

Aldersgate United Methodist Church

Open Arms



A Ministry for Adults with Special Needs

**Open Arms
Policy and Procedures**

I. Definition

1. The Open Arms Coordinator is responsible for overseeing programming and organized Open Arms events, admitting new families, recruiting and maintaining volunteers, volunteer training and compliance.
2. The Open Arms Activity Coordinator is responsible for planning and implementing special events for Open Arms and coordinating planned activities.
3. General Consent attached as Exhibit A.

II. General

1. The Open Arms program does not endorse other programs, individuals, professionals, products or organizations.
2. Providing a resource does not constitute an endorsement by Aldersgate United Methodist Church or Open Arms.
3. Upon receipt of the Open Arms Application, the Open Arms team may accept or decline the applicant at its sole discretion.
4. A parent or legal guardian shall drop-off and pick-up their dependent at any Open Arms program or event, unless prior arrangements have been made with the Open Arms Coordinator.
5. A parent or legal guardian is required to sign each participant in and out at any Open Arms program, leaving an emergency contact name and phone number.
6. A parent or legal guardian is required to sign¹ a “General Consent” for each participant at each Open Arms program unless prior arrangements have been made with the Open Arms coordinator.

¹The responsible party appointed by the parent/guardian will follow the procedures required by the parent/guardian.

7. No fee will be charged for attending an Open Arms program.
8. Only service animals are permitted to attend Open Arms programs with the prior approval of the Open Arms coordinator.

NOTE: Open Arms programs may involve animals which have been approved and arranged by the Open Arms committee (i.e. petting zoo, SPCA).

9. No volunteer, family or participant shall bring any pet to any Open Arms program.
10. Any participant or volunteer in any Open Arms program must be free from signs/symptoms of communicable disease and free of fever for 24 hours prior to such Open Arms program.

Please be considerate of ALL participants in all Open Arms programs

III. Participants

A. General

1. A participant must be eighteen (18) years of age or older to be eligible for the Open Arms program.
2. If a participant requires medication and/or any special procedures during any Open Arms program, the parent/guardian shall follow the procedures and policies under “Medication/Special Procedure” (Section VI).

B. Special Needs

1. Each participant is eligible for the Open Arms program if they are ambulatory and have a physical and/or mental disability including complex developmental disabilities that affect the ability to communicate and interact with others.
2. Acceptance into the program will be based on the complexity of health care needs of the participant determined by the coordinator.

IV. Families

1. The family list is confidential and NOT available for release to other programs.
2. Participation in the Open Arms program is not contingent upon membership of Aldersgate United Methodist Church.
3. Families who have standing reservations but have frequent absences without notification will be removed from the standing list. Upon loss of the standing reservation, the family will then be required to call each month for reservations.

Open Arms encourages all families to be considerate of the needs of other families when seeking respite care.

Parent/Guardian is required to notify the Open Arms Coordinator if they are unable to keep their standing reservation.

V. Volunteers

1. An adult volunteer must be at least eighteen (18) years of age.
2. Application/Eligibility to Volunteer – Each volunteer must complete annually an application and consent to a criminal background check as required by Aldersgate United Methodist Church. The Open Arms coordinator will make the final determination on eligibility for volunteers.
3. Training – New volunteers must complete training before working with the Open Arms program. All volunteers must renew training annually. Youth volunteers must have parental consent before beginning training.
4. Youth volunteers between the ages of fourteen (14) and eighteen (18) will be paired with an adult for the duration of each Open Arms program.
5. Each youth volunteer must consent to annual criminal background checks.
6. Volunteers suspected of alcohol/drug abuse/use before or during an Open Arms program will be asked to leave immediately by the Open Arms Coordinator.
7. Volunteers may NOT bring their children under the age of 14 to Open Arms programs.
8. The volunteer list is confidential and NOT available for release to other programs.
9. Guests/Visitors – Guests and visitors are required to sign in at the registration table and receive a nametag. Tours of the program are given by the Open Arms coordinator or a volunteer. Prior notification of the visit is required.
10. Outside Contact – Outside contact (i.e. babysitting, dining out, taking participants special places, visiting participants in their homes) with Open Arms participants and family is strongly discouraged and requires prior approval from the Open Arms coordinator.

These activities are discouraged because they cannot be provided for every participant in Open Arms, and individual outside activities are not within the Open Arms mission.

11. All volunteers shall be knowledgeable and adhere to the Open Arms Operational Procedures as attached.
12. All volunteers must treat each participant's personal and medical information as confidential. Please respect the privacy of each Open Arms family.

VI. Medication/Special Procedure

1. If a participant requires medication and/or a special procedure during any Open Arms program, the parent/guardian will:
 - Provide all medication which must be clearly labeled in a prescription bottle with the dependent's name, name of medication, required dosage, and time to be given.
 - All medication must be signed in. Any special procedures must be reviewed with a nurse.
2. Medicine is maintained and administered by a nurse.
3. Routine medications and special procedures will not be administered during any event lasting less than two (2) hours, unless prior arrangements have been made and approved by the Open Arms coordinator.
4. The Open Arms coordinator may decline any special procedure and will discuss this decision with the parent/guardian.

EXHIBIT A

Health Ministry – Open Arms

Aldersgate United Methodist Church
3926 Old Denton Rd.
Carrollton, TX 75007

Participant's Name _____

We must have a completed release form for each participant in our care. Please read the following information carefully and sign below.

- I will provide all diapers, clothing, and needed supplies for my dependent while attending Open Arms. I understand that the staff cannot provide these items for my dependent.
- I understand that pictures and film may be taken at Open Arms for the purposes of publicity, pictorial recordings, and identifications. I give my permission for my dependent to be photographed while at Open Arms.
- I understand that the only medications Open Arms will administer are medications that I provide. All medications will be administered by a nurse.
- I authