Parent Handbook

2026

Ministry Purpose, Goal & Services

The PURPOSE of Hilltop Kids Learning Center and KidZ Landing is to support and be an extension of Christ Community Lutheran Church.

It is our MISSION to stimulate the love of learning in children in a safe, caring, and fun environment that instills Christian values and encourages positive development.

It is our GOAL to provide a Christ-centered, quality early childhood program where each child is recognized as a child of God and is affirmed for her / his uniqueness.

One of our core beliefs about the early childhood classroom is that learning should be child-centered and age-appropriate. Teachers will be involved in the child's play/work through a variety of activities to keep children engaged.

One of our core beliefs about the way children learn is that it needs to be hands-on and fun. Here at Hilltop Kids Learning Center and KidZ Landing School Age Programs, we strive to keep each child engaged and interested in the day's play/work, and in return, the child will learn much more.

Insurance

Hilltop Kids and Christ Community carry liability insurance in accordance with Illinois DEC Licensing Standards. Primary insurance is the responsibility of the parents.

Hearing Impaired: The Learning Center will utilize the Illinois Relay Center for the Hearing Impaired. Voice: 1-800-826-0867 TTY: 1-800-526-0844. When necessary, furniture and equipment shall be adapted for individual children's use.

Hilltop Kids Learning Center is licensed through the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and serves children from 6 weeks to 6 years of age.

Ownership / Operation

Hilltop Kids Learning Center and KidZ Landing School Age Programs are owned and operated by Christ Community Lutheran Church, located at #1 Christchurch Way, Columbia, IL 62236. Finances and budgeting are under the direction of the congregation, church council, and the Learning Center Board—this team of parents, educators, and church representatives oversees policies, curriculum, and program planning. The center director provides immediate supervision to all staff and curriculum development. All classes are under the direction of state-qualified teachers and assistants. The Pastor, as approved in the constitution, has ultimate responsibility for all schools and programs of the church.

Director:	Daleena Guldner Phone: 618 281-4646 ext 110 dguldner@christclc.org	Assistant Director:	Candy Biggs Phone: 618-281-4646 ext. 111 cbiggs@christclc.org
Pastor:	Jared Parker Phone: 618 281-4646 ext 101 jparker@christclc.org	Billing:	Karen Bartoni Phone: 618-281-4646 ext 102 kbartoni@christclc.org

Days of Operation

Regular Hours of Operation

Hilltop Kids Learning Center is open from 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Severe Weather Closures

If severe weather forces us to close, parents will be notified through Classroom Dojo**.** We are typically open even when public schools are closed. No tuition refunds will be issued for any such emergency closures.

Holiday Closures

The Center will be closed on the following holidays. If the holiday falls on a Saturday, we will be closed on Friday; if it falls on a Sunday, we will be closed on Monday:

- New Year's Day
- Presidents' Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Thanksgiving Day/ Day after Thanksgiving
- In observance of Christmas Eve
- In observance of Christmas Day
- In observance of New Year's Eve **(closing @ 3:00)**

****Parents will be notified of additional closing days.****

Registration, Enrollment, and Fees

Enrollment Fees

Hilltop Kids Learning Center: Upon enrollment, a non-refundable registration fee of $75 for one child and $100 for a family is due.

Kidz Landing School Year: Upon enrollment, a non-refundable registration fee of $50 for one child or $75 for a family is due.

Kidz Landing Summer Program: Registration fees for the Summer program are sent out with the Summer camp packet.

Materials Fees

For Hilltop Kids Learning Center, an annual materials fee of $45 per student is due upon initial registration and every August thereafter.

Release of Personal Information

Only the Director or Office Administrator will have access to all personal information provided during the enrollment process. If parents refuse to release this information, it will not be shared. The confidentiality policy is on the child's forms and is kept in their file.

Vacation week

Each child enrolled in Hilltop is eligible to receive a one-week vacation period per calendar year, and tuition will not be charged if your child is not in attendance during this period. Vacation weeks must be used for an entire week, not for individual days. We cannot, for any reason, reimburse your tuition for times when your child is not present. A vacation request must be submitted in writing to the director at least one week prior to the week the individual will be absent.

