

Parent Handbook

2017-2018



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Meridianville, AL 35759
(256) 714-9273
www.nhecc.net

*A ministry supported by
North Hills Presbyterian Church*

Preschool phone: (256) 714-9273

Church phone: (256) 829-0333

Director: Donna Hyde

Director's cell phone: (256) 503-7075

Web page: www.nhecc.net

Email: daycare@northhillschurch.net

Dear Parents,

We extend a warm welcome to you and your family! Thank you for choosing our program at North Hills Early Childhood Center. We look forward to serving you, and we are blessed by the opportunity to partner with you to provide a positive learning environment for your child.

We believe children are gifts from God; therefore, we consider it a privilege to be entrusted with your little one. Their spiritual growth is as important to us as their intellectual and social development. It is also very important that your child feel loved and cared for during the time they are with us.

Please read all the information in this handbook and let us know if you have any questions. After you have read it, please sign the signature page, and return it to the director.

We are excited about working with you to enhance this formative time in your child's life.

Sincerely,

NHECC Staff

Our Vision

To instill a love for God and learning, that will last a lifetime.

“Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he shall not depart from it.”

Proverbs 22:6

Our Mission

To extend the ministry of North Hills Presbyterian Church by providing quality care, education, and development for each child to reach his/her greatest potential – spiritually, mentally, physically, emotionally, and socially. This is to be accomplished through developmentally appropriate activities and guidance that encourages children to grow in a wholesome attitude towards themselves and others in a God-loving well-mannered fashion.

NHECC Program Choices

NHECC welcomes children of any race, religious belief or national heritage. We offer four choices for a preschool and daycare program:

- 5 days, Monday through Friday
half-day (8:15-12:15) and full-day (6:30-6:00)
- 3 days, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday
half-day (8:15-12:15) and full-day (6:30-6:00)

Children are placed into the appropriate classroom according to the age they will be on September 1st. We have adopted the September 1st birthday cutoff following the Madison County School Board enrollment guidelines.

2017/2018 Tuition & Fees

- Fall Registration Fees: \$125
- Summer Registration Fee: \$75

Program	2 ½ years-old	3 years-old	Pre-K
3 Half-days (Tu/We/Th)	\$180 per month	\$170 per month	\$170 per month
5 Half-days (Mon-Fri)			\$240 per month
3 Full-days (Tu/We/Th)	\$100 per week	\$95 per week	\$100 per week
5 Full-days (Mon-Fri)	\$150 per week	\$150 per week	\$150 per week

Lunch is included with tuition for all full-time children.

Sibling discount for two or more children enrolled full-time is \$10.00 per week.

Tuition Due Dates

Part-time children Due on the 1st of each month
 Late fee of \$10 if paid after the 5th of the month

Full-time children Weekly tuition is due by Tuesday
 Late fee of \$10 if not paid by Wednesday

If tuition is over a week late, your child may be dropped from the rolls and their spot may be filled with another child.

Tuition and fees may be paid via check or cash – we do not accept credit card payments at this time. If paying by cash, please provide exact change. Fees may be placed in the locked payment box outside the church office. The School Board reserves the right to increase tuition at any time during the school year to meet budget demands. Parents will receive a 30-day written notice of this change.

If your child is **not** enrolled in our summer session, your first tuition payment for our fall session will be due in early July (your invoice will be mailed and a due date noted). Your first tuition payment is equal to one week for full-time children and one month for part-time children. Failure to remit payment by the established date will result in your child being dropped from the roll. This tuition payment is non-refundable.

Miscellaneous Fees

A sleep mat is required for all children enrolled in our full-day program. The required sleep mat has an attached lightweight cover and pillow and rolls up tightly with a velcro fastener. You are not required to purchase the mat from NHECC. If you desire to purchase the mat from us, the current cost is \$33.00.

If a child is picked up after 12:20 (for half-day children) and 6:05 (for full-day children) there is a \$5 late pick-up fee for every 5 minutes late. The clock posted at our entrance is the clock we will use as the official time.

A check returned for insufficient funds will incur a \$30 fee.

Early drop off is available for our half-day children. The cost is \$5 per morning and should be used on an occasional basis. Every day or frequent early drop off of our part-time children is not permitted as the child should be enrolled in our full-time program.

