



MINISTRY VILLAGE

early learning center

Parent Handbook

2018 - 2019

1724 E. OLIVE ROAD

DCF LICENSE # C01ES0341

ACSI APPROVAL # 648587

Ministry Village Early Learning Center

1724 E. Olive Road, Pensacola, FL 32514

Main Telephone: (850) 378-8044

Email: Info@MinistryVillageELC.org

www.MinistryVillageELC.org

www.Facebook.com/MinistryVillageELC

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Welcome _____

We are honored that you have chosen the Ministry Village Early Learning Center (ELC) to care for your child during this important developmental time. We endeavor to share the love of Jesus Christ with every child. It is our goal to nurture your child and help them develop as a whole person – emotionally, spiritually, mentally and physically. We aim to provide Christ-centered high quality, early learning childcare programs for children from 3 months of age to pre-kindergarten as we engage, invest in, prepare the children and assist their parents, guardians and families to achieve kindergarten readiness, leading our community to a stronger and more capable future workforce.

Mission _____

We will deliver Christ-centered, high quality care to the children in our community. We will equip the youngest generation with the skills and processes they need to build a strong educational base, while welcoming every member of our community and ensuring that each one feels treasured, loved and supported.

School Contact Information _____

The main telephone number for the Ministry Village Early Learning Center is (850) 378-8044.

Ministry Village ELC Director : Mrs. Kristi Zagar

Telephone (850) 490-3436

Email: kzagar@ministryvillageelc.org

The ELC also maintains a website at MinistryVillageELC.org and a Facebook page – [Ministry Village Early Learning Center](#) (@MinistryVillageELC) – where we will share general

information, our calendar of events, and special announcements. The contact information for your child's teacher will be provided to you upon your child's classroom placement.

Hours of Operation _____

Our Early Learning Center will offer child care Monday through Friday, 7 AM to 6 PM. Check-in for the regular school day begins at 8:45 AM and **instruction time will begin promptly at 9 AM** in each classroom. We will observe national and religious holiday closings to include: New Years Day, Fourth of July, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. These holidays are subject to change based on demand. Participants in the free Florida Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) program will follow the Escambia County public school calendar which is posted by the school district at ECSD-FL.SchoolLoop.com and will also be available on our [ELC's website](#). The ELC can also provide summer care for children whose ages/placement fall under our regular admission guidelines as space permits in the appropriate classrooms.

Licensing / Funding _____

The Ministry Village Early Learning Center is licensed under the Department of Children and Families (DCF #C01ES0341) and becoming an approved provider for Florida's free 4-year-old Voluntary Prekindergarten Program (VPK). In addition, the ELC is licensed through the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI Approval #648587). We meet or exceed all standards set forth by DCF and ACSI, and the facility is regularly inspected by the Fire Marshall, ACSI and DCF to ensure the safety of everyone in our facility. The Ministry Village ELC is a program of Ministry Village at Olive, Inc. a non-profit 501(c)3

organization. We are funded through tuition and registration fees, private donations and fundraising efforts.

Board of Directors

A Director administers the ELC and is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the facility. The ELC Director reports to the Executive Director of Ministry Village at Olive and its Board of Directors.

Staff

The ELC staff members caring for your children are committed to providing a loving, Christian environment and sharing the love of Jesus Christ on a daily basis while providing quality care. The Director of the ELC holds a Director's license under the Florida Department of Children and Families. The teachers in the facility are certified in education and/or have experience teaching or working with young children. All staff members who are in the classroom and in daily contact with the children are fingerprinted and must pass a Level 2 background screen in the state of Florida as well as nationwide. Staff members are also required to have completed 40 hours of educational training along with 10 hours of continuing education each year.

We are committed to high standards of excellence for our staff and our facility. Staff requirements meet or exceed the standards required by the State of Florida Department of Children and Family Services as published in Chapter 65C-22 Child Care Standards of the Florida Administrative Code. Staff members are not available to provide off-site private childcare for a child currently enrolled at the Ministry Village Early Learning Center.

Ratios ---

The Florida Department of Children and Families defines our class size and child/teacher ratios (see chart on the next page).