Tuition

Weekly tuition is due by **Friday of each week in advance**. If tuition is not paid by Monday, an automatic $15 late fee will be added to your current balance. Full tuition is due weekly regardless of holidays or absences. If the balance remains unpaid for three weeks, the Office Manager will initiate a payment plan to bring the account current. The weekly amount must equal the current tuition and a portion of the outstanding balance. Families will be given up to 8 weeks to pay the overdue balance. Failure to maintain the payment plan will result in an additional $15 late fee charge and require full payment of the complete balance within 14 days, or child care services for the family will be terminated. If the entire balance is paid and the family remains at the Center, parents will need to make weekly payments from that time forward, for the duration of their stay, or services will be terminated 14 days after the first non-payment.

Arrival, Departure, and Pick-Up Policy

Arrival

The Center opens at 6:30 a.m., Monday through Friday. Your child must be present by ***9:00 a.m.*** for the beginning of the center's daily schedule. This ensures that your child receives the maximum benefit from the program and that other children and staff are not disrupted by their late arrival. We kindly request that you accompany your child into their room after signing them in.

Departure

The Center closes at 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Parents should notify the center immediately if they will be late. If the parent is more than 15 minutes late, a $10.00 fee will be charged. After 15 minutes, a $ 1.00-per-minute fee will be added to the $10.00 late fee. Parents will be called after the first 15 minutes if the child is not picked up. If the parent cannot be reached, the emergency contacts listed on the enrollment form will be called in order until someone is notified. By State Law, authorities will be called if the parent or emergency contact has not been reached after one hour.

We will not allow your child to leave with anyone **NOT** on your pick-up list. For this reason, a pickup list must be completed, listing all persons approved to pick up your child. Please notify your child's teacher of any changes in pick-up arrangements. The person picking up must have a valid form of identification.

Communication

The following modes of communication with parents are provided. Phone Calls, E-mail, Texts, Classroom Bulletin Boards, Teachers' Bulletin Boards, Notes Home, Face to Face, Parent/ Teacher Conferences, Parent Satisfaction Surveys, and Dojo.

Contacting Staff

We encourage you to use Classroom Dojo to contact the staff. You may call the Center at any time regarding your child. Using voicemail is encouraged so the teaching staff's attention is not drawn from your child or other children. If you need to contact the room directly, here are the extensions:

Bumblebee's 106	Dragonflies 104	Director, Daleena Guldner 110
Caterpillar's 103	Ladybugs 107	Assistant Director, Candy Biggs 111
Butterflies 105	Kidz Landing 114	

Learning Center Program

Our program is designed to help children develop practical observation, questioning, and listening skills. This approach provides them with awareness of their feelings and the right to express them by channeling them into alternative outlets. Children are free to make choices within the limits of consideration of people and things. Our programs prepare children to use their intellectual and creative abilities in future learning tasks. "Play" is a vital role in a child's early development.

Daily Program:

- Curriculum-based centers where each child chooses his/her activities with developmental growth support from teachers.
- Daily "talks with Jesus": bible-center curriculum, prayer before meals & snacks, weekly chapel
- A structured group time of instruction focuses on language development
- Outdoor/indoor playtime to develop large motor skills
- Rest period/quiet time
- Nutritious meals, including a morning snack, hot lunch, and late afternoon snack

Personal Belongings:

Each child has a space for personal belongings. Toys, candy, and videos are not allowed. If your child arrives with any of these items, they will be placed in his/her cubby until it is time to leave. The center is not responsible for missing, damaged, or broken personal items, including toys and technology. *Technology refers only to school-age children.*

Please bring in a complete change of clothes for your child. If your child is in diapers or undergoing toilet training, please bring an extra set of clothing. Parents are responsible for maintaining supplies needed for day-to-day routines. The staff will remind you of the supplies needed.

