

Helping Hands Childcare



A Ministry of Christ Lutheran
Share God's Word, Share His Love, and Do It Now!



Parent Handbook

Revised September 2015

Helping Hands Childcare Center

Christ Lutheran Church

400 W. Pasewalk Avenue

Norfolk, Nebraska 68701

402-379-3275

About Helping Hands

Helping Hands Childcare Center is owned and operated by members of Christ Lutheran Church. To carry out the objectives of the Center, Christ Lutheran Church voter's assembly elects the board of Christian Childcare. The Board meets monthly with the Childcare Director.

The Board of the Christian Childcare has placed direct responsibility for the day to day operation of the Childcare Center into the hands of the director. Under the Boards supervision the Director oversees the daily functions of the center by supporting staff members, developing a positive environment, and working directly with children and their families.

Mission

The mission of Helping Hands Childcare is to serve the community by assisting each child in our care to develop physically, cognitively & spiritually, reaching out with Helping Hands.

We, the staff of Helping Hands, will accomplish this mission by:

- creating a safe and pleasant space to play and learn
- providing a variety of developmentally appropriate experiences
- establishing a Healthy Christian environment
- developing a place to meet the social, emotional, physical, intellectual, and spiritual needs of the children

The staff at Helping Hands acknowledges and appreciates that each family is unique. We strive to work alongside families to establish an environment that respects and encourages the family as the main support system of the Children in our care.

Licensing

Helping Hands Childcare Center is licensed by the state of Nebraska Department of Social Services. The center is licensed for a maximum of 35 Children ages 18 months to 12 years. All staff members of the Childcare center are regularly screened by the Nebraska Department of Social Services for a history of either child abuse/neglect or adult maltreatment.

The Center holds a second License for 35 children at Christ Lutheran School. During the times when the center exceeds our 35 child limit, children ages 5 and older will be taken to the school.

The center is also licensed to accept Social Services and Respite care billing.

Teacher to Child Ratio

Age Group	Child to Staff Ratio
18 months – 2 years	6 to 1
3 – 4 years	10 to 1
School age children	15 to 1

Ratios are strictly adhered to as part of our licensing procedure and are recognized by the staff, director, and board as an important part of the well being for the children placed in our care.

Admission and Registration

All Children are accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis, upon receipt of the required registration form and fee. Children are not discriminated on the basis of race, creed or color.

To be registered at the Center, The following requirements must be submitted:

- ✓ Nebraska Department of Education Emergency form
- ✓ Immunizations record
- ✓ Income Eligibility food program form
- ✓ Attendance calendar
- ✓ Signed parent contract

Children must be at least 18 months old to register.

Enrollment and Activity Fees

- Enrollment fee \$15 per child or \$25 per family is required to be enrolled
- Separate Activity fee of \$35 per Child will be required for summer camp registration to cover the entire summer. This fee covers activities including swimming, bowling, movies, and field trips.
- Families enrolled with Social Services will have an additional agreement signature page with the center

All forms will be filled out prior to the first day of attendance and must be resubmitted by July 31st of each subsequent year.

Hours of operation and Holidays

Helping Hands Childcare is open year round Monday through Friday from 6:00 AM to 6:30 PM. The schedule of our daily activities is posted in the entrance to Childcare and is flexible to seasonal activities.

Helping Hands Childcare is closed for the following Holidays

- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving and the Friday after
- Christmas Day
- Christmas eve day early close
- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day

If adequate numbers for attendance are not met the center may be closed. Sign up forms will be posted for days we foresee this happening and any changes to the schedule will be posted. No charges will be made for days the center is closed.

Programs

The following programs are offered to meet your childcare needs:

- 1.** Full day toddler, preschool, and school age (non school day) care
- 2.** Part-time preschool care (kids taken and picked up from Christ Lutheran Preschool)
- 3.** Before and After School care for school-aged children (up to age 12)
- 4.** Drop in (when space is available)
- 5.** Summer camp program (separate registration and pamphlet needed)

These programs are a general outline of what we offer based on the needs that have been communicated by families that attend our center. Please speak to the director about any specific needs that the center might meet for you in regards to your personal schedule.

Rates (New Rates effective September 1st 2015 no rates change will occur again until August 2016)

Our goal at Helping Hands is to provide competitive rates that meet the specific needs of the families that we work with. The following is a break down of what the Center offers.

