

Parent's Day Out Handbook

www.parentsdayoutfcfumc.org

970-494-5950

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Welcome to the Parent's Day Out program! PDO is a part-time childcare service and preschool sponsored as an outreach of the First United Methodist Church. We use play based learning and follow the Colorado Early Learning and Development Guidelines. We are delighted that you have chosen PDO to meet your family's needs and are grateful you have entrusted your child to our care.

Parent's Day Out Mission Statement

Parent's Day Out provides low-cost childcare for children ages 1-4 in a safe, developmentally appropriate environment. Our focus is to offer nurturing, stimulating, educational experiences, which promote each child's social-emotional, physical, and cognitive development. Our staff gives support and encouragement, allowing our program to serve as a model of childcare excellence. We help kids grow their minds while giving parents peace of mind.

Purpose

- To furnish a caring place where young children can explore, learn, and develop important socialization skills in a safe, loving, and nurturing atmosphere.
- To provide parents some time during the week to attend to their busy lives, while knowing their child is enjoying an important early learning experience.

Organization

Parent's Day Out is a non-profit, licensed program that was started in 1977. The program is run by its directors and teaching staff. Our current directors, Lea Gibbens and Catherine Pawlikowski both have bachelor's degrees in early childhood and/or elementary education, and have almost 40 years of teaching preschool and elementary school between them. Both of them are also former PDO teachers. A PDO advisory board assists in the

program's operations. We adhere to all of the rules and regulations of the Colorado Department of Human Services and the Larimer County Health Department. All of our lead teachers have taken all the college courses needed to earn their Early Childhood Teaching Credential, and take 15hrs of continuing education credits every year to keep up with their license. Many of our assistant teachers are lead teacher qualified as well, and all have years of experience in early childhood.

Hours of Operation and Ages Accepted

We are open Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. We are presently closed during the summers. Opening day is the day after Labor Day; closing day is the Friday of Memorial Day Weekend. We are licensed for ages 1 and walking to 5 years.

School Closures

PDO follows the Poudre School District School Calendar for holiday closings and other days schools are not in session. Additionally, we follow the PSD's determination regarding snow days. A PSD late start will cancel PDO classes for the day, since we are only a half day program. Notification of PDO cancellations will be sent through the Brightwheel app, so please make sure the app is downloaded to your phone, and you have notifications turned on.

Fees

Parents choose to enroll their child anywhere from one to four days per week. Enrollment is for the duration of the school year. Our tuition runs \$45/day billed monthly, except for the one year old's class, which is \$50/day. This is due to the low student to teacher ratio we use for that young age. Families are billed for all dates we are open that month, whether their child attends or not. They may choose 1, 2, 3, or 4 days per week. Class assignments will be based on availability at the time of registration. We often move children up to other classrooms throughout the year based on readiness and availability.

PDO follows the Poudre School District calendar, including all Poudre School District holidays and closures, and credits will be given for snow days. When you register your child, you will be committing for the entire school year, September-May. If you make the choice to withdraw, you must provide a full 2 week written notice prior to the last day of attendance. You will be responsible for tuition occurring 14 days after your notice. Tuition payments are due by the 1st of each month. Tuition is due even when PDO is closed for part of the month for school district breaks or holidays, or if your child is not present on their assigned days of attendance. There are no fee reductions/credits/refunds for make-up days or absences.

Registration Fee, Payments

There is an annual registration fee of \$75 per child. This fee is non-refundable and must be paid before your child can enroll. All payments are made through an app PDO uses called Brightwheel. All payments are made through ACH (automatic withdrawal from checking account) or by credit/debit card through Brightwheel.

Parents should also know that PDO does not keep track of individual payment accounts. It is the parents' responsibility to keep totals of childcare expenses for tax purposes, and you can access the information you will need from Brightwheel.