Class	Teachers	Children
Infants	1	4
One year olds	1	6
Two year olds	1	11
Three year olds	1	15
Four year olds*	1	20
Five year olds	1	25

*During VPK instruction hours, class ratio for four year olds is 1:11 or 2:20.

Admissions ---

To enroll in the Ministry Village Early Learning Center, submit a completed application form as well as the **non-refundable registration fee** of \$100 per child. Classroom placement is based on the child's age as of September 1, which is consistent with the Escambia County School District placement policy. The registration fee holds your child's place in the appropriate classroom. If there is a waiting list for the appropriate classroom, the non-refundable registration fee will ensure your child's place in line.

Openings will be filled from the waiting list based on the submission date of a completed application and full payment of the non-refundable registration fee.

Students registering only for the free VPK program with a Certificate of Eligibility obtained through the [Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County](#) are not charged registration or supply fees.

Admission is prioritized in the following order: reenrollment of current students, siblings of current students, children of staff members, and new students. Reenrollment for current, returning children begins on February 1 for the following school year. Enrollment opens for new students on March 1.

Parents must complete and return all required forms prior to the child's first day of attendance. All

immunization and physical records are to be updated as needed. Current immunization requirements can be found on the Department of Children and Families website at MyFLFamilies.com or by request from the Ministry Village ELC administration office.

Media Release – We ask for your permission to create, release and/or reproduce your child's photo, video, and/or likeness, and release and/or reproduce your child's artwork and creative writing for advertising and promotional purposes, including but not limited to, display on the ELC's website, social media, in-school bulletin boards, etc. *Please note that your child's name WILL NOT appear in conjunction with your child's photograph on the website or social media at any time.* A media release form will be included in your enrollment packet.

Enrollment Forms – The following is a summary of the forms required for admission and enrollment:

- Ministry Village Early Learning Center Application for Enrollment
- [Florida Certificate of Immunizations / Shot Form](#) or [Religious Exemption Form](#)
- [Student Health Examinations Form](#), signed by your child's doctor
- Birth Certificate
- Ministry Village ELC Media Release Form
- Ministry Village ELC Medical Authorization Form

- Ministry Village ELC Food Permission Form for special classroom events
- Ministry Village ELC Discipline Policy (page 11 in Ministry Village ELC Parent Handbook)
- [DCF Know Your Childcare Facility](#)
- [Influenza Virus Guide to Parents](#)
- [DCF Brochure “Getting In Getting Out”](#)
- [DCF Brochure “Rilya Wilson Act”](#)

Withdrawal Procedure – If it becomes necessary to withdraw your student from the Ministry Village ELC due to job/life change or move, please submit written notification to the ELC one month prior to withdrawal. Tuition will be due at the regularly scheduled time unless one month’s prior written notice is provided. The Ministry Village ELC operates year-round, including summer months. Families whose children will not attend the ELC during summer months but plan to return to the ELC in the fall must provide notice in writing at time of reenrollment for the future school term.

Tuition / Fees _____

Tuition and fees for the Ministry Village Early Learning Center are competitive and based on similar facilities in our area. **Fees are due on the 1st day of each month** and are not prorated or discounted due to school holidays, emergency closings, severe weather closings or child’s absence due to illness, vacation etc. Tuition is considered late if not received by the 5th calendar day of the month, and a late fee of \$25 will be added. **If overdue tuition including any assessed late fee is not submitted by the 10th calendar day of the month, the child will not be admitted to the classroom and may lose his/her place in the program.**

Your child’s level of tuition will be determined by their age as of September 1 of the current school year. The final room assignment will be based on the director’s discretion.

Florida’s VPK Certificate of Eligibility (COE) covers the cost of a child’s VPK instruction care. When VPK instruction hours end, children are available for pickup by an authorized parent or guardian, or must be enrolled in Wrap-Around VPK Care.

MONTHLY TUITION	
Level	Cost per month
Infant (under 1 year)	\$675
One year old	\$650
Two year old	\$600
Three year old	\$550
Four year old VPK	COE*
Four year old private pay	\$475
Five year old VPK	COE*
Five year old private pay	\$450
Wrap-Around VPK Care** (after VPK until 6 PM daily)	\$250
Daily Fee (VPK students)	\$25

*COE is Certificate of Eligibility obtained from the [Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County](#).