Hourly 3 years and up (and potty trained)

\$3 per hour for the first child

\$2.65 per hour each additional child

Hourly toddler age (18 months to 3 years)

\$3.20 per hour first toddler

\$2.80 per hour additional toddler

Drop in

\$3.50 per hour

A **15 hour minimum** will be charged weekly regardless of attendance (before and after care not included). If you have not attended for two weeks with no notice your spot will be vacated, account closed, and bill mailed out. You will be billed the minimum hours for those two weeks. Bills not current 30 days from last day of attendance will be submitted to collections.

Full Week Rates

Toddler (18 mo – 2 yrs 11 mo)	\$135 \$125
Preschool and School age (rate includes preschool at CLS)	\$126 First Child \$116 additional Child

12 days are given for vacation/sick time per year for full time families only. All requests for vacation/sick time to be used must be submitted to the director in writing. If the day you request has been billed to your account, a credit will be given. Forms to make this request will be in available in the entry way under the clock in calendar. **As you can see days have been added to the sick and vacation time. We will no longer give holiday credit unless you request them. Those days (7 per year were added to this plus an additional week) your days are yours to use. They will start in September each year and end on August 31st. Unused days will NOT be credited.**

If you wish to change to another rate category, two weeks written notice is required. The weekly rates have a maximum of 45 hours per week. Any additional hours will be charged at the hourly rate.

Before and Afterschool Rate

Before school is a minimum of \$3 per day and is billed at the hourly rate. After School is charged at the hourly rate plus \$1 added to the first hour. The one dollar first hour charge will not exceed \$3 per child per week.

Late pick up fee

A child who has left the center after 6:30 pm on the sign in computer is considered a late pick up. An initial fee of \$5 will be charged for up to the first 10 minutes. After ten minutes a charge of \$1 per minute will be assessed. This late charge payment is due at the start of the day that your child next attends. Payment amount can be figured out using the time on the computer when you clock out. Additionally, every attempt will be made to contact you and your emergency contacts. If no contact can be made or you have not arrived by 7pm on the sign in computer clock the proper authorities will be contacted to ensure your child's safe return home. Excessive (more than 5 per calendar year) late pick ups will result in a suspension of care until a meeting has been had with the director and daycare board.

Billing, Payment, and schedule policies

Bills

Bills are printed weekly on Mondays with an attempt to be in the billing file by 4pm on that day. Bills are not guaranteed in the billing file until 1pm on Tuesday weekly. Additionally, if Helping Hands is closed on a Monday for any reason, bills will not be guaranteed until 1pm on Wednesday. This does not change when payments are due. Finally, we understand that special billing arrangements, such as split bills, may be needed. Please see the director regarding this, we are glad to assist you.

Payments

Payments can be made at any time but are due on a bi-weekly schedule. Payments will be collected from our payment box nightly. The last payments will be collected at close of business on the final day of our week. Payments are entered on the first day of business weekly. If your check is not in by the final collection it will be considered delinquent. Please be sure to contact the center if you know that your payment will be delinquent. This is not a promise that the following actions will not occur, still, communication always helps.

Actions for delinquent payments

- ✓ Delinquent payments will be subject to a \$25 late fee at the time of billing. This late fee plus the past due charges and any current charges must be paid by the end of the following week to avoid any further late charges.
- ✓ If you receive 3 consecutive late charges, services will be suspended at the childcare until your bill is paid in full or other payment arrangements have been made.
- ✓ Failure to pay on payment arrangements will be grounds for suspension or termination of services at Helping Hands Childcare.
- ✓ If 3 suspensions occur in one calendar year the account will be brought before the board of childcare at Helping Hands as to whether or not services need to be terminated. The services will be suspended until said meeting has transpired.
- ✓ All accounts will be submitted to collection 30 days after the last day of service if not paid in full. The only exception would be a working payment arrangement that is in place with the director.

Schedules

Schedules are due in the schedule box by Thursday prior to the week of attendance. Regardless of the rate package you have chosen, Helping Hands requires a schedule. Any child attending with out a current schedule will be billed at the drop in rate of \$3.50 per hour. Scheduling is the most important way that you can help keep costs down at the daycare. Please know that if you do not have a schedule turned in, Helping Hands reserves the right to refuse service to avoid conflicts with our licensing regulations. Schedules can be made up to one month at a time and schedule changes may be made by filling out a new calendar. Additionally, you may email your schedules to helpinghands@clnorfolk.org. Emailed schedules are due by the same time as paper schedules and should be clear and concise regarding who is attending and their time of attendance. Finally, a start and end time must be a part of the schedule for each day your child will attend. You will be billed for the hours that are on your schedule. Any additional hours not on the schedule will be billed at the drop-in rate.