Extended afternoon daycare is available for our half-day children if space is available. The cost is \$10 per afternoon and should be used only on an occasional basis. Lunch can be added for \$2.50 or you may pack a lunch for your child who is staying for extended afternoon care.

Pro-rate

If a child is enrolled mid-month the tuition will be prorated. If a child is enrolled after January 1st for the current school year, all fees for enrollment will be reduced by half.

Reimbursement

It is our policy to adequately staff our center at all times and to have the appropriate supplies for all enrolled children. Because of this, no reimbursement will be made due to child's illness, holidays, personal vacations, school closings or delays, inclement weather or potential hazardous road and travel conditions.

We value our employees and pay our employees regardless of weather conditions, closures, vacations, holidays, etc. Given our fixed operating costs of payroll and facilities, tuition is not reduced for closures or delays as mentioned above. NHECC is a ministry of the church and we do operate within a very tight budget.

2017/2018 Holidays & Playcare Days

Our preschool schedule will follow the Madison County School Calendar for holidays and breaks. Our daycare will be open year round with the exception of certain holidays as listed below:

Holidays we are closed for:

July 24-Aug. 1, 2017:	Closed to prepare for school-year
Sept. 4, 2017:	Labor Day
Nov. 10, 2017:	Veterans' Day
Nov. 23, 2017:	Thanksgiving Day
Nov. 24, 2017:	Day After Thanksgiving
Dec. 25-29, 2017 & Jan. 1 & 2:	Christmas Break (no full-time tuition due this week)
Mar. 30, 2018:	Good Friday
May 28, 2018:	Memorial Day
July 4, 2018:	4 th of July

The following days will be **daycare only days (playcare) for our full-time children**.
Preschool half-day only children do not attend:

Playcare Days (for full-time children only)

Sept. 5, 2017:	Madison County Schools Work Day
Oct. 2-6, 2017:	Fall Break Week
Nov. 20-21, 2017:	Thanksgiving Break
Dec. 18-22, 2017:	Christmas Break
Jan. 3, 2018:	Madison County Schools Work Day
Jan. 15, 2018:	MLK Day
Feb. 19, 2018:	President's Day
Feb. 20, 2018:	Madison County Schools Work Day
Mar. 26-29, 2018	Spring Break Week <i>closed Friday due to Good Friday</i>
May 25, 2018:	Madison County Schools Work Day

Potty Training

We do not require our 2 ½ year-old class to be potty trained, but those entering a 3 year-old class or Pre-K class must be fully potty trained. They must be out of diapers, pull-ups, and/or training pants. If they are not toilet trained by the time our session begins, then they will be unable to attend. Occasional potty accidents happen – it is developmentally appropriate and expected. However, if potty accidents become a regular occurrence, we will ask the following of you:

1. Remove your child from the program and re-enroll once your child has mastered potty training. Your spot will not be held and there is a chance that an opening may not become available for you again until the next school year;

- OR
2. Remove your child for a period of two weeks during which you will work on potty training at home. During these two weeks, tuition is still due to hold your child's spot in the class.

We do allow for nap time pull-ups if your child still has difficulty staying dry during nap time. We will assist your child in putting on “nap time underwear” before nap and assist with removing it immediately after nap time.

Withdrawals

A two week written notice is required when withdrawing your child from NHECC during our fall session. We also request a two week notice when changing program selection from full-day to half-day. A change in program selection may not be available, as the center has to maintain a certain balance of half-day & full-day children to meet budget. Our summer session requires a full session commitment. No withdrawals for summer are permitted.

Termination of Enrollment

Enrollment may be considered terminated if:

- Tuition payment is delinquent and/or arrangements have not been made with the Director.
- Parents repeated failure to comply with the school’s published policies and procedures.
- The preschool, on its sole discretion, determines that it is unable to meet the needs of the child, or that it is not in the best interest of the school or other children enrolled to have the child in the preschool. Under certain circumstances, this dismissal may be immediate. Any tuition that has been paid in advance will be refunded.

Inclement Weather

NHECC will follow the same actions that the Madison County School System takes concerning inclement weather.