**See description of Wrap-Around VPK Care below.

Florida’s VPK Certificate of Eligibility (COE) covers the cost of a child’s VPK instruction care. When VPK instruction hours end, children are available for pickup by an authorized parent or guardian, or must be enrolled in Wrap-Around VPK Care.

Wrap-Around VPK Care is available for children attending the ELC with a VPK Certificate of Eligibility but needing care

after VPK instruction hours end. Wrap-Around VPK Care provides care from the end of the VPK instruction time until 6 PM. These charges are noted in the Monthly Tuition chart above.

The **daily fee** will be used for any VPK student needing care on a VPK holiday when the ELC is otherwise operating (example: spring break week).

A supply list for each class will be provided during enrollment.

Payments may be made by cash, personal check, cashier's check, or credit card. Please make checks payable to **Ministry Village Early Learning Center**, and note the child's name on the memo line. Payments may be made in person at the ELC office or online through the ELC's secured website at MinistryVillageELC.org. Please do not leave payments in the classroom or with the child's teacher.

A late fee of \$1 per minute will be charged for any child picked up after the facility's closing time of 6 PM. Fees will be added to the account immediately and charged at the end of the month. If late pickups become an issue, the ELC Director will meet with the parents/guardians to find a solution. If a solution is not available, the family may be asked to withdraw from the ELC.

A surcharge of \$35 will be added to accounts for returned checks/insufficient funds and future payment by personal check will no longer be accepted on the account.

Discounts – The Ministry Village Early Learning Center is pleased to offer select discounts to its children. Families with multiple children enrolled at the ELC will pay the full rate only for the youngest child; each subsequent child's tuition and

registration fees will be discounted by 10%. Any family who desires to prepay for 12 months of tuition will receive a 10% discount on the total amount. Families may take advantage of no more than 1 discount per year (a maximum 10% discount).

Drop Off / Pickup Procedures _____

Classrooms open at 7 AM and instruction begins promptly at 9 AM. Parents and caregivers will register their fingerprint to provide a unique entry code for the facility's secure entrance system. The facility's exterior doors will be locked and only accessible to employees with a passkey. Parents and caregivers will be required to enter the building from the main entrance for drop-off and pickup each day.

If your child will be late to arrive or will not be attending one day due to illness, doctor's appointment, etc., please call the ELC by 9:30 AM to notify the teacher that your child will be absent. After 9:30 AM, to ensure the child's wellbeing, someone from the ELC will begin contacting the parents or guardians of any child who is not in attendance and has not previously notified the ELC of the absence.

Only parents and caregivers listed on a child's enrollment form will be allowed to pickup a child. Proper photo identification will be required. If someone arrives to pickup your child and that person's name is not on the enrollment form, we cannot and will not release the child until we have received proper confirmation from a parent or guardian. No one under the age of 16 will be allowed to remove your child from the school at anytime, including siblings. You may add or delete authorized pickup names from your child's form at any time by providing written notice to the ELC office.

A parent or guardian must check students in and out each day using the ELC's attendance software.

If you must pickup your child during the day, before his or her normal release time such as for a doctor's appointment, please enter through the main entrance and someone in the ELC office will assist you.

Florida VPK Program Attendance Policies – Children enrolled in Florida's Voluntary Prekindergarten Program (VPK) must meet the state's guidelines for attendance. The VPK program meets for a total of 180 days of instruction. A calendar with all scheduled holidays will be provided at orientation. In the case of an absence, parents or caregivers of a VPK student must write a dated note explaining the reason for the absence. This note must be sent to the ELC on the day the student returns from an absence. Florida VPK details the following requirements for attendance:

- Each child is allowed a **maximum of 3 unexcused absences** per calendar month. Excused absences are permitted for student illness or death in the immediate family.
- **An additional 7 absences per month** may be allowed for extraordinary circumstances and must be documented by a person other than the parent and unrelated to the child (physician, officer of the court, etc.). Extraordinary circumstances may include illness/injury of child/family requiring hospitalization or bed rest (physician's note required); medical or dental appointment (physician's note required); infectious disease or parasitic infestation (physician's note required); funeral/memorial service of a child's family member (obituary or death certificate required); compliance with court order (court order required); family vacation (not to exceed 5 absences per program year); religious holiday observance; special education or related

services for child's disability (program enrollment certification required); or other extraordinary circumstances beyond the control of the child and parent.