Arrival and Pick up

Upon arrival each child should be brought into the building and clocked in to our sign in computer with your family pin number. Please be sure to see that a staff member knows your child is in the building before you exit. Helping your child(ren) get settled is an important part of starting their day off on the right foot.

When picking up please come into the building. Refrain from calling out to your child or asking them to come to you. Again, it is important that a staff member see that you are leaving with the child. If someone other than a parent is picking up a child, we must receive authorization from you to release the child. If you are authorizing this pick up over the phone you must provide the staff member you speak to with your personal pin number. This means it is important to keep your pin as private as possible.

Children should arrive at the center dressed appropriately and ready for their day. The person picking up will also be responsible for gathering your child's belongings.

When your Family is Sick

The Childcare Center cannot accept or give care to a sick child. If your Child has these symptoms, please keep him/her at home:

- Oral temperature of 100.1 degrees or higher (must be under 100.1 for 24 hours without medication to return)
- Thick, foul smelling, bloody, or (pus) drainage from nose, eyes, ears, and/or wounds.
- Uncontrollable coughing causing vomiting or spitting up of mucus
- Undiagnosed rash or one that causes excessive itching or are blistered
- Persistent pain, including ear aches, stomach pains, pain when urinating, or injured limbs.
- Sore throat
- Parasite infections such as, but not limited to, lice or their eggs and pin worms until proper treatment has been given
- Vomiting within the last 24 hrs
- Diarrhea within the last 24 hrs
- Sore throat, enlarged glands, or stiff neck
- Treatment for scabies must be completed

If a child displays signs of illness, the parent will immediately be notified to pick up the child. If a child has left school because of any reason (even a headache), we will not accept the child in our care. In case of a serious illness or accident, the Center will follow the parent's written instructions on the emergency form. The parent will be immediately notified. If a child has an infectious condition a written doctor's note must be obtained and presented to childcare staff before the child may return to the center.

Please do not send your child to the center if he or she is not allowed to go outside. All staff and volunteers must remain with all the children. Teacher child ratios do not allow for one staff member to stay inside with a given child.

Medications

Helping Hands Childcare does not administer any medication this is not provided by a parent or caregiver. Helping Hands prefers that you attempt to give all medications at home. Most prescription medications are written so that they may be given at breakfast, dinner, and bedtime. If your child's condition requires a staff member to give medication or treatment you must bring the medication in the original container from the pharmacy or doctors office. A medication form must be filled out daily, with the name of the medication, dosage, and a parent signature. A permission form, included in the enrollment packet, must be signed before any medication will be administered.

Medications will not be dispensed without these authorizations. Furthermore, please do not send medication with your child. Medication should be presented to staff to be stored properly. This includes cough drops, inhalers, ointments, etc. Be sure the staff understands the directions and knows if the medication must be refrigerated.

First Aid Injuries and Emergencies

At least one staff person on the premises is certified in First Aid and CPR (Helping Hands current goal is 75% of staff members maintain this training). First aid treatment for minor injuries is limited to cleaning a wound and covering it with a bandage. Injuries requiring the attention of a doctor will be brought to the attention of the Director and parents will be notified immediately. Emergency forms that include the parent/guardian's work and home phone numbers and the nearest relative or neighbor are updated yearly. If changes in these numbers occur, please tell the director immediately.

Insurance

It is important that each child is covered by medical insurance. Helping Hands does not carry medical insurance. We are on the same policy as Christ Lutheran School and Church and are covered only for liability.

Immunizations

Students at Helping Hand Child Care Center must have on file accurately completed and satisfactory immunization records. Each year these records are sent to the State of Nebraska. If parents sign the waiver not to provide information on immunizations, their child will not be allowed to attend the Center in the event of an outbreak of a covered illness.

Diapering and potty training procedures

Children in diapers should have an adequate supply of diapers/pull ups and wipes. A notification board is present near our sign-in computer to let you know when supplies are needed. Please send in the diapers and/or wipes immediately. If Helping Hands must supply diapers a \$1 per diaper fee will be applied to your next bill.

If your child has a diaper rash or any other conditions that requires the use of the medication, please follow the medication procedures listed above. Basic, non-medicated cream may be applied with out these notices.

Diapering is done at regular scheduled intervals through out the day and as needed. A record is kept of changes. Urine out-put and bowel movements are marked in these records. Please let a staff member know if you would like to see your child's record.

Helping Hands follows the guidelines set forth by the state health department for diapering of children.