The parents are responsible for laundering all personal belongings. Soiled items will be sent home at pick-up. Children must wear footwear with securely fitting backs. Flip-flop-style footwear is NOT to be worn at any time. **Please dress your child appropriately. Outdoor play is essential in the daily routine. Please include weather-appropriate clothing.**

Meals

Breakfast

The Center offers breakfast from 7:00 a.m. until 8:00 a.m. If your child arrives after 8:00 a.m., you must provide breakfast before arriving at the Center. No food is to be brought into the Center.

****On school days, school-age children will be provided with breakfast from arrival until the bus arrives.****

Snacks

The Center has two scheduled snack times: a mid-morning snack and a late afternoon snack. These snacks are based on the four food groups.

Lunch

The Center serves a hot lunch made here. All meals and snacks are served family-style. A prayer is said before each snack and meal.

On half days and school days out, lunch will be provided, along with two snacks, for all school-age children.

Outside Food

All food consumed by the children in the Center shall be provided by the Center, except as follows: Upon the staff's agreement, parents may occasionally bring in commercially prepared foods as part of holiday or birthday celebrations. Food brought in for this purpose must arrive unopened, as packaged by the bakery or manufacturer; otherwise, it will not be accepted. Food brought in must be peanut-free and tree-nut-free. Food for dietary restrictions is permitted with a doctor’s order.

Health and Safety

Vaccination Policy

It is Hilltop Kids Learning Centers' policy that all children in the center be vaccinated. ***No exemptions will apply.*** These vaccinations include, but are not limited to, poliomyelitis, measles, rubella, mumps, diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, Haemophilus influenzae typeB, hepatitis B, and varicella (chickenpox). Hilltop Kids Learning Center reserves the right to refuse admittance to any child who is not vaccinated.

Child Illness

If your child becomes sick and cannot attend the Center, please call by 8:00 am. When you call, please tell us the nature of the illness and how long you think your child will be absent. If your child needs to be sent home, they must be picked up within one hour; otherwise, an emergency contact will be called. The Director reserves the right to refuse admittance to any child who arrives and is suspected of being contagious. When a child becomes ill at Hilltop, the parent will be notified immediately to arrange for the child's pickup. To protect your child and the other children at the Center, we must insist that no child will be allowed in the Center who has experienced the following in the past 24 hours:

Sickness Policy

The sickness policy is meant to keep all children safe and healthy.

- Must be 24 hours fever-free without fever-reducing medicine.
- If a child tests positive for COVID-19 or is in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, talk to the Director about a return date and/or steps that need to be taken.
- If a child has goopy eyes, they must be sent home. The child must have a doctor's note to return.
- If a child vomits, they get sent home and have to be symptom-free with no medication for 24 hours before returning.
- If a child has diarrhea, they will be sent home and must be symptom-free for 24 hours. (The child must have two diarrheas within 2 hours.)
- If a child exhibits two or more symptoms below, they must be sent home and can return after being symptom-free for 24 hours or after receiving a doctor's note stating the child's condition and when they are no longer contagious.

    - Rash
    - Fever (100.4)
    - Loss of appetite
    - An actively runny nose with a fever
    - Persistent cough
    - Impetigo

- If a child has lice, they will get sent home and can return after they are nit-free for 24 hours.
    - If your child attends Lice Busters and is cleared to return, they may return as long as you have proper documentation confirming their clearance.
- If your child has spots on their hands, feet, and/or mouth, they will be sent home. The child must have a doctor's note to return.

If your child is diagnosed with Streptococcus, Croup, RSV, Influenza, or any other contagious illness, you must inform the Director. This is so that other families can be notified that their child may have been exposed. Confidentiality will be kept, and your child's name will not be exposed.
If your child is not able to attend school due to an illness, they are not able to attend Kidz Landing either.

Accidents

If your child has a minor accident at the Center, the staff will complete an accident report. The parent, the teacher, and the director must sign the form. Provisions will be made to prevent recurring accidents.

Emergency Procedures

In an emergency, the family physician and/or ambulance service will be contacted. The director will accompany the ambulance to the hospital, as stated on the enrollment form, unless otherwise directed by emergency personnel. The parent will be notified immediately of the course of action taken.