- Absences of 5 consecutive instructional days without proper documentation will be considered a withdrawal from the free VPK funded program at the Ministry Village Early Learning Center. Withdrawals of this nature are not eligible for reenrollment in the VPK program at our facility.

Tardiness – All VPK instruction begins promptly at 9 AM. Students who arrive after 9:10 AM are considered tardy. Any student who is tardy more than twice in one month may be dismissed from the free VPK program.

Health/Safety_____

We take the safety and security of your child very seriously and will follow every precaution to ensure they are cared for with the utmost respect. Our campus and parking lot are tobacco-free environments, including vaping.

Immunization Forms / Policies – An up to date, valid Florida Department of Health [Immunization Form DH 680](#) or the [Religious Exemption Immunization Form DH 681](#), is required upon enrollment for each child. Please verify that the expiration date on the form is valid for the current enrollment year. It is the parent's responsibility to update the child's form with the ELC when and if the child receives another immunization. The State of Florida [Student Health Examination Form DH 3040](#) must be completed by your child's doctor and is valid for 2 years from the date the physical was performed. Notification will be given to parents if records are not current, and a child whose cards have

expired will not be allowed to attend, regardless of a future scheduled doctor's appointment.

Illness / Injury Policy – The staff of the ELC adheres to strict guidelines concerning handwashing and hygiene. The infant and 1-year-old toddler rooms are equipped with handwashing stations, and the older toddler and child rooms include private, child-friendly bathrooms to encourage handwashing and good hygiene habits among the children.

Sick children should not attend the Early Learning Center. Children with fevers of 100 degrees or higher, vomiting, diarrhea, bad colds (green mucus), conjunctivitis (pink eye) or communicable diseases cannot attend any portion of the school day. **If a child has experienced any of these symptoms within the last 24 hours, the child should remain at home** for the wellbeing of the ill child as well as to protect the other children and staff.

If your child will be late to arrive or will not be attending school due to illness, doctor's appointment, etc., please call the ELC by 9:30 AM to notify the teacher that your child will be absent. After 9:30 AM, to ensure the child's wellbeing, someone from the ELC will begin contacting the parents or guardians of any child who is not in attendance and has not previously notified the ELC of the absence.

Parents or guardians will be called to pick up any child who has a fever of 100 degrees or higher, or who has an incident of vomiting or diarrhea. The child will be isolated and made as comfortable as possible while waiting for pickup. The child is to be removed from the facility within one hour of notification. If the parent or guardian cannot be reached, the emergency contact(s) listed on the child's enrollment form will be notified. If a child is sent home from the ELC due to

illness, he/she will not be allowed to return the next day. A minimum of 24 hours must pass symptom-free before the child can return to the ELC.

If your child or someone in your home has been exposed to any of the following communicable diseases, please notify the ELC Director immediately: chicken pox, German measles, haemophilus influenzae, measles, meningococcus, mumps, strep throat, tuberculosis, whooping cough, giardia lamblia, hepatitis, salmonella, shigella, impetigo, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) rotavirus, fifth disease, or hand-foot-mouth disease.

Parents will be notified when exposure to diagnosed cases of communicable diseases has occurred.

For helpful information about the dangers of the flu and how to protect your child, visit cdc.gov/flu or immunizeflorida.org.

Medication Authorization – If your child requires medication to be administered while in attendance at the Ministry Village ELC, an **Authorization of Medication Form** must be completed. The form must be submitted to the ELC Director, along with the medication. All prescription medication must be in the original container, dated, labeled by a pharmacy and prescribed in the child's name. Over the counter medication must be provided in its original container, along with a written doctor's note including dosage instructions if the child is under the age of the manufacturer's recommended dosage guidelines. This policy also applies to topical treatments including diaper creams, sunscreen and insect repellent.

