



**Parent Handbook
2025-2026**

Thank you for choosing Sojourn East MDO for your child(ren) this school year. We welcome you here and hope your time here is a blessing for you and your child(ren).

Mission Statement

The Mother's Day Out (MDO) program is designed to provide opportunities for varied learning experiences in a safe, gospel-centered environment – including but not limited to peer interaction, time away from parents, music, arts/crafts, Bible story, motor development, listening development – for children ages 1 to 5 years by the start date of the program.

Calendar

- MDO will be offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. beginning **September 2, 2025**, and **ending May 14, 2026**.
- The program will follow the JCPS calendar for holiday closings and for inclement weather closings.
- A full school calendar is attached.
- We will **NOT** make up snow days unless we have more than 5 in a school year.
- No refunds are given for snow days.

Tuition

- A non-refundable registration fee of \$125 is required to secure a spot in the program. This also covers the cost of supplies for our teachers throughout the school year.
- Two payment options:
 - \$200 per month will be automatically withdrawn each month
 - \$1,800 paid in full by the 1st of September

Attendance Policies

- MDO doors open at 9:00 am and close at 9:10 am
- In the afternoon, doors will open promptly at 1:00 pm
- Doors to MDO remain locked during school hours.
- Being on time in the morning and at pick-up gives consistency and a sense of security to your child's routine.

- Late arrivals miss Free Play and Circle Time. Free Play allows your child to choose an activity or to play with a special friend. Circle Time is a vital time for learning developmentally appropriate skills.
- **If your child is late or absent from school, a text, email, or phone call is very much appreciated.**
- Parents/guardians will be asked to park and walk their child in/pick their child up at their classroom door. They will enter and exit through the doors to the parking lot at the end of the children's hallway.
- Teachers should be notified at morning drop-off if someone other than the parent/guardian is picking up. Children may **NOT** be picked up by anyone except the persons listed on your emergency contact and release page. You may add names as needed throughout the year. Any person besides the registering parent will be asked to show a photo ID.
- Parents will be charged a late pick-up fee of \$5 per 10 minutes.
- Parents/guardians must sign their child(ren) in and out. Sign-in sheets are located on the whiteboard next to your child's classroom.
- Tuition will not be prorated for absences due to illness. There are no make-up days.

Curriculum

- Our goal is to incorporate the gospel of Jesus Christ into all areas of a child's development. Our age-appropriate activities include large and small group times, music, free play, creative arts, language and math development, and playground time. Various resources are used for each age – including The Gospel Project.

Discipline

It is our desire to help children understand that they are worthy to be treated with love and respect.

Children will be taught and reminded of behavioral expectations. The teachers will use positive reinforcement to encourage children to make good choices.

- Our goal is to help children learn appropriate skills for interacting with others and gaining self-discipline. Our teachers will use positive guidance techniques to encourage this behavior.
- Sojourn MDO will follow the general policies and procedures of SojournKids. (see attached)

- Redirection by diverting the child's attention to another activity and the use of "time-out" may be necessary. Parents will be notified of any behavior issues.
- All staff are trained in these policies.

If a child regularly displays inappropriate behavior, the parents will be consulted for help and support. A plan of action will be discussed so that the school and parents work together to correct the behavior. If, for any reason, a child displays intentional behavior that is harmful and aggressive towards another child or teachers, the directors have the right to dismiss the child immediately from the program.

Dismissal of a Child

MDO reserves the right to dismiss any child after entering the program for the following reasons.

- MDO Behaviour Expectations: Three Strike Policy (see attached)
- We determine it is not in the best interest of our program or the children enrolled to have the child in attendance.
- Failure of the parents or guardians to honor the guidelines as set forth.
- Or parents or guardians are delinquent in payment of tuition fees.

Child Abuse

By law, all education and administrative staff are required to report any suspected child abuse or neglect to their supervisor, who is responsible for reporting to the appropriate authorities.

Lunch/Snack

- MDO will NOT provide snacks.
- If a child is unable to consume any of the provided snacks, a parent/guardian may provide an alternative snack for their child.
- Parents should notify the Directors and the child's teacher if there are food allergies.
- Parents will be asked to send their child a labeled sippy cup or water bottle and a **nut-free** lunch each day.
- Please do not send glass containers or food that needs to be heated or refrigerated.
- Please label all containers, cups, lunch boxes, etc.
- Please be aware of any food allergies in your child's class.
- While we ask that you not send nuts, Sojourn MDO is **NOT** an allergen-free program. However, parents will be asked to notify staff of food allergies so

that snacks can be planned accordingly. You will be notified of any allergies in your class.

- Please do **not** send in yogurt/applesauce cups and shredded cheese. This makes a huge mess on our carpets.

Sick Policy:

We desire to keep the kids we serve healthy, as well as our teachers. Please help us do so by following our sick policy. Please be sure to provide us with current emergency phone numbers should we need to call.