- **For early dismal** – we will close 30 minutes after the Madison County School pick up time.
- **For a delayed start:**
For a one hour delay: preschool will start at 9:15
For a two hour delay: preschool will start at 10:15
- For a three-hour delay: We will not have preschool and will only have daycare for our full-time children.

With a delayed start, morning daycare for full-time children may or may not be available. Please call our center at (256) 714-9273 to inquire if morning daycare is available.

If threatening weather should occur, you will be notified by our automated phone messaging system to pick up your child. Please be prepared to do so within the time frame requested. If you are late in picking up your child, a late fee of \$5.00 every 5 minutes will be charged.

Automated Phone Messaging Service

We use an automated phone messaging system to notify our parents of early dismissals and delayed openings. This system will also be used to notify and/or update you regarding emergency situations.

Your message will be delivered to TWO phone numbers and TWO email addresses furnished by you. The system will leave voice mail messages if you do not answer and your email message will give you the ability to play the recorded message. If the call or email fails to be sent, NHECC will be notified of the error and we will follow up to be sure you received the message. Please note that we will not call a parent for each child in attendance should we need to do an early dismissal. The automated calls and emails are your notification.

Please don't forget to update the office regarding any changes to these important numbers and email addresses.

Arrival and Departure Procedures

Our center is open 11 ½ hours a day. DHR child care laws prohibit a child staying at a child care center for more than 10 hours a day. Quality time at home with your child is very important.

Everyone must enter through the front entrance doors to the church. Our entry doors are locked at all times unless there is a special event taking place in the center. Please ring the doorbell for entry if no one is attending to the door upon your arrival. Upon arrival and departure, you will be required to sign in and sign out your child. Only those individuals listed on the Emergency Release & Car Pool Drivers List will be allowed to pick up your child. We cannot accept phone calls from a parent asking us to release a child to someone not on their list. A photo ID may be necessary until our staff becomes familiar with everyone who picks up your child.

Preschool begins at 8:15 am. **Half-day children may arrive as early as 8:00.** Daycare for our full-time children begins at 6:30. In order to make drop-off as smooth as possible, please do not linger in the classroom. It is very important for your child to be on time. Children miss out on opportunities to serve as a special helper when they are late. It can also be disruptive to a class when latecomers arrive. We need to be teaching our children

good habits in regard to attendance and promptness. **Please do not bring your child any later than 10:30** – arrival after this time is very disruptive to everyone’s day. Please keep this in mind as you schedule doctor visits. Our weekly chapel service is Wednesday morning at 8:20. **We ask that Wednesday chapel services not be interrupted with late arrivals.**

Please keep your children with you at all times when you walk from your vehicle to the classroom, as well as after picking your child up at the end of the day. Children running ahead of their parents is a safety concern. Please do not allow their child to climb on our outside handrails at our entry steps and ramp as well as roll down the hill near the playground gate.

Parking

Please park your car in a marked space in the parking lot. Please do not park in front of the entrance ramp and please respect the handicapped parking spaces.

Parent Involvement (VIP Program – Very Important Parent)

We believe parents are the most significant teachers in a child’s life. It is our desire to partner with parents to create an enjoyable learning experience for each child. At North Hills, we offer many opportunities for parent involvement throughout the school year. Some activities include being a special reader for a class, volunteering in our library, helping with crafts, playing games with the class, and assisting with parties and special events. We invite you to use your talents to enrich our classes. Parents are always welcome to visit the classroom and you are welcome to eat lunch with your child anytime. It is the sincere hope of NHECC staff that all parents will avail themselves of the numerous opportunities to enrich their child's classroom experience.

Religious Statement

Because NHECC is a ministry of the church, the caring for, teaching of, and socializing with the children is done in a Christian environment. Theological beliefs in which we operate in relationship with the children are:

- God has created and loves all people and creatures
- God makes each person unique and special
- God is always present with us
- We all do wrong but God forgives us and we can forgive each other
- God's Son, Jesus, is our Savior
- We can learn about God and Jesus in God's word, the Bible

While these are difficult concepts for children to understand, they can be demonstrated in the teachers' and caretakers' relationships with the children, in their everyday conversations with the children and in the telling of Bible stories appropriate to the children's age and ability to understand.

