**Parent’s Day Out**

**Handbook**

[**www.parentsdayoutfcfumc.org**](http://www.parentsdayoutfcfumc.org)

**970-494-5950**

**Revised April 2022**

Welcome to the Parent’s Day Out program (formerly known as Mother’s Day Out)! PDO is a drop-in childcare service sponsored as an outreach of the First United Methodist Church. We are delighted that you have chosen PDO to meet your childcare 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, drop-in childcare for children ages 1-5 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 a few hours 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. We are licensed for ages 1-5. The program is run by its director, assistant director, and teaching staff. 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.

**Hours of Operation and Ages Accepted**

 For 1-year-olds (must be 12 months and full-time walkers):

 Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

 For 2-5-year-olds:

 Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

 Opening day is the first Tuesday after Labor Day; closing is prior to Memorial Day.

We accept special needs children on an individual basis.

**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. Notification of PDO cancellations will be posted on the website, on the school voice mail, and in an email sent to families.

**Fees**

Parents choose to enroll their child for 1, 2, or 3 days a week on a monthly basis.

1 day/week-- $160/month

2 days/week-- $320/month

3 days/week-- $480/month

When paying for the month, parents need to designate which days of the week their child will attend.

For 1-year-olds, options are:

1. Tuesdays
2. Thursdays
3. Tuesdays & Thursdays

For 2-5-year-olds, options are:

1. Tuesdays
2. Thursdays
3. Fridays
4. Tuesdays & Thursdays
5. Tuesdays & Fridays
6. Thursdays & Fridays
7. Tuesdays, Thursdays, & Fridays

We ask that parents indicate specific days of the week, so PDO staff can establish daily class lists. Parents need to select their class time preference(s). Class assignments will be based on availability at the time of registration.

PDO follows the Poudre School District calendar, including all Poudre School District holidays and closures. Credit may be given for some holiday closures.

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. If proper notice is not given, you agree to pay any fees or tuition that may be due for the final 2 weeks, regardless of attendance.

 Tuition payments are due by the 1st of each month. Full 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 $50 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), check or cash. Credit cards are not accepted.

 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.

**Registration Process**

 All children are registered on a first-come, first-served basis. Registration is ongoing each month until classes are full. Applications will be given consideration only after the registration fee has been submitted and processed. Once the registration fee is paid, you will be directed to the Brightwheel app to complete registration.

**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 OR vaccine exemption form
	+ Statement of Health to be completed, signed, and dated by a physician (updated

yearly)

* + Photo release/sunscreen policy
	+ Parent handbook acknowledgement
	+ COVID-19 Waiver

 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.

**Discipline and Guidance Policies**

 In order to maintain a safe and happy environment for the 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 time-outs are utilized when needed. The teachers’ continual awareness of children’s personalities and volatile 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 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. 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 presence constitutes a threat to the health of 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 might be on a 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 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 Drama**

1. Establish trust with your care provider. Know that as your child forms a bond with their teacher, separation should get easier.
2. 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.
3. Try to be upbeat and positive when dropping off your child. Children are very perceptive and can pick up on your emotions. Instead of showing sadness, smile!
4. 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.
5. Don’t linger. Be quick, short; and sweet; do your goodbye routine and then leave. Staying too long gives the impression you are staying, making it more difficult to finally say goodbye.
6. 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.

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 where they can begin to enjoy their morning. Know that we will always call you if we are unsuccessful at calming your child, and that you can always call in to check on how your little one is doing.

**Arrival Procedures**

 Due to COVID-19, arrival and departure procedures will look very different from the way they have previously operated.

Instead of entering the building, families will enter through their child’s outside 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 family. 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 and the classroom doors. Through the Brightwheel app, parents will answer the COVID-related health questions, sign in electronically, then proceed to the classroom door. In each classroom, you will be greeted by a teacher, who will be required to take and record the temperature of both child and parent. The teacher will check you in on the class list, collect your child’s belongings, welcome your child, and let you say your good-byes. Masks are encouraged for ages 3 and up, but not required. More information about masks is found in the COVID-19 policy section.

**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 exit door, where you can briefly chat with your child’s teacher while your child and his/her belongings are collected and brought to you. We ask that you save longer conversations with the teachers for another time.

 We will release your child only to you or the persons you have designated in 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 will be contacted and proper steps will be taken.

**Late Fee Policy**

 A late fee of $10.00 will be charged for every 15 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.

**What to Bring**

 Parents provide sack lunches for PDO, labeled, with an ice packet, and items not requiring heating. Parents are asked to supply a snack for any child with food allergies, otherwise, PDO provides a morning snack. We request that special attention be given to lunch items that may pose a choking hazard, such as grapes, hot-dogs, tomatoes, raw vegies, etc., and that these foods are cut into very small pieces. PDO is not a peanut-free center.

 Also bring a complete change of clothes (including shoes), and warm clothes for outside play. Avoid dressy shoes and flip flops that can be hazardous during active play. All outerwear should be labeled with your child’s name, along with backpacks, lunches and any other belongings brought to school. Please also provide a name tag for your child to wear while they are in PDO’s care. For the little ones, please supply a no-spill cup and at least 2 labeled diapers (disposables only). Older children (3-5) can bring a labeled water bottle.

 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.

 Should the weather outside be excessively hot, cold, wet, 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.

**Personal Belongings**

 At PDO, we request that parents not allow their children to bring toys from home. The exception to this rule is the show and tell activity done with the older class of 3-5-year-oldss. Security blankets and lovies are welcome. We also ask that parents pay not allow their child to have any money/change in their pockets, as this presents a serious choking hazard.

**Diaper Changing and Toilet Training Policy**

 All diapers will be checked and/or changed in the 1’s and 2’s room twice daily, once after morning snack, and again after lunch. Children will be changed at other than regular times as needed. Toilet training will not be forced upon any child. Children will need to be potty trained to move into the older 3-5 class. Staff will work with parents regarding individual toilet training needs and schedules.

**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 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. PDO cannot transport children in an emergency. In accordance with state regulations, we ask parents to please report to us exposure or diagnosis of their child to any communicable or contagious diseases contracted outside our center. Our 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 a director, assistant director, and one 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, and must complete 15 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
	+ Math concepts
	+ Early literacy
	+ Language development
	+ Gross and fine motor skills
	+ Science
	+ Expression through art

 Because of our drop-in status, PDO does not conduct formal parent-teacher conferences. Instead, our teachers get to know children and families by having daily interactions about their child’s day. Also, PDO does not do field trips because of the drop-in nature of the program.

**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 who 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
	+ Parents do not adhere to PDO policies
	+ Parents demonstrate blatant 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.

 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!

 If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to call Director Gail Farnum through the PDO number at 970-494-5950. You can also email us at parentsdayoutfcfumc@gmail.com or visit our website at [www.parentsdayoutfcfumc.org](http://www.parentsdayoutfcfumc.org).