First Aid – All accidents on facility property will be reported immediately to the ELC Director to ensure proper handling of the incident. Accidents not requiring professional care will be

reported to the parent by the end of the school day. The staff member present will complete an accident form, detailing the incident and injury. If the incident involves more than one child, names of the children involved will not be reported to other parents. Accident forms will be submitted to the parent for signature and will be kept on file at the ELC.

If an accident occurs that requires immediate medical attention, every effort will be made to contact the child's parent/guardian. The ELC does not assume any financial, medical or legal responsibility for decisions made due to the inability to locate a parent or secondary authority for approval. The Ministry Village Early Learning Center has CPR and First Aid certified staff members available at all times the facility is operational. West Florida Hospital is adjacent to the ELC's campus and an ambulance will be called for transporting students if deemed medically necessary.

Head Lice - Children may be checked periodically for head lice. If lice or nits are found, the child will be isolated and a parent will be notified to pick up the child as soon as possible. Children will need to be treated with medication and be nit free before they are allowed to return to the classroom. Parents are encouraged to always give notice to the ELC in the event that they find head lice or nits on their child at home. This will help prevent the spread of head lice at the ELC.

Potty Training - The potty training schedule is determined by each child's developmental level, and generally is introduced in the 2-year-old room. Teachers work with parents to establish a plan for consistency in training at school and at home. All of our classrooms from age 2 through 5 include in-room private bathroom facilities, with child-size sinks and toilets for their ease of use and comfort.

Children enrolled in the 3-year-old program or above must be potty trained.

Shaken Baby Syndrome – As mandated by the Florida Department of Children and Families, the Ministry Village Early Learning Center has a policy and procedure to identify and prevent shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma. All child care personnel, including substitutes and volunteers, who work in our facility and care for infants have received training regarding guidance on safe sleep practices, preventing shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma; recognition of signs and symptoms of shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma; strategies for coping with a crying, fussing, or distraught child; and the development and vulnerabilities of the brain in infancy in early childhood. The proper care and safety of your child is of the utmost importance to us.

Security / School Safety / Emergency Situations – The Ministry Village ELC was constructed with your child's safety and security top of mind. A certified staff member will be present with your child at all times throughout the day. Constructed with impact-resistant glass, an advanced security system, and built to meet or exceed all of the latest building codes for safety and storm hardening, the ELC building is strong and safe. Security cameras will be recording inside and outside the facility at all times. The ELC administration has consulted with trained industry professionals to ensure that every necessary safeguard is in place.

The facility has a modern sprinkler system and smoke detectors throughout, and fire drills will be conducted on a monthly basis in accordance with the Florida Administrative Code, Chapter 65C-22.002(7). Department of Children and Families requires each facility to conduct 1 fire drill each

month. Since these drills may include loud noises and flashing lights, every effort will be made to reassure your child during these drills.

The ELC will follow the guidelines and recommendations of the Escambia County School Board regarding emergency closures. In the event an emergency arises which makes it necessary to close the ELC, parents will be notified as quickly as possible. We will reopen once security officials deem the circumstances safe.

If we are required to evacuate the ELC building due to an emergency, we will be at the nearest possible shelter, which is Olive Baptist Church. You will be notified of any emergency situation requiring evacuation and modified pickup procedures will follow.

We will follow the Escambia County public school plan related to the opening or closing of schools during severe weather situations. Please listen to the local radio and television stations concerning severe weather closings. If public schools are closed for weather emergencies, the Ministry Village ELC will also be closed.

Food / Lunches / Nutrition – Parents/caregivers must provide an appropriate lunch and snack each day for the child. If your child has allergies or dietary restrictions, please notify the ELC Director in writing with specific details so staff can ensure foods are not shared with children who have such allergies.

Do not provide foods that will need to be warmed or cooked. Be sure to also provide a healthy beverage. Refrigeration is not provided for standard lunches or beverages, so consider including an ice pack. Each child should be provided easy to

open food containers, in age-appropriate sizes. Juice boxes/bags with high sugar content are discouraged. Please mark your child's lunch box and drink container with the child's name. For a good resource on childcare nutrition, including guidelines for a healthy and balanced diet that includes fruits, vegetables and whole grains, and limits foods and beverages high in sugar and/or fat, visit the USDA MyPlate website at ChooseMyPlate.gov.