A Chapel worship service is held each week where our children and teachers participate in activities that include singing songs, saying prayers, catechisms, and hearing Bible stories and stories related to the Christian principles appropriate to their age level. Parents are always welcome to attend Chapel with their child at 8:20 on Wednesday mornings. Our Chapel service is approximately 20 minutes long.

Records

The Preschool is required by state law to have current immunization records and emergency information forms on file at all times for each child. A child without the current immunization records or a religious exemption statement cannot attend. It is the parent's responsibility to provide the Director with updated immunization records throughout the year. **It is also important to update us with any changes in address, email, phone, cell and work phone numbers.**

A background check has been conducted on every staff member hired by NHECC.

Divorced or Separated Parents

NHECC has no legal authority to refuse either parent the right to visit or pick up their child at the center. However we will honor all court orders and injunctions such as custody agreements or restrictions which apply to your child. We must be furnished with a copy of any such court order barring the courts signature. Both parents may make changes to the authorization to pick up form unless the court order states differently.

Guardianship

If a child is enrolled by a legal guardian or foster care provider, a copy of all legal documents must be in the child's personal file at the center.

Developmental Screenings and Testing

Part of your teacher's responsibility is to assess each child in the class in all areas of child development : fine motor, gross motor, language, adaptive, social/emotional and cognitive. If your child's teacher should have a concern regarding your child's development in any of these areas, they will seek to discuss their concerns with you.

Often it is your child's preschool teacher who is one of the first to identify concerns during the early years of education. After conferencing to discuss their observations and concerns, they may suggest screening or testing within the Madison County School system. These screenings and tests are very thorough and often times lead to specialized services and therapy available at no charge within the school system.

Our goal is not to label a child as delayed or special needs ... but to ensure that each child has the best services available to them. Our Lead Teachers all have over 10 years of experience in early childhood education - please trust their judgement when they speak with you regarding their observations and suggestion for further screenings and testing. It is with the best interest of the child at heart that they have chosen to address their concerns with you.

Hearing, Speech and Vision Screenings

Early in the school year, NHECC will provide screening for hearing, speech and vision by a certified screener or health care professional. These tests are optional and will be offered at a low cost or free. Communication about testing dates will be sent home in the fall.

Scholastic Book Club and School Library

Our center does participate in the Scholastic Book Club program. Each month a Book Club Order form will be sent home to all children. This program is totally voluntary and a purchase is not required. We feel that reading to your child is very important to encourage speech and language development. Scholastic offers a very affordable way to build your child's library. Purchases can be made on line or by returning your payment and order form to us. We do ask that all payments to Scholastics be made by check, as we cannot send cash to Scholastic.

Donations of new or used books to our school library are always welcome and appreciated. Parents and family members are welcome to volunteer to be our special guest Librarian during library on Tuesdays from 8:20 to 9:30. Printed details on being a Volunteer Librarian are available from the Director.

Clothing and Personal Belongings

- Children will need a full-size backpack labeled with their name. Please do not send a mini-backpack or one that is on wheels. The backpack must be large enough to fit a 9x12 folder inside it and a lightweight jacket..
- Children must wear comfortable, sturdy play shoes. Tennis shoes are best for all their activities (and the rocks on our playground). Tennis shoes should cover the foot entirely and must be worn with socks. **Please no sandals, flip-flops, clogs, crocs, slippers or cowboy boots. We do not change shoes for the playground.**

- Children should be dressed in comfortable clothes that allow them to move freely. Please no dress up clothing, costumes or long night gown princess dresses. Girls should wear shorts under their dresses. Weather permitting, classes go outside every day. Be sure your child comes prepared with a jacket or sweater, hat, mittens, etc. There is no provision for a child to remain indoors while the rest of the class is outside.
- Children should not bring toys and other items from home unless requested by the child's teacher for Show & Tell or some other special occasion. We ask that you not allow your child to bring their toy guns or swords for Show & Tell.
- Our full-day children are allowed to bring one item of comfort to sleep with (i.e. stuffed animal, special blanket, etc.). Their special nap item can transport daily in their backpack or be rolled up in their sleep mat. **We do not allow pacifiers for nap time or classroom time.**
- Please be sure to label your child's jacket/sweater and lunch bag. We try to keep lost & found items to a minimum.
- Please avoid accessories such as belts, watches, fit bits, necklaces, bracelets, etc. These often become objects to get lost, broken and played with.
- Your child's sleep mat will be sent home weekly to be washed. If your child forgets their sleep mat and borrows one from us – we will send home the spare mat for you to launder. Please return it back as soon as possible - preferably the next day.

