

**Harbor View
Presbyterian Church
Early Care and Education Program
(ECEP)**

**Parent's Handbook
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Harbor View Presbyterian Church
Early Care and Education Program

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 Early Care and Education Program was founded in 1977 as an outreach to the James Island community. Over the years, our teachers have dedicated countless hours to ensuring that the children entrusted to their care were part of a safe, secure and nurturing environment. This tradition continues today at HVPC Early Care and Education Program (ECEP).

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 snacks

We strive to provide classrooms, playgrounds, toys and curriculum that are developmentally appropriate and fun to spend the day exploring for children **15 months of age that are walking through children 11 years of age.** The children learn through the examples set by our staff of accepting other cultures and children with special needs. We appreciate the support our HVCP 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.

HVPC ECEP 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.

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. To reach these goals a compassionate and empathetic staff trained in early childhood development, accepting of the uniqueness of each child and family; and able to provide smiles, hugs, laps, kind words and encouragement for each child is a vital part of our program.

DAILY ACTIVITIES

The ECEP opens at 7:00 a.m. and closes at 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. A detailed account of the daily schedule of each classroom is available from your child's teacher.

Our days start with quiet viewing developmentally appropriate programs and music and movement in the opening room. Academic activities begin in all classes by 9:00 am. All children need to be in their classes before 9:00 am to take full advantage of our learning activities. Our learning activities include a daily review of the calendar, weather, books, music and small group activities that are theme related and follow the SC Early Learning Standards. 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 held during the morning.

An afternoon naptime is encouraged for children **15-months to 5 years of age**. The 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. This quiet time allows them to relax, read and nap if they wish.

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 with staff that will monitor and give assistance as needed. Late afternoon activities include music, story time, group/board games if not outside.

FIELD TRIPS

Field Trips are planned throughout the year for children in the 4'S through the 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 7:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. are to enter through the main entrance to the church. Children arriving or leaving between 9:00 am and 3:00 pm are to use the assigned door - TBD. Staff and / or Parents are to sign in/out their child/children daily on the class clips boxes. When picking up children from the playground **Please do not allow your child/children to run free within the building or in the parking lot for safety reasons.** **Arrival and departure times are based on your signed schedule not 5 + minutes earlier or 5 + minutes later. If you arrive earlier you may be asked by staff to stay with your child/children to help maintain DSS class ratios.**

TUITION RATES

Tuition is **payable in advance and may be paid on Friday prior to or on Monday** of the current week. Payments received **after Wednesday** of the current week will require an additional late fee charge of **\$15.00**. Children cannot return to the ECEP once tuition is two weeks past due until all late fees and tuition fees are paid.

TUITION RATE INCREASES

Information about tuition increases is sent to families in December by email or a paper copy. Fee increases are implemented in January as needed. Increases are based on the current year's expenses and income. Also, any major code changes required by DSS/DHEC/FIRE MARSHALL can affect the amount of fee increases. ECEP operates on an annual budget and not a school year budget.

REGISTRATION FEES AND FAMILY DISCOUNTS

A non-refundable registration fee of \$150.00 per family is required for all students entering HVPC ECEP. This fee is waived for active members of HVPC. A re-registration fee is due in February at the time of re-registration for current families for the coming school year. This re-registration fee is \$100.00 per current family and is non-refundable.

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 \$30.00 returned check fee. After 2 returned checks fees, future payments will need to be paid in cash. Late pick up fees are \$10.00 per child until 5:45, plus an additional \$15.00 per child from 5:46 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. Three late pick-ups will result in dismissal of your child or children from the ECEP.

ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

To enter the ECEP the following items are required: a tour of ECEP, payment of the registration fee, a completed registration form, a DHEC record of immunization, completed Department of Social Service forms, emergency consent form and a scheduled orientation conference. A tour of the facilities will be conducted during a scheduled visit. Extra visits to ECEP ARE REQUIRED to 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. The class head teacher will conduct an orientation conference before your child enters his/her/their new ECEP classroom.

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. 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. If you wish to share items pertaining to the class curriculum, please check with your child's teacher.

CLOTHING

Children of all ages should wear comfortable, clean clothes suitable for indoor or outdoor wear and weather appropriate. Shoes with backs must be worn. **Backless shoes and Crocs are dangerous for running, please keep them at home.** Children 15 months of age through 5 years of age need a complete change of seasonal clothing that is left in their classroom for emergencies. The younger age groups will need 2 complete changes of size and weather appropriate clothing, to include 1 pair of shoes. All clothing, backpacks, jackets, etc. need to be labeled with your child's name.

