morning:

- Parents should put sunscreen on children before they arrive.
- Parents will use the ELV app to sign in and out.
- Parents will limit time inside the building to ease congestion and allow teachers to focus on all students.

SECURITY

For the safety of our children, our security system requires an access code to enter the Hope Preschool door. The code will be given at the Back-to-School event. You may share the code only with those who are authorized to pick up your child. When entering, if you do not recognize those behind you, please close the door and let them use the code. All Hope Preschool families are asked to enter through the preschool door, unless otherwise instructed. The church front doors are always locked.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is taken each morning and routinely during transitions throughout the day. If a child should go missing, all staff are notified immediately through teacher radios. Doors are secured and all available staff search rooms and outside areas until the child is found.

LATE ARRIVAL

It is very important to your child's adjustment to school that he/she arrives at school promptly at 9 am. This aides in making each child feel like part of a group. If you arrive late, please take your child to his/her room and follow normal sign in procedures. If the child's class is not in the classroom at that time, go to the office for assistance.

PICK-UP

When departing, each child will be individually released by the teacher to an authorized person. Only authorized people will be allowed to pick students up from school. The Hope Preschool staff cannot legally deny release of any child to a parent or guardian unless we have a written court order or just cause. The Hope Preschool staff will not allow a child to leave with any person under the influence of any legal or illegal or prescriptive substance that we suspect could interfere with the safety of the child, even a parent. If an authorized person is unknown to the staff, a valid ID is required.

LATE PICK-UP

If a parent is more than 10 minutes late picking up their child, a \$5 fee will be charged. This will be according to the school's clock. For each additional minute after the first 10 minutes, a \$1 fee will be added to the late fee. This fee is payable to the staff person who has remained with your child until picked up. Phone calls to inform us of tardiness are appreciated, but do not excuse you from payment of the late fee. If the fee is not paid by the morning of the child's next school day, the child will not be allowed to stay. If the designated pick-up person cannot be reached, parents and additional adults listed as emergency contacts will be called to pick up the child. If Hope Preschool is unable to reach any contact person and the child is not picked up after one hour, Arapahoe County Police will be contacted.

ABSENCES

If your child is going to be absent, you must notify the Hope Preschool office at 303-741-1073, as well as enter the absence in ELV. If leaving a message, please detail the reason for the absence, including illness symptoms, and when you anticipate the child returning. There are no makeup days and no pro-rating of tuition.

VISITORS

All visitors must be buzzed in from the church's main entrance and must check in at the preschool office. Visitors must sign in and show their driver's license to confirm their identity. They will be escorted by a staff member to their area of business. Hope does not allow solicitors. People with no business on campus will NOT be allowed in the building. Any suspicious people will be immediately confronted and dealt with accordingly.

WHAT TO SEND

CLOTHING

It is important to send your child to school wearing washable play clothes that encourage independence, including playground friendly shoes. All students go outside daily, excluding extreme cold, wind or precipitation. Please dress your child in or pack weather-appropriate clothes, including coats, hats, mittens and boots.

TOTE BAGS

All newly enrolled children will receive a Hope tote bag at the Back-to-School Open House. Returning students who need a new tote may purchase one for \$15. Parents should pack a lunch, snack, spill-proof water bottle and a change of clothes (including underwear and socks) in a gallon-size, labeled Ziploc bag. Students may bring stuffed animals or toys *ONLY* for show-and-tell, and those items must remain in totes at all other times.

LABELS

Please label everything your child brings to school! This includes coats, boots, lunch boxes, ice packs, water bottles, etc. It is much easier to find the owner of an item if his or her name is on it.

LOST AND FOUND

A lost and found tub is in the hallway by the director's office.

DRINKS AND FOOD

WATER BOTTLES

Each child must have a spill-proof water bottle, filled with water. This may be used as their drink for lunch and snack.

SNACK

Parents must provide a snack each day, stored separately from the child's lunch. We encourage using reusable containers that are easy to open for both snacks and lunch. Snacks should include two food groups and be in smaller portions to ensure lunch consumption. Special snacks in small proportions may be brought for the class for birthdays and other special occasions.

LUNCH

Each child must bring a non-perishable lunch and drink each day. These lunches should include a third of the child's daily diet and should be proportioned for the child's age and appetite. Lunches should include vegetables and fruits, bread or bread alternatives and a meat or protein. Since there is no ability to heat or refrigerate foods, your child may bring a thermos or ice pack. To encourage independence during lunch, we discourage parents from packing foods that are difficult to open or eat or that make a mess.

CURRICULUM

Hope PDO and Preschool is a play-based program intended to meet the interests and abilities of each age level as they learn through play. Our program includes Parents-Day-Out (1- and 2-year-olds), Preschool (3- and 4-year-olds) and Pre/Jr. K (4- and 5-year-olds) programs. Each classroom has planned activities geared to the interest and level of that particular age group. We provide a wide variety of activities to enhance each child's opportunity to play and learn.