Lunch, Snacks and Breakfast

NHECC provides lunch for our full-time children using a local caterer. A monthly lunch menu will be provided. If your child will not or cannot eat what is on the menu, please pack a lunch for them to eat. Please pack a lunch that does not require heating or refrigeration. Please insert an ice pack for chilling or use a thermos to keep food warm. At lunch, we serve reduced fat milk. If your child will not or cannot drink reduced fat milk, we will serve water. You are also welcome to provide an alternate drink for your child (no soda allowed). Due to Health Department regulations, we do not use sippy cups at the center.

Parents and family members of our full-time children are welcome to come have lunch with your child. If you should need a catered lunch, please let us know at morning drop off so that we may add an additional lunch with our caterer. Cost of a catered lunch is \$6 per adult.

Children that arrive **BEFORE 7:30** am may bring a breakfast from home to eat at the center. Please bring something that is not too messy since we will be eating in a classroom. Your child will need to bring a morning snack every day. Please pack a healthy snack daily in your child's backpack. It would be helpful to write their name on the snack. Afternoon snacks will be furnished by NHECC.

Junk Food for Snack/Breakfast

A healthy mind and a healthy body go together. A child's diet has a direct effect on his behavior, as well as his ability to learn. To this end, it is our strong preference to avoid candy, sweets and convenience junk food items.

Birthdays

A birthday is a special day at North Hills. We want to recognize and celebrate each and every one of them. With the increased awareness of food allergies, food safety and the potential for an overabundance of “sugary treats”, **we prefer not to celebrate birthdays with cake or cupcakes.** In lieu of celebrating birthdays with food, we would like to recognize and celebrate your child’s special day in the following ways:

- Parents are invited in on their child's birthday (or a school day close to their birthday) to read a story to the class, do a special craft, play a game or lead in some other fun activity. Your child will love having you in the classroom. Please coordinate your special activity, date and time with your child’s teacher several days in advance. Your parent involvement is very much appreciated (by the teacher) and adored (by your child).
- Parents are welcome to send in “party bags” for each child in the class to take home. Please try to include items other than candy as some parents may not appreciate a bag full of candy.
- At our Wednesday Chapel service, we will say a special birthday prayer for each birthday, sing Happy Birthday and present each child celebrating a birthday with a birthday card signed by his teacher.
- Invitations to a party outside of the center may be given out in class only if every child is invited. If you cannot invite the entire class, the director will be happy to add addresses to postage applied birthday invitations and drop them in the mail for you. We can also forward birthday invitations by email for you.
- For children with summer birthdays, we will recognize summer birthdays at the end of the school year.

Holidays & Celebrations

Please take note of how we will celebrate the below holidays:

- We celebrate Fall instead of Halloween.
- We will have a Happy Birthday Jesus Party that will emphasize the true meaning of Christmas – not Santa.
- Easter is a celebration of our Risen Lord. We will not place an emphasis on the Easter Bunny nor have an Easter Egg Hunt.

Visiting

Parents, grandparents, and other relatives are welcome to visit your child's classroom. If you would like to visit, please contact your child's teacher in advance so they may set up a time that is beneficial to all.

End of Year Child Care Expense Statements

We will prepare end of the year Child Care Expense Statements for all children. These statements will be issued prior to Jan. 30th.

Field Trips

During the year we may take a field trip with our pre-K classes. Written permission to participate will be obtained from the parents prior to the trip.

Discipline

Discipline at NHECC is handled in a positive manner, consistent with the developmental needs of children. Clear behavioral limits are set and consistently enforced. Discipline is treated as a positive learning experience and an opportunity to encourage good behavioral habits. At no time will harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment be used as a method of discipline. Removal of the child from the program may occur in the case of a severe, continuing discipline problem after a confidential conference between parent(s), teacher(s) and director.