Registration Process

All children are registered on a first-come, first-served basis. Registration is ongoing throughout the year, if we have any availability. Otherwise, families are put on our waitlist. Current and alumni families, as well as church members and staff, are given priority on our waitlist. Open spots will be assigned only after the registration form and fee has been submitted and processed. Once the registration fee is paid, you will be directed to the Brightwheel app to complete other registration paperwork.

Required Forms

All forms must be completed and submitted before your child can attend our program.

Forms are located on the Brightwheel app and include:

- Registration (1 per child)
- Current immunization record if out of state, or not recorded in our state immunization records system, OR a vaccine exemption must be turned in. Vaccine exemption forms can be obtained online or here at our office, and a course must be completed online or signed by your child's pediatrician.
- Statement of Health to be completed, signed, and dated by a physician (updated yearly)
- Photo release
- Parent handbook acknowledgement
- Tuition Agreement
- Emergency Authorization/Sunscreen/Ointment/Lotion Policy

PDO also requires parents to notify us of any changes of information in their child's paperwork, i.e. address, phone numbers, emergency contacts and medical information, etc. Up to date information is critical in keeping your child safe, and keeping our state license in good standing.

Discipline and Guidance Policies

In order to maintain a safe and happy environment for children, we adopt a positive approach to discipline. Simply stated, consistently enforced and developmentally appropriate rules are carried out in each classroom. Re-direction and occasional, brief "breaks" with a teacher or director may be utilized when needed for safety, but are a last resort. The teachers'

continual awareness of children's personalities and possible escalating situations help keep the classroom a fun and relaxed place where the children can learn self-control, self-expression, self-esteem and regard for the feelings and safety of others.

Behavior Issues - Suspension

If the PDO staff has concerns about a child's behavior or development, they will address those with the parents. It is vital to identify delays or behavioural/social emotional issues in early childhood. In Colorado, we have free early intervention services to children up to age 3. And it is always better to get a child too much support, than too little! When it becomes apparent to staff that we're not able to meet the needs of the child in our center, or if the child's behavior endangers the safety of the other children or staff, we will set up a parent/staff conference to create a plan. This plan may include the involvement of professional resources, and/or a period of suspension (usually 1-3 months), after which the behaviors will be re-evaluated, or ultimately, a request for parents to withdraw their child from our program. PDO also reserves the right to terminate care, without prior notice or cause, should the staff determine a child's or parent's presence constitutes a threat to the health or safety of students or staff.

Additionally, PDO parents may, at any time, withdraw their child from our center, with 2 weeks written notice. We highly appreciate notification from a parent if they make this choice, so that the spot can be fulfilled by another family who may be on our waitlist.

Identifying Where Children Are At All Times

At PDO, your child's safety is paramount. For this reason, teachers do multiple head counts throughout the morning, especially when changing locations within the church and when going to and from the playground. Attendance in each classroom is checked against that room's sign-in roster. Arrivals and departures are recorded so that accurate head counts can be achieved at all times. Also, teachers check their classrooms daily at the end of the day to ensure all children have been picked up.

Getting Comfortable in Child Care

Your child may need some support as they begin their morning at PDO. Saying goodbye can cause feelings of stress, fear, or sadness, for you as well as your child! Try to recognize that these feelings are natural. Your child may very well adapt much quicker than you think. Bear in mind that your child may also go through a period of relatively stress-free drop-offs, followed by weeks of difficult good-byes. This may be due to a new stage of development, change in the routine at home, or simply fatigue, illness, or hunger.