We use the *Creative Curriculum*, which is based on the premise that the best way to teach young children is by using an appropriate environment as well as a planned appropriate schedule and positive teacher/child interactions. Lesson plans for class are presented to the Director in advance and are posted outside of each classroom.

Our program includes:

- Small and large groups
- Free Choice Centers
 - reading and quiet time
 - writing and drawing
 - building (blocks)
 - manipulatives
 - pretend play
 - nature and science
 - sensory play
- Art
- Math Concepts
- Science Discovery
- Music and Movement
- Playground Time
- Gross Motor
- Fine Motor
- Language and Literacy

ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS

- Throughout the year, we invite a variety of outreach programs/community visitors to provide additional opportunities for our preschool children.
- The Preschool and Pre/Jr. Kindergarten children present a Christmas program in December.

- Hope offers after-school enrichment programs, including dance, music, STEM and PEP.
- Pre/Jr. Kindergarteners participate in a graduation program in May.

STUDENT EVALUATIONS AND TEACHER CONFERENCES

The teachers are continually making observations and assessing the developmental growth of each child throughout the year. Children enrolled in the Preschool and Pre/Jr. Kindergarten programs (ages 3-5) will be given a formal evaluation in the Fall and Spring. Students enrolled in the PDO will not be formally assessed but observed in a more informal setting. Parent-Teacher conferences are not held unless specifically requested by the teacher or parent. Parents are always welcome to schedule a time with their child's teacher to discuss their child's progress.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

We encourage parents to be involved at our school. Volunteer opportunities for parents include bringing in snack and helping at special events or parties. Talk to your child's teacher about volunteer opportunities in your child's class.

DISCIPLINE

Hope Preschool recognizes that children don't come to school knowing how to act and react in all situations. Our philosophy of discipline involves a basic emphasis on positive behavior. This includes a few basic guidelines of positive expectations for classroom/playground behavior.

- Techniques involving separating and re-directing the child from unacceptable behavior to a more positive one.
- Staff will offer positive guidance to help children recognize how their actions affect others, develop skills for social competence and communicate in meaningful ways.
- As a regular part of the learning experience, children are encouraged to solve their own disputes. The teacher will be receptive and make suggestions of vocabulary to aid in reaching a satisfactory solution for both parties.
- At all times, the child's positive behavior will be recognized and encouraged.

- We emphasize that God always loves us no matter what.
- Rarely, if safety is involved, time out within the room itself may be used as a natural/logical consequence.
- Sometimes a short amount of time in the office will be used for the child to think about the incident/behavior that has occurred, discuss the negative behavior that caused the problem, what behavior is expected and how the child can make a better choice next time.
- Power struggles with out-of-control children will be avoided unless safety is an immediate issue and natural or logical consequences will result.
- Food and bathroom privileges are never acceptable items to withhold.
- No child shall be left alone, and no corporal punishment is allowed.
- With repeated problems, a parent-teacher-director conference will be arranged in order to determine the best action to be taken.
- In rare situations, involving harmful behavior, disenrollment may be a result.

Children who deliberately bite, hit, kick or scratch other children will be immediately removed from the situation. An appropriate consequence will follow at the discretion of the teacher and director, and the parent will be notified. A deliberate second offense will result in a call to the parent to pick up their child.

Habitual harmful behavior will be handled on an individual basis, and the welfare and safety of the group will be considered when a decision is made to allow the child to return to class. A conference will take place with the parent, teacher and director. A child may be removed from the classroom for a period of two weeks and returned for a probationary period of two weeks. A joint decision between the director and teacher will be made at the end of that time as to whether the child is ready to rejoin the program.

SAFETY PROCEDURES AND PRECAUTIONS

Hope Preschool has written policies and procedures for dealing with emergencies. Be assured that the staff will offer your child any emergency care they may need. Each staff member has been trained in First Aid and CPR, and each classroom is equipped with first aid supplies. We conduct monthly

evacuation (fire), shelter (tornado), and lockdown drills, teaching the children safety procedures in accompaniment with their teacher.

If an emergency occurs and the director determines it is in the children's best interest to leave Hope Preschool, parents or emergency contacts will be notified. Individual classroom teachers will dismiss children to authorized person(s).

EVACUATION (FIRE)

Emergency exits will always remain unlocked. In the case an evacuation is required, teachers will take their class outside to a safe, designated location. Once at the safe location, teachers will take attendance. If outdoor conditions are unfavorable, or if it is unsafe for children to gather outdoors, children and teachers will proceed to the neighboring building, Aish Denver.

SHELTER (TORNADO)

In threatening weather and if the conditions warrant, the director will notify classrooms to implement 'Shelter' Procedure. Playground activities and field trips become suspended. Teachers lead children to designated areas where they sit on the floor with backs to the wall. If signs indicate a tornado is coming, children should put heads down between knees, close eyes, and cover heads with their arms ("the turtle").

LOCKDOWN

A Lockdown is called when there is a threat or hazard **inside** the school building and evacuation is not a safe option. The director will notify teachers when it becomes safe to come out of lockdown or wait for First Responders to open the door.