Discipline Policy

Hilltop Kids Learning Center believes in positive methods of discipline. We establish consistent, age-appropriate limits to help children navigate the world effectively. Our program is designed to foster independence and confidence in children. Hilltop Kids Learning Center believes praise and encouragement are more effective in modeling appropriate behavior in children than negative techniques. The discipline policy used at Hilltop Kids Learning Center complies with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services Licensing Standards. It includes positive reinforcement and redirection for all age groups. Physical punishment, physical restraint, or humiliation is never used in our center.

Aggressive Behavior Policy

Biting, hitting, pushing, foul language, pinching, scratching, kicking, and punching are considered aggressive behaviors. If the discipline techniques are ineffective in controlling a child's behavior, the teacher can call upon the Director or Assistant Director to assist with teaching the class while the teacher works with the child in the child's classroom to help resolve the child's behavior issues. If this is ineffective, the parent or guardian will be contacted and asked to remove the child from the facility for the rest of the day.

Discharge Policy

The policy at Hilltop Kids Learning Center is that children enrolling can function in a group setting. If a child is having or causing disruptive behavior, a conference will be held with the parents.

Suggestions and various disciplinary procedures will be discussed with parents and staff. An initial meeting will be held with the student's parents to discuss various corrective strategies. After one month, another conference will be held to re-evaluate the situation, and if all parties feel the situation has improved, the action plan will continue. If the situation has not improved, the parents will be asked to remove their child from the Center. Hilltop Kids reserves the right to dismiss immediately any child exhibiting the intent of harming other children or teachers or displaying destructive, damaging behavior to the property of the Center. The Center will identify resources and alternatives for the child and family involved.

Termination Procedures: Either parent or provider may terminate this contract by ***giving 2 weeks' written notice before the ending date***.

Transition

When a child is ready to move to the next classroom, you will receive a transition letter. The letter will introduce teachers, give the new tuition rate, and explain the dates your child will begin transitioning, what it involves, and when they will be in the room permanently.

- Bumblebees (6 weeks- 15 months): Must be walking and off a bottle to transition.
- Caterpillars (15 months): Any pacifiers must be removed to facilitate the transition and can only be used during naps.
- Butterflies (2 years): Must be fully potty-trained to transition.
- Dragonflies (3- 4 years): Must be fully potty trained without assistance to transition.
- Ladybugs (4- 5 years): Kindergarten readiness will be followed
- Kindergarten

When your child is ready to enter Kindergarten, we will work with the local Eagleview Elementary School to help with the transition. We maintain open communication and collaborate with the school district to strategize and facilitate a smoother transition for your child. We will communicate all information to parents to help everyone stay informed.

Family Resources

- We accept Child Care Support. The Director will assist families in completing the application and redetermination process.
- Documents such as our Parent Handbook, IDCFS Child Care Laws, Child Care Support applications, and other necessary documentation are freely accessible.
- We communicate in various ways, including phone calls, Dojo, email, face-to-face, newsletters, bulletin boards, daily notes, and classroom folders.
- We host several family nights throughout the year, including Trunk-or-Treat, Thanksgiving Feast, Christmas Program, Muffins with Mommy, Donuts with Daddy, Open House, Scholastic Book Fair, and a Spring Event.
- Referrals to outside resources if necessary or requested.
- Visiting Nurse.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent/staff conferences will be held in the fall and spring to inform parents about their child's development. Parents or staff may request conferences as needed. This information is confidential and will not be released without parental consent. The staff, teacher, director, and pastor directly involved with your child will have access to all information about your child's daily welfare.

Enrollment Forms

The following forms MUST be completed before admission:

1) Enrollment Form
2) Birth Certificate
3) Fee Contract
4) Consent for Daycare Providers Agreement Form
5) Emergency Medical Form
6) Child Release Information
7) Parent Handbook Form
8) Confidentiality Release
9) Photo Release
10) Sun Block Release
11) Late Departure Form
12) Discipline Policy- Signed by Parent/s
13) Verification Slip- Standards- Signed by Parent/s
14) Pest Policy
15) Health Certificate (less than 2 years old)
    a) TB and Lead test assessments completed by a physician.
    b) Complete list of Immunizations.