Tips for Easing Drop-Off Tears

- Establish trust with your care provider. Know that as your child forms a bond with their teacher, separation should get easier, and we will send you messages through brightwheel to let you know how they are doing if your child has tears at drop-off.
- Develop a routine and be consistent with it. Whether it's a kiss, hug, high five, or fist-bump, make a choice; it will become a sign that it's time for you to leave. Rituals and routines are useful for relieving your child's anxiety and providing security and predictability.
- Try to be upbeat and positive when dropping off your child. Children are very perceptive and can pick up on your emotions.
- Always say goodbye vs. sneaking away, which sends a confusing message, and ultimately creates a longer period for trust to develop. Always remind your child that you will return. This is difficult for some young children to understand, but with repetition, we can teach your child to grasp this concept.
- Don't linger. Be quick, short; and sweet; do your goodbye routine and then leave. After the first couple of times your child is with us, it works best to say good-bye at the classroom door. Staying too long gives the impression you are staying, making it more difficult to finally say goodbye.
- Talk about going to childcare with your child ahead of time. Tell them what to expect, that you will be leaving and that you will pick them up. Give them a reference point for your return time. ("I'll come and get you after lunch.") Talk about the fun they will have.
- We encourage families to bring a comfort item- blanket, stuffy, etc. to school with them, especially if this is their first time away from you.

Be assured that usually their tears are short lived. Our staff is experienced and nurturing, and adept at redirecting your child to a fun activity, song, or story, where they can begin to enjoy their morning. Know that we will always call or message you if we are unsuccessful at calming your child, and that you can always message through Brightwheel to check on how your little one is doing.

Arrival Procedures

Upon entering the building through the south entrance, families will go to their child's classroom door. Upon admission into the program, parents will be invited to download the Brightwheel app. Brightwheel will issue a random personal code to each parent. There is also an option to choose your own code through Brightwheel. Parents will begin check-in by scanning the QR code posted at the church entrance or the classroom doors. Through the Brightwheel app, parents will answer the health questions, sign in electronically, then proceed to the classroom door. After your first couple of visits, drop-off at the classroom door is preferred.

Departure Procedures

When you arrive to pick up your child, you must again scan the QR code, enter your personal code assigned to you by Brightwheel, and sign out electronically. Pick up is also at your child's classroom door, where you can briefly chat with your child's teacher. Children need to be picked up by 1pm at the latest.

We will release your child only to you or the persons you have designated on your registration form. Please let us know if your plans change during the morning, because we cannot release your child except with your permission. Picture ID will be requested of unauthorized persons. In the event a child is not picked up by his/her parent or designated pick-up person at the end of the session, the following steps will be taken: After one half hour, the emergency contact person(s) will be notified, and after one hour, if no emergency contact person can be located, the police department and/or social services have be contacted and proper steps have to be taken.

Late Fee Policy

A late fee of \$10.00 will be charged for every 10 minutes, or portion thereof, after closing time that you are late picking up your child. This also applies to anyone designated to pick up your child. Your child and our staff appreciate you being on time for pick up. Children should be picked up by 1:00pm.

What to Bring

Parents provide lunches for PDO, labeled and with healthy items (grains, fruits, vegetables, protein) not requiring heating. Parents are asked to supply a healthy snack for their child as well. We request that special attention be given to lunch items that may pose a choking hazard, such as grapes, hot-dogs, tomatoes, raw veggies, etc., and that these foods are cut into very small pieces. PDO is not a peanut-free center, but we will do our best to accommodate any allergies.

Also bring a complete change of clothes in your child's backpack (including socks and shoes), and warm clothes/outerwear for outdoor play (including mittens and hat if needed). Avoid dressy shoes and sandals that can be hazardous during active play, and sandals that can trap gravel and/or wood chips. We have gravel and wood chips on our playgrounds that easily get stuck in sandals and become uncomfortable. Durable water resistant shoes or boots are great for when there is snow on the ground. All outerwear needs to be labeled with your child's name, along with backpacks, lunches and any other belongings brought to school. Please supply a no-spill cup or water bottle with anti-spill lid and at least 2 labeled diapers (disposables only please) for those using diapers.

Our teachers request that mittens and hats be placed inside coat sleeves, to make locating them easier. The state requires children to wear sunscreen year-round. PDO has sunscreen for parents to apply, if they forget to do it at home.

Should the weather outside be excessively hot, cold, wet, smoky, or windy, the director will decide as to whether it is safe for the children to go outside. On such days, appropriate

activities may be offered in the classrooms or in the Fellowship Hall of the church, which serves as our gymnasium in inclement weather.