The Ministry Village ELC staff support both breastfed and formula-fed babies and will follow you and your physician's wishes when it comes to your baby's individual nutrition needs. Refrigerators are provided in the infant and toddler rooms for families to provide bottled infant formula, baby food or bottled breast milk. Mothers who wish to breastfeed during the day can speak with the ELC Director to prearrange accommodations.

Children age one and under should provide their own sippy cup from home, labeled with the child's name.

Occasionally, teachers plan crafts or learning activities that involve food items. In order for a child to participate in these activities, written permission by a parent or guardian is required. **This Ministry Village ELC Food Permission Form must be signed annually and is included in your enrollment packet.**

Birthdays and holidays are often celebrated with special food treats. For holiday celebrations, a sign-up sheet requesting specific foods and beverages will be placed in the classroom for your participation. Parents are welcome to recognize a child's birthday by bringing in a treat for the class. Please notify the teacher one week in advance so an announcement can be posted in the classroom. Your child will be given special attention on his/her birthday and reminded that

he/she is a unique and special gift from God! Our teachers will be happy to assist in distributing birthday party invitations if everyone in the classroom is included.

Clothing – Please provide a complete change of season-appropriate clothing (including undergarments and socks) for your child. Clothes should be labeled with the child’s name, placed in a plastic bag and left at the ELC with your child’s teacher. Be sure to update the clothes as the seasons change.

Each child should be dressed in comfortable clothing and shoes that encourage independence and allow for safe play. Please remember that while the ELC uses washable materials (crayons, paint, etc.), clothing items are sometimes stained through creative play and art. Children should wear shoes that fit securely and have a rubber sole, like tennis shoes. Crocs, flip-flops, or thong-type sandals are not allowed and pose a danger on the playground.

Personal Belongings / Toys – Children are encouraged to leave personal toys, pacifiers, blankets, stuffed animals, etc. at home to avoid classroom disruptions. Teachers may occasionally invite children to bring in an item for a special “Show and Tell” Day. Please use your discretion on the types of toys that are appropriate for school, and avoid toys like guns, swords or items that are fragile or could pose a danger to other children.

Children attending the ELC for a full day will have rest time. Each child not placed in an infant room must provide a 1-inch thick nap mat made of washable material (vinyl) and bring a sheet and blanket for naptime. These will be sent home each Friday evening to be laundered and returned on Monday morning. Children will be expected to remain quiet and calm during rest time to minimize disruptions for others.

Diapers and wipes should be provided to the child's teacher and labeled with the child's name. These items will be kept in the classroom and used only for your child. You will be notified to restock as items run low. A \$1 per diaper/pull-up charge will be assessed to the child's account if diapers or pull-ups are not provided from home.

Academics and Curriculum _____

The Ministry Village Early Learning Center utilizes [The Creative Curriculum®](#). The Creative Curriculum® is aligned with the Florida Department of Education Developmental Standards, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) curriculum content and assessment guidelines, and the American Academy of Pediatrics developmental milestones.

Utilizing the latest research on early learning and brain development in children, we strive to prepare your child for kindergarten readiness and nurture their development in all areas. We focus on their Christian development by encouraging daily prayer, singing Christian songs, and learning weekly Bible stories. We hope to serve as an educational resource and partner to each family who places a child in our care.

Each child will be assessed on a regular basis to verify the ability to meet appropriate developmental milestones. Assessments are based on the [Ages & Stages Questionnaires](#). Parents will be provided a copy of the completed assessment and if indicated, a referral to the [Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County](#) will be provided for additional hearing, vision and/or behavioral screening.

Parental Communication and Involvement _____

We believe that a strong family foundation and home environment is vital to the healthy development of our children; therefore, we hope to support your family relationship and look forward to working with you to nurture your child. Classrooms will periodically invite parents and friends to visit the ELC for special events, and we hope you will participate. Parents are permitted to visit the school to observe their child's class or have lunch with their child with advance notice. For the security of the children at the ELC and to minimize classroom disruptions, please contact the ELC Director at least one school day in advance to arrange any visits taking place during school hours.