When the time comes for potty training we are here to help. We have a specific potty training readiness form and contract that we will discuss when the time is right. A copy of this form is available to you at any time prior to potty training. We **will not** begin potty training here until this form has been discussed and signed. The purpose of the form is that everyone is on the same page for the success of the child. Please see the director for a copy of this form and to schedule a time to discuss it. We are equipped with a bathroom specifically for this purpose and work with you to develop a potty training plan. Helping Hands does not discipline children for accidents and in the beginning rewards children with a small treat upon successful attempts. We will only work on potty training if you are doing so at home. If it seems to become a frustration point for your child at the center, we will encourage a step back and a reevaluation of your child's potty training plan.

Children with Special Needs

At Helping Hands Childcare we believe that each child is a unique gift from God. As such, we encourage parents to take the time to give complete information on our enrollment form regarding any specific information you would like us to know. If needed you may schedule a meeting with the director to discuss these needs more in depth. Additionally, the director and/or staff members may request more information regarding what is seen on the enrollment form. Dietary concerns require a written note from your family doctor due to our participation in the Nebraska Food Program. Details may be discussed with the director upon enrollment and review of the doctor's note.

Confidentiality

A statement of confidentiality to parents, visitors, students, personnel and volunteers

The aim of this policy is to protect the child at all times and to give all staff, families and visitors clear guidance as to their professional and legal roles and to insure good practice through out the center.

Sharing information unnecessarily is an erosion of trust. The center is mindful that it is placed in a position of trust and there is a general expectation that a professional approach will be used in all matters of confidentiality

Child records

All family information is kept in a locked filing cabinet and is confidential with in the daycare center. Since we are state licensed facility, forms required by the state can and will be reviewed at annual meetings upon the states request by state-licensed workers. Any other information will only be shared with a completed release of information form (by a parent or custodian) or in the event of an emergency.

Individual information

All information about individual children is private and will only be shared with the staff that has a need to know. Children's names should NEVER be used outside the center. Information about children will be shared with parents but only about their own child. Parents should refrain from asking about other children because it breaches that child's confidentiality. Staff members have been informed of their responsibility regarding confidentiality and appropriate actions are outlined in their handbook regarding actions taken if a breach occurs.

Parents

The Staff of Christ Lutheran Church, the owner of Helping Hands Childcare, expects parents and caregivers to be mindful of the confidentiality of its staff and children. Grievances should be taken care of in the manner outlined in the handbook as to avoid slander. Helping Hands asks you to partner with us regarding this important topic so that we may provide the best experience for each child in our care. Please note: by signing the contract page at the end of this packet, you are agreeing to this and all other policies outlined.

This statement is verification that all individuals including; parents, students, personnel and volunteers that enter Helping Hands Childcare are to remember that confidentiality is to be an ethical principal to follow at all times. This statement signifies commitment to this belief and the above practices.

Grievance Policy

In the event of misunderstandings, personality conflicts, complaints against the center staff or about the center policies parents are encouraged to make an appointment to remedy such problems. A written record will be made of items discussed and an action plan will be submitted by the director to the parent(s) and reviewed by the daycare board. Additionally grievances may be submitted to the daycare in writing. Grievances must be signed and dated; therefore no electronically submitted grievances will be recognized. A response to the signed and dated grievance will be submitted to the parent with specific actions to be taken as long as they do not break any confidentiality policies within 10 business days of receipt. Parents and caregivers may also request a meeting with the daycare board during its regularly scheduled monthly meetings. Any written requests must be submitted to director of Helping Hands.

Positive Behavior Guidance

We at Helping Hands Childcare have a philosophy that your children are important and if given the opportunity they will thrive emotionally, intellectually, spiritually, socially, and creatively under the loving guidance of concerned Christian parents and teachers. In this spirit our staff will:

- Model positive acceptable behavior

- Redirect children away from conflict to constructive activities
- Teach children alternatives to problem behavior
- Protect the safety of children
- Provide immediate guidance/direction if child behavior is unacceptable
- Recognize the age-appropriate development of the child
- Not allow the child to act in a manner which will endanger themselves, another child, or the staff

The following actions are prohibited by any staff person:

- Subjection of child to emotional or physical abuse
- Punishment in lapses in toilet training
- Withholding food, light, warmth, or medical care as punishment for unacceptable behavior
- Physical or mechanical restraint other than to physically and safely hold a child when necessary to protect themselves or others from harm.