Hilltop Kids Learning Center / Kidz Landing
ENROLLMENT FORM

Name of Child: _____
(First) (Middle) (Last)

Address: _____

Anticipated Start Date: _____ Birth date (Due Date): _____ Sex: M F

Days per week: M T W Th F Hours of Care: _____

Church/temple/synagogue membership/in which active: _____

Are there any Christian holy days you wish your child not to observe? _____

Parent Information

Name: _____**Relation to child**:_____

Home Address:_____

E-mail Address:_____

Place of Employment:_____

Address: _____

Business Number: _____Working Hours_____

Cell Phone: _____Home Phone: _____

Name: _____**Relation to child:**_____

Home Address:_____

E-mail Address:_____

Place of Employment:_____

Address: _____

Business Number: _____Working Hours_____

Cell Phone: _____Home Phone: _____

Physician to call if the child becomes ill or injured

Name: _____ Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ Hospital or Clinic: _____

Additional emergency contacts to be phoned; three names are required. *(These people also act as other approved pick-up people)*

Name: _____ Relationship: _____Phone:_____

Name: _____ Relationship: _____Phone:_____

Name: _____ Relationship: _____Phone:_____

Program

If the child has any of the following, please explain:

Restrictions for play- outdoors_____

_____

Restrictions for play - indoors_____

_____

Allergies_____

Fears_____

Does the child regularly take medication?_____ If so, what kind and directions _____

_____

_____

Other information/comments that will help in caring for your child:

_____

_____

* All signatures and dates on the required forms must be filled out. *

Hilltop Kids Learning Center Tuition Guide

Bumblebee Classroom (Infants) Tuition	$327/Week $290/4 days $244/3 days $169/2 days	*(Sibling Rate - $294)**
Caterpillar Classroom (Toddler) Tuition	$327/Week $290/4 days $244/3 days $169/2 days	*(Sibling Rate - $294)**
Butterfly Classroom (2-year-olds) Tuition	$286/Week $252/4 days $216/3 days $154/2 days	*(Sibling Rate=$257)**
Dragonfly Classroom (Pre-School) Tuition	$243/Week $216/4 days $189/3 days $145/2 days	*(Sibling Rate=$218)**
Ladybug Classroom (Pre–K) Tuition	$243/Week $216/4 days $189/3 days $145/2 days	*(Sibling Rate=$218)**

A Sibling Discount of 10% is applied to the oldest child's tuition only.

Hilltop Kids Learning Center Fee Agreement

Child's Name_____ Age_____ D/O/B_____

Additional Child's Name_____ Age_____ D/O/B_____

Parent(s) Name_____

Address_____

City _____ Zip Code _____Phone_____

E-mail Address_____

I/We, as parents or legal guardians of the above-stated child(ren), agree to pay Hilltop Kids Learning Center/KidZ Landing:

Child 1:

Tuition:	$_____
Discounts (if applicable) *	$_____
Total:	$_____

Child 2 (if applicable):

Tuition:	$_____
Discounts (if applicable)*	$_____
Total:	$_____

Print Name_____ Date_____
Parent/Legal Guardian

Sign_____
Parent/Legal Guardian

A Sibling Discount of 10% is applied to the oldest child's tuition only.

Late Fees and Returned Check Fee: If the weekly fee is not paid by Monday, a $15.00 late payment fee will be applied. An additional **$15.00** per week late fee will continue to accrue until the amount is paid in full, as well as any court or collection costs incurred by the center. There will be a **$25.00** charge for any returned check. ***The provider may terminate the contract without notice if the parent does not make payments when due.***

Discipline Policy

Hilltop Kids Learning Center staff will use disciplinary procedures designed to help the children develop self-control and assume responsibility for their actions.

The discipline will be directly related to the act, and the child shall be made aware of the relationship between the act and the consequences. Children will always be warned and given the opportunity to correct their behavior before a staff member takes action, unless the behavior is aggressive. When a child's behavior is inappropriate, staff will use encouragement and positive redirection to help the child gain control over their actions.