Personal Belongings

At PDO, we request that parents not allow their children to bring toys from home if possible. The exception to this rule is if a classroom has show and tell. And security blankets and lovies/stuffies and any comfort items are welcome as well. We also ask that parents not allow their child to have any money/change or small toys in their pockets, as this presents a serious choking hazard.

Diaper Changing and Toilet Training Policy

All diapers will be checked and/or changed twice daily, once after morning snack, and again after lunch. Children will also be changed at any other times when needed. Toilet training will not be forced upon any child. Staff will work with parents regarding individual toilet training needs and schedules. If a child is having multiple accidents while at school, they will need to be put in a pullup for the remainder of the day.

Wellness Policy

Our intention is to keep our children and staff as healthy as possible, and to prevent the spread of all communicable illnesses. Please do not bring your child to PDO if your child has had any of the following in the last 24 hours:

- Colored mucus
- Diarrhea
- Fever
- Vomiting
- Cough
- Rash (undiagnosed)
- Sore throat
- Runny eyes
- Head lice
- Any other communicable or contagious illness

Children need to be symptom-free for 24 hours before returning to PDO. If antibiotics are needed, they must be given for at least 24 hours before returning. If your child becomes ill or injured while in our care, we will make every effort to reach you or your contact person(s). Please make sure your contact numbers are always up to date, and you have emergency contacts besides parents, entered when you fill out the registration form, or entered into Brightwheel. PDO cannot transport children in an emergency, they will need to be taken by

ambulance. In accordance with state regulations, we ask parents to please report to us the exposure or diagnosis of their child to any communicable or contagious diseases contracted outside our center. We need to know as soon as possible, so we can control any outbreaks. This also goes for stomach virus symptoms, or anything requiring antibiotics. Our general policy is to not administer medications, except for emergency use of epi pens or inhalers, which requires a physician's order.

Staff

Our staff at PDO is dedicated to providing a warm, safe, and valuable experience for the children in our care. The staff consists of two directors, and at least one licensed early childhood qualified teacher and teacher aide for each classroom. All staff are background checked, certified in CPR and First Aid, trained in emergency procedures, experienced in early childhood settings, and must complete 15 credit hours of additional training per year.

Curriculum

Each PDO classroom has its own daily schedule. Teachers plan activities that are developmentally appropriate; and geared for a range of interests and skill levels.

Our mornings include:

- Activity centers
- Arts & crafts
- Circle time
- Stories
- Music
- Snack
- Outside play
- Sensory activities
- Child-directed time
- Lunch

We work on:

- Social-emotional development
- Early Math concepts
- Early literacy
- Language development
- Gross and fine motor skills
- Science
- Expression through art

Transition to Different Classrooms

Transition to the next age group will be based upon a child's readiness and availability of space. Children may spend time visiting the new class to ease the process. All transitions are first discussed with parents.

Reporting Child Abuse or Complaints

As a licensed facility, we are required by law to report any suspected cases of abuse or neglect. Any staff member who has reasonable cause to know or suspect that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect will immediately report such information to the Director, and will then report it to the department of social services.

Parents who wish to report child abuse should contact Larimer County Child Protection at 970-498-6990. If you wish to file a complaint or concern about a childcare facility, contact the Colorado Office of Child Care Services at 303-866-5958.

Discontinuation of Services

PDO reserves the right to withdraw a child and discontinue service if:

- Fees are unpaid
- Required paperwork and forms are not provided
- Unresolvable behavior problems exist, and are a safety issue
- Parents do not adhere to PDO policies
- Parents demonstrate disrespect, verbal abuse, or lack of cooperation with staff

Contact Information

Our PDO bulletin board contains more pertinent information, and a more detailed book of rules and regulations is always available through the director, and please don't hesitate to shoot us an email or brightwheel message with any other questions or concerns.

Thank you so much for your interest in our program! Our qualified staff makes each child feel welcomed and loved. We are delighted that you are here!