Teachers will send home notices to inform parents of activities and lessons taught in the classroom. **The Ministry Village ELC also utilizes the [Remind App](#)**, which will be used to notify you of important school information and events. You will receive directions to sign-up for this free tool at orientation.

Anyone wishing to volunteer at the Ministry Village ELC must complete a fingerprint and Level 2 background check at your own expense. Please contact the ELC Director if you are interested in volunteering.

Annual Open House and Orientation – Each year, the Ministry Village Early Learning Center offers an Open House for new and prospective families to tour the facility and meet the teachers and staff. This optional event provides an informal, low-stress opportunity for your child to see the classrooms, meet the teachers, meet other children, and experience the toys and playground.

Prior to each new annual school term, the ELC holds a mandatory orientation session for the parents or guardians of newly enrolled students. During this meeting, you will have the opportunity to ask questions, learn the facility's procedures, and be prepared to start the term. If you are unable to attend the mandatory orientation session due to a scheduling conflict, please contact the ELC Director as soon as possible.

Discipline / Expulsion Policy_____

Proverbs 22:6 says, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it." The administration and staff of the Ministry Village ELC believe it is our responsibility to provide a loving and safe Christian environment for all of the children in our care. We will use positive reinforcement to encourage good behavior.

Discipline should be an encouraging learning experience, reassuring the children of Jesus' love for them. Methods of discipline used include:

- Redirecting negative behavior
- Teaching appropriate responses to challenging situations
- Giving positive reinforcement while celebrating appropriate behaviors
- Modeling of appropriate behavior
- Leading conflict resolution
- Reevaluating age-appropriateness of activities
- Providing consistency with expectations and consequences
- Allowing opportunity for the child to calm down in a quiet place
- Removing the child from the classroom (by the Director)

Physical punishment is not used, nor will your child be publicly humiliated or degraded. No discipline will be related to toileting or eating.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to discuss their concerns about their child's behavior with teachers to work together on a plan for responding consistently to problem behavior. Our role at the ELC is to work together with parents to help children develop appropriate behaviors. If a child's behavior becomes unmanageable, the parent will be notified and a strategy to correct the problem behavior will be developed. If the child presents a threat to the safety or wellbeing of other children or staff, hinders the learning of the other children, or continues to cause a disruption that requires more attention than our teacher ratio allows -- and after all discipline measures have been exhausted -- the ELC reserves the right to dismiss the child from the program. Behaviors that could lead to expulsion include but are not limited to:

- Bullying or hurting other children (pushing, hitting, kicking, biting, cursing, etc.)
- Threatening other children or staff with violent words
- Angry, uncontrollable outbursts
- Unacceptable parent/guardian behavior including, but not limited to: vulgarity, intimidation, harassment, or violation of child care licensing regulations.

Biting is a common developmental expression for many children who are struggling to express themselves verbally; but that understanding does little to reassure someone who receives a bite. Teachers will make every effort to prevent children from biting others. Children who are repeat biters will be assessed by the Director and may be sent home to protect the wellbeing of others.

Every effort will be made to prevent expulsion or dismissal of the child from the program. We pray for your children daily and ask for God’s love and guidance in all aspects of their care. Our goal is to teach love, compassion, trust, fairness, cooperation, and reverence for the family and life in God’s world.

Questions or Concerns? _____

If at any time, you have questions or concerns about the facility, curriculum, child care or your child’s experience at the Ministry Village Early Learning Center, please contact **Kristi Zagar, the Ministry Village ELC Director**, at (850) 490-3436 or kzagar@ministryvillageelc.org.

If the situation requires further attention, please contact **Stan Lollar, Executive Director of Ministry Village at Olive** at (850) 475-1106 or slollar@ministryvillage.org.

The Ministry Village Early Learning Center Parent Handbook will be updated throughout the year as necessary. To ensure that you have the most up to date information, please check the “Updated” date on the online handbook at the [Ministry Village ELC website](#).