No corporal punishment will be used at any time or for any reason. If a child needs a break to calm down, a safe, calming space away from other children will be provided in each classroom. Firm positive statements and redirection will be used.

We believe it is essential that children enrolling be able to function effectively in a group setting. If the child is exhibiting or causing disruptive behavior toward him/her or the rest of the class, a conference will be held with the teacher/director and the parents. Suggestions and disciplinary procedures will be discussed with parents and staff. After a pre-agreed time, another conference will be held to evaluate the situation, and if all parties involved feel the situation has improved, the action plan will continue. If the situation has not improved, the parents will be requested to remove their child from the center.

Parent Signature: _____Date: _____

Parents Handbook

I, _____have been given a copy of the **Hilltop Kids Learning Center** handbook and I have read and gone over the handbook with my child/children and understand that if I do have any questions that the Director of **Hilltop Kids Learning Center** is happy to answer any questions that I may have.

Child(ren): _____

Parent Signature: _____Date: _____

Late Departure Policy

The Center closes at 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Parents should notify the center immediately if they will be late. If the parent is more than 15 minutes late, a $10.00 fee will be charged. After 15 minutes, a $1.00 per-minute late fee will be added to the $10.00 initial late fee. Parents will be called after the first 15 minutes if the child is not picked up. If the parent is not reached, emergency contacts listed on the enrollment form will be called in order until someone is notified. In accordance with State Law, authorities will be called if the parent or emergency contact has not been reached after one hour.

Parent Signature: _____Date: _____

Pest Management Policy

Policy Statement

The management of Hilltop Kids Learning Center and KidZ Landing is committed to providing a safe environment for the children in our care. We aim to prevent children from being exposed to pests and pesticides; therefore, we have adopted the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach to pest control. The IPM approach minimizes children's and staff's exposure to pesticides and incorporates a range of non-chemical and chemical methods to prevent and eradicate pests. While pesticides may be used to remediate pest infestations (such as insects, weeds, and rodents) found in the facility and its surrounding grounds, only the least toxic products will be considered and used in combination with non-chemical methods.

Definition of Integrated Pest Management

An ecologically based management strategy that provides long-term solutions to pest problems with minimum impact on human health and the environment. Programs rely heavily on pest prevention through good sanitation and mechanical measures, such as pest-proofing buildings.

Commitment

Our center is responsible for notifying students' parents or guardians and the school staff of upcoming pesticide treatments. Notices will be posted in designated areas at school and sent home with students.

Record-keeping

Records of pesticide use shall be maintained on-site to meet the requirements of the state regulatory agency and the School Board. Records must be current and accurate if IPM is to work. Additionally, pest surveillance data sheets, which record the number of pests or other indicators of pest populations, are to be maintained to verify the need for treatments.

Parent Signature: _____Date: _____

Photography Release

I permit the staff of **Hilltop Kids Learning Center** to photograph my child for the purposes within their program, including bulletin boards and Dojo.

Child(ren): _____

Parent Signature: _____Date: _____

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_____ I **DO NOT** consent to using my child's photograph for the above.

Parent Signature: _____Date: _____

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Physical Form Requirement

To know before you go….

Please ensure your doctor completes the lead assessment and signs it.

- The TB Skin Test portion of the attached physical.
- It is also necessary that the physician signs both sides of the physical.
- Be sure that the shot record is filled out or is attached.

Things the kids should bring:

ALL Children

1. Tennis Shoes or closed-toe shoes.
2. Comfortable clothes to be active in.
3. Coats, Gloves, etc., to go outside
4. Change of Clothes

Infants- 6 weeks through 15 months (in addition to the items above)

1. Bag
2. Bottles
3. Diapers and Ointment
4. Wipes
5. Formula or breast milk
6. Baby Food

Toddlers- 16 Months through 23 months (in addition to the items above)

1. Bag
2. Blanket
3. Diapers and Ointment
4. Wipes

Two to Five Year-olds (in addition to the items above)

1. Bag with a blanket and a sleeping item

Please make sure your child's name is on ALL items brought from home

Hilltop is not responsible for missing, broken, or damaged items.