Biting Policy

Biting is a natural developmental stage that many children go through. The following steps will be taken if a biting incident occurs at NHECC:

- The biting will be interrupted with a firm "No... we don't bite people!"
- The bitten child will be comforted and the wound of the bitten child will be cleansed with soap and water and ice applied.
- The biter will be removed from the situation and the caregiver will work with the child who bit to learn why biting is inappropriate and discuss other ways to express their frustration.
- The parents of both children will be notified and the names of the children involved will be kept confidential. This is to avoid labeling of the child which makes it more difficult to work quickly and positively toward stopping the biting.

Conferences

We provide the opportunity for parent-teacher conferences at any time. Please let the Director or Teacher know if you would like to schedule a conference.

Health and Safety

Your cooperation is needed in maintaining high health standards for our school. **Parents are asked to keep their child home when the child:**

- **Has a fever of 100 degrees or higher**
- **Vomiting or diarrhea**
- **Colored discharge from the eyes or nose**

Children must be free from fever and/or vomit and diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to NHECC. Children who develop symptoms of illness after arrival at school must be taken home by the parent immediately after contacted by a staff member.

Our general guideline is this: If your child is too tired or ill (even from allergies) to benefit from school, please keep him or her at home. NHECC staff will **only** administer oral medications as so needed for an allergic reaction, asthma, or any other emergency situation. The center **will not** administer any prescription or over the counter medications such as vitamins, diaper crème, antibiotics, cough medicine, fever reducing medicines, etc.

If a child should become ill at the center or has a temperature exceeding 100 degrees, we will contact one of the parents (or emergency contacts), and will require that you come immediately for your child. When your child has a chronic condition such as a cough or sinus drainage, please include a note from your child's doctor indicating that your child is not considered contagious and may attend the center with other children.

Sunscreen

Please remember that outdoor play is a daily activity for us if weather permits. Please apply sunscreen or insect repellent on your child in the morning before they arrive if weather and/or temperature mandate it.

In the event of an accident or illness requiring emergency medical attention, we will call 911 for assistance. The staff will not personally transport a child to the hospital.

Communicable Illnesses

Certain illnesses (other than the common cold) are highly contagious and require special procedures to prevent spreading throughout NHECC. These may include, but are not limited to: pink eye, head lice, strep throat, chicken pox, and pneumonia. If your child contracts a communicable illness, please notify NHECC as soon as possible, so that other parents can be informed their child may have been exposed.

Following are the procedures for returning to school:

- Children with chicken pox may return to school when all blisters have scabbed over, and no new ones have erupted in the past 24 hours.

- Children with pink eye or conjunctivitis must be on medication at least 24 hours. Child may return to school when redness and discharge are gone.
- Children with head lice may return after the first treatment is given.

Fire Policy

We hold fire drills throughout the school year to familiarize the children with the proper procedures that will be used in the event of an actual fire. In case of a fire, children will be taken outside the building to a previously designated area in accordance with the Madison County Fire Department. As a safety precaution, fire extinguishers and smoke detectors are in place throughout the building.

Severe Weather

Children and staff will participate in tornado drills throughout the school year. We monitor a weather alert radio at all times. In the event of a dangerous storm, it is important for you to remain calm and know we are taking care of your child in an appropriate manner. If you come to the center during a tornado warning, we encourage you to join your child's class and help the teachers. We prefer that children remain in our facility while Tornado Warnings are in effect.

Communication With Parents

Parents will be provided with information pertinent to the preschool, child development, church and community events through a variety of means including e-mail and written notices sent home with your child. A monthly calendar and weekly email communication from your child's teacher will be sent home. **Please check your child's backpack daily** for any notices.

Grievance Procedure

While we make every effort to prevent problems, situations may occur which require special attention. If you feel there is a problem, please follow the biblical principle of Matthew 18 regarding conflict resolution by first speaking with your child's teacher. Most situations can be resolved with a parent/teacher conference. However, if appropriate, please feel free to discuss it with the NHECC Director. If you are still not satisfied, you may contact the Chairman of the NHECC Board.

NHECC Board Members

Paul Turner, Chairman & Elder (256) 426-5467
Ray Carlson, Deacon
Linda Billiter