LOCKOUT

A Lockout is called when there is a threat or hazard **outside** of the school building. Inside school, children go about business as usual. Teachers take attendance, account for all students and increase situational awareness.

HEALTH PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES

ACCIDENTS

All Hope staff have up-to-date training on CPR, first aid and blood-borne pathogens. If your child is injured while at school, first aid will be administered. If treatment by a doctor is needed, we will make every effort to contact you and/or the doctor noted on your child's emergency card. If attempts to contact a parent or guardian, or the child's doctor, are not successful, we will call emergency medical services to ensure that your child receives the necessary care. If there is a need to transport the child, a staff member will always accompany your child. Any expense incurred will be the responsibility of the child's family. The school will not be responsible for anything that may occur as a result of false or misleading information given at the time of enrollment. Please keep your child's file current with updated phone numbers and other pertinent information. The people listed to be called in an emergency when the parents cannot be reached should live in the local area, be available during school sessions, and should know your wishes for your child.

ALLERGIES

Teachers will notify parents of any food allergies that children in their child's class may have. We can **never guarantee** that a room is a nut-free environment. However, children with severe nut allergies will be in classrooms declared as 'nut-free,' and parents will be asked not to send peanuts in lunches or for snacks.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

The director must post information about exposure, signs and symptoms of communicable diseases, and report to the local health department any communicable disease contracted by any staff member or child at Hope.

DIAPERING AND TOILETING

Toddlers in diapers will be changed as needed. Parents will provide disposable diapers daily, labeled with the child's name. Desitin or a similar product may be used if needed with a completed form signed by the parent. No toilet training will be attempted at school with children not concurrently working on toilet training with parents at home. Parents should communicate throughout the year with their child's teacher what stage their child is in.

FIRST AID

- Cuts and scrapes will be cleaned with soap and water, rinsed and bandaged. No ointments can be used.
- In the event of a bite, the area will be cleaned and bandaged to avoid infection.
- Splinters will not be dug out. If close to surface, it may be removed. Otherwise, a Band-Aid will be applied to cover until parent can remove.
- Objects may never be dug out of a child's nose or ears. Parents will be notified to pick up child.

ILLNESS

DO NOT bring sick children to school. They will be sent home. Some symptoms that will deter a child from staying at school are flu symptoms, rash, runny eyes, diarrhea, fever, vomiting, sneezing, coughing, colored mucus and sore throat. If your child becomes ill at school, he/she will be isolated in a warm, comfortable area and a parent or designated adult will be contacted to pick them up immediately. If they cannot be reached, emergency medical treatment may be sought. Please be sure your child is symptom free for 24 hours before returning to Hope Preschool. If your child is sent home with a fever, vomiting or diarrhea they may not return the following day, per the 24-hour policy.

MEDICINE

Hope staff will not administer medication to a child for illness or injury. If a child requires medication during the four-hour period, he/she should be kept home. In special circumstances, medication will be administered with permission and instructions from child's parent and physician. Children are not allowed to transport medication at any time or keep it in their tote.

MEDICATION NEEDED FOR EMERGENCIES

- Allergies and medical conditions requiring emergency medication must be listed on emergency cards.
- Staff will be aware of any allergies and other medical conditions and trained with proper protocol for reaction/incident.
- Emergency medication (such as those for allergies, asthma, etc.) must be brought to the director's office in the original container and checked in with director. All necessary medical forms must be filled out and signed by parents and doctors and reviewed by Hope's nurse consultant.

SUN PROTECTION

Please apply a four-hour sunscreen to your child before bringing them to school. Sunscreen is available in the director's office for parents to apply at drop-off, should they forget to apply sunscreen at home. Children who go outside in the afternoon are required to bring sunscreen to be applied while at school. Sunscreen sticks are preferred. Please label your child's sunscreen before giving it to the teacher. No sunscreen may be kept in totes. If you prefer not to use sunscreen at Hope, you can note that on the authorization form.

COMMUNICATION

Hope Preschool will communicate with Hope Families in several ways.

1. A monthly newsletter will be emailed to enrolled families, as well as posted on the Hope website.
2. Bulletin boards outside of classrooms (including daily lesson plans) and the Parent bulletin board.
3. Conferences are available upon request on an as-needed basis.
4. Parents may observe in classrooms. They will not be denied access to their child unless we know of a custody dispute. Arrangements to observe a classroom should be made with the teacher in advance. Please remember it is inappropriate to have a lengthy conversation with the teacher during an observation, as the children are the teacher's priority during class time.
5. You are more than welcome to contact Ashley, Sara or Melissa via email or phone.

FILING A COMPLAINT

Complaints or concerns regarding the operations of Hope PDO and Preschool program in regard to implementation of the Rules and Regulations for Child Care Centers may be submitted to the Colorado Department of Human Resources, Licensing Division. It is recommended that you first take your concerns to the director.

Colorado Department of Human Services Division of Child-care Licensing Division
1575 Sherman Street. Denver, CO. 80203