- Sojourn MDO will follow the general policies and procedures of SojournKids.
- If your child contracts a contagious illness, please notify us immediately. This courtesy helps us stay informed of anything contagious to which other children may have been exposed.
- Children will NOT be allowed to attend the program if they have exhibited any of the following symptoms within 24 hrs of a school day:
 - Nausea
 - Vomiting
 - Diarrhea
 - Any unexplained rash or skin infection
 - Open skin lesions
 - Colored discharge from the nose
 - Temperature of 100 degrees or higher
 - Pink eye
 - Head lice
 - Severe coughing
 - Any infectious disease
 - Hand-Foot and Mouth Disease after 14 days/blisters have healed
- **Children must be symptom-free for a full 24 hours (without medication) before returning to school.**
- Should a child begin to show these symptoms during MDO, staff will contact a parent or emergency contact as soon as possible. The child will wait with the director until he/she is picked up. **Arrangements should be made to pick your child up as soon as possible.**
- No medication (prescription or over-the-counter) may be given by the MDO staff (with the exception of emergency allergy care with a doctor's note).

Restroom Policy:

- Sojourn MDO policy is that diaper changes and toilet assistance be performed in the presence of two adults.
- Parents will be responsible for sending extra diapers (for those not potty trained) and a change of clothes for each child.
- **All students age 3 and up must be fully potty trained. Teachers will provide toilet assistance in the younger classes, but the PreK class should be fully independent.**
- Sojourn MDO recognizes that preschool-age children have accidents. Once every few weeks is an accident; daily or weekly is not. If your child is not fully potty trained by the beginning of the school year, our only option is to ask you to keep your child home until he/she is fully potty-trained (while still paying for your spot) or to withdraw from Sojourn MDO. We believe a few weeks of concentrated effort is enough to motivate a child to be school-ready in this area.

Birthday Celebrations

- We will celebrate birthdays in class with a simple birthday song, hat, and trinket surprise.
- Please be aware of any food allergies in your child's class
- **Please** coordinate with your child's Lead teacher about bringing treats to share!

Clothing and Other Personal Items

- Children at Sojourn MDO will be exploring and playing with fun things such as finger paint, play-dough, glue, etc. Please dress your child in clothes that can get "messy."
- We will also be going outside to the playground area, so we ask that your child wear comfortable, closed-toe shoes. **Please, NO FLIP FLOPS.**
- Please send appropriate outerwear (coats, hats, gloves) for colder weather, as we plan to go outside as much as possible.
- Children in diapers should wear snaps if their outfit is a one-piece. They should also have clothing that does not require the removal of shoes to change diapers.
- Please make sure that if your child is potty-trained, he/she can easily remove clothing items.

- All children (regardless of toileting abilities) should keep a **FULL CHANGE OF CLOTHES** in their school bags that is appropriate for the current weather. Please label all items of clothing.
- Personal items and toys should only be brought if the class has a “show and tell” activity. Any personal item brought should fit inside the child’s school bag. If a child needs to bring a special toy or blanket in order to help with separation, that item should stay in the child’s backpack during class.

Special Events-Programs

Special Events throughout the school year

- Fall Pictures in September
- Muffins with Mom in late Sept. for ages 2- Pre-K
- Costume Parade in October
- Christmas Program in early December for ages 2-Pre-K
- Grandparents Day in late January
- Donuts with Dad in spring, ages 2 - Pre-K
- Spring Pictures in March
- Spring Program late March for ages 2-Pre-K

Parent/Teacher Communications

There are several ways we strive to maintain open communication between parents and teachers.

- Class Dojo App
- Phone calls, **text**
- Notes/flyers in folders!!
- Emails: check often

Addressing Parental/Guardian Questions/Concerns

- All questions/concerns about your child in the classroom should first be addressed to your child's (ren) teacher.
- When/if no resolution/satisfaction is given, please direct all questions/concerns to:

Claudia Blum at mdo@sojourneast.com

**General questions about dismissal, pickup, illness, and registration can also be directed to Claudia Blum.

Acknowledgement and Agreements

Acknowledgement of Risk

Parents/guardians acknowledge that while the program takes reasonable precautions to ensure the safety of all children, normal risks are associated with activities such as playground play, arts and crafts, and other group interactions.

Release of Liability

To the fullest extent parents/guardians agree not to hold the church, the Mother's Day Out Program, its staff, volunteers, or affiliates liable for any injuries, illnesses, or accidents that may occur while their child is participating in the program, except in cases of gross negligence or intentional misconduct.

Medical Emergencies

If a child is injured, staff will take appropriate measures, including administering basic first aid and contacting emergency services if necessary. Parents are responsible for all medical costs incurred due to illness or injury during program hours.

Supervision and Behaviour

The program maintains appropriate child-to-staff ratios and takes reasonable steps to supervise all activities. However, parents understand that minor incidents can occur during normal play.

Personal Belongings and Property Loss

The program is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal items brought by children.

Indemnification Clause

Parents agree to indemnify and hold harmless the church, its staff, volunteers, and affiliates from any claims, demands, or liabilities arising from their child's participation in the program, except in cases of gross negligence or willful misconduct.

Thank you for partnering with us in our endeavor to meet the developmental needs of your child. We look forward to caring for them and feel privileged to teach them. We count it a blessing to guide them as they learn how to get along with others, develop appropriate skills, and learn more about Jesus and his love for them.

Please sign and return the portion below by September 11, 2025

I, _____, have read the parent handbook and agree to abide by its policies.

Parent/Guardian

Signature: _____

Date: _____ Child's Name: _____