FOOD AND FOOD ALLERGIES

Children arriving between 7:00 a.m. and 7:30 a.m. may bring breakfast. Snacks are provided for the children in the mornings and afternoons. Parents are to supply a daily lunch for their child/children. Teachers will warm up lunch by using a micro wave for items needing to be heated but not cooked. **Children arriving after 12:00 pm need to eat lunch before arrival. The center should be notified of all food allergies immediately.**

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 or heavily frosted cupcakes. 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/DSS Tracking Forms & Procare APP

Currently the ECEP Staff are signing children in and out daily on the class clip boxes and the Procare App. If any person other than a parent is to pick up, please remind them to bring their photo id for pick-up...

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 messages on Procure, phone calls, and ECEP's Observation Form for Inappropriate Behaviors and/or Developmental Concerns. 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 to schedule a conference. By scheduling a conference, your child's teacher will be able to give full attention to your concerns. **Please do not talk with a teacher during drop off or pick up times about a specific concern. The teachers need to give their full attention to ALL the children in their care and cannot do this and talk with a parent. Please have your Procure Alerts set up on all your devices for daily messages from ECEP staff.**

DEVELOPMENTAL CONFERENCES

During the spring of each year, conferences are scheduled by parents or teachers to review a child's progress during the current school year.

ORIENTATION CONFERENCES

An orientation conference is scheduled with parents to introduce them to their child's / children's teachers and classroom. These conferences provide parents a time to share information about their child/children with the teachers. Parents are encouraged to share specific goals they have for their child/children as student(s) at ECEP. During the orientation conference the **toilet learning policy will be explained** and reviewed with parents of children 15 months – 24 months of age. Children must be potty/toilet trained to enter the 3 year old class of ECEP. **Parents must attend an orientation conference before their child/children may enter the ECEP. Also, a toilet learning conference is needed before the ECEP staff will be able to start potty/toilet learning with your child/children.**

OPEN HOUSE

Currently individual Orientation Conferences are held instead of an Open House.

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 or text the ECEP cell phone at 843-406-8844.

Forms of Communication with Families

The ECEP staff use the Procure on line app for daily communication with parents. Once your child/children are registered with ECEP an invite will be sent from Procure for parents to register with Procure. The staff communicate daily activities, emergency closings, and other daily information to parents through the Procure app. Once registered with Procure, parents may communicate daily with their child's teacher or director. Also, parents may go to the Procure app to check their weekly statements for fees, payments or tax statements.

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. Due to various illnesses throughout the year, visits may not be possible.

ABSENCES

The Program is to be notified when your child is out because of illness or a change in schedule. If your 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 available. **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 school year. Reminders are posted before scheduled closings and on monthly newsletters.

The center will be closed whenever we are without electricity, sufficient running water, working toilets or when weather conditions prevent Charleston County Public School from being open. **If ECEP must close early due to any of these listed reasons, parents will be notified by the Procure APP or text.** Please send changes in cell numbers and emails to us immediately to keep communication current.

If ECEP 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 ECEP 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 for the 1st day of closure. Continued days of closure will be determined and communicated to parents. Please check you devices for messages and texts from ECEP!**
- **If the opening of the Charleston County School District is delayed, ECEP will open at 8:00 a.m. if roads are clear for driving.**

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 used 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 remainder of the calendar year. Child/children must be away from ECEP from Monday through Friday to receive a free vacation week.**

LEAVING THE EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION PROGRAM

One week's notice by either the center or the parents is required for leaving ECEP permanently. Please remember registration fees are non-refundable.

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 Harbor View Presbyterian Church Office for the committee chairperson to pick up.

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. Please message us on the Procure app!

Wish List

Throughout the school year, class teachers may post "Wish List" for class specific items or send home reminders for wipes, diapers, tissues or foaming hand soaps. These items may be sent home in the daily Procure messages or listed in the monthly newsletters.

SAFETY INFORMATION

- ***Tornado and fire drills are held monthly...***
- ***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 as well as the local police/sheriff's department.***

Health Information

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**, **other symptoms of illness or lice**. 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 SCDHEC Schools/Childcares Child Exclusion packet information for more specific requirements. Please communicate with ECEP staff the types of symptoms and or diagnosis by your child's doctor **BEFORE RETURNING TO ECEP**. Please supply a doctors's note stating your child is clear to return to school with not limitations. Please inform ECEP staff when your child is taking medication either OTC or prescription medications. This information helps the staff understand if your child is acting out of his or her usual self. Also, some medications cause stomach upsets and / or lethargic behaviors.

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. Children must be fever free without medication for 24 hours before returning to ECEP. Please reference your copy of the Mildly Ill form you signed for specific information about returning to ECEP after illnesses. Covid exposures and quarantine requirements will be communicated to families when they occur and affect the ECEP children and or staff.

Incident forms are sent home to parents for any type of hurt your child may have had during the day at ECEP. Incidents involving the head will result in an immediate phone call or Procure message to parents. The ECEP staff may request parents to come to the program for an observation and parental decision.

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, even over the counter medication with the current year on it.**
- **The medication must have a current date on it and not expired.**
- **Parents must fill out a childcare medication form completely, according to your child's doctor's instructions.**
- **Your child's name must be on the medication.**