Separation occurs when a child is removed from the group and is temporarily unable to participate in the program’s activities. No child may be separated from the group unless the staff has tried less intrusive methods of guiding the child’s behavior, which have been ineffective, and the child’s behavior threatens the well being of the child or the other children in the center. Children separated from the group will be properly supervised during this time. Parent communication will occur regarding multiple separations as to how to work together for the betterment of the child’s daycare experience.

Child’s Belongings

Children’s belongings should be clearly labeled with their name. A complete change of clothing is requested for children in our toddler room and/or potty training. Changes of clothes are available at the center but many children prefer to have their own items to change into. Please send children in clothing that will be comfortable and easy to remove for toileting purposes. Children will get messy outside and during some of our projects. Helping Hands is not responsible for any personal belongings getting lost.

Meals and Snacks

Meals and snacks will be served at the following times:

Breakfast	6:30 a.m. to 7:45 a.m.
Morning Snack	9:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.
Lunch	11:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon
Afternoon Snack	3:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
After School (school age and pm preschool)	3:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

If there is excess food, we pass it out to the children who want more. If we know in advance, we will save a lunch for a child who arrives late. Please do not expect your child to receive a meal if you arrive after these times unless we have been informed. If your child arrives at 8:00 a.m., for example, we will not furnish breakfast.

Helping Hands is licensed by the Child and Adult Care Food Program and follows the guidelines set by the Department of Agriculture. The Center is licensed for 35 children. On school days we sometimes exceed that number over the noon hour with overlap of morning and afternoon preschoolers or public school age children out of school. When this occurs, we will take those children to the lunchroom to eat at Christ Lutheran School. The Childcare pays for these meals. No outside meal substitutions are allowed per the rules of the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Food can only be substituted by the daycare in the case of severe allergies with a written doctor's note. No child is forced to eat anything served. If your child does not have a severe allergy but you wish for them to not consume a particular food item you may communicate that to them. Please discuss any food or milk consumption concerns with the director in a scheduled meeting prior to the first day of attendance or as you become aware of a concern.

Parents may wish to bring treats on their child's birthday. Please let the director or staff members know in advance.

Rest Time (1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.)

Every effort is made to adjust to the individual needs of all children regarding the daily nap. We strive to give your child one on one attention during this time. A short, age appropriate movie or show is shown starting at 12:30 p.m. to allow staff members to lay children down a few at a time. Please direct the staff of Helping Hands on your enrollment form regarding your child's nap routine, length of time, and attitude towards rest. Children needing less or no rest will be asked to head to rest time last. We strive to provide a quiet and calm environment for rest. Therefore children awake will be allowed to look at books or play with a quiet toy. A 2 inch thick mat is provided by the daycare. A small blanket, stuffed animal, and/or pillow are allowed to be brought from home and should be stored in the child's cubby. Toddlers rest in their own room as to allow for a quieter space with fewer distractions.

Snow Days

Helping Hands Child Care Center will remain open if at all possible. If however, the Director feels that there is too much danger in remaining open, The Center will close. Additionally, when Christ Lutheran School is a late start for the day due to inclement weather Helping Hands' open time will be 7:00 a.m. If Christ Lutheran School closes due to inclement weather Helping Hands with either open at 8:00 a.m. or opt to close. You may listen to all Norfolk based radio stations for closure or delay start information.

Field Trips

Rarely field trips may be taken during the school year. If so a specific field trip permission form will be required. All field trips taken by Helping Hands Childcare are within walking distance. We do not hold a license to transport children in motor vehicles. Most field trips occur with school age children in the summer months. A blanket permission form will be a part of summer registration. Any child without a completed form will not attend a trip outside of Helping Hands property. A tentative schedule of events will be distributed before the beginning of summer.

First Day at the Center

Before your child begins attending Helping Hands Childcare, set up an exact enrollment date. You may bring your child for a few part day visits with a parent staying to become acquainted to the center. A child may not be left in our care until the enrollment process is complete.

Children often cry the first few times they are left. Therefore, during the enrollment process the director will set up a transition plan with you for those days. It is the belief of Helping Hands that a brief but loving good bye is best. Delaying departure or sneaking out with them unaware is hard on the child and makes their transition to the center difficult. If your child is upset when you leave the center, feel free to call at any time for an update to check on their progress.

Rest assured that most children quiet down soon and staff is aware and practiced at positive transitions. We are here to make this as comfortable for you and your child as possible. Helping Hands staff will contact you if your child seems inconsolable. This is very rare as most children are reassured by the teacher and become interested in the toys and other children.

**Welcome to Helping Hands!
We are excited to work with you
And your children to provide
The best care experience possible.
Please contact the Director with any
Questions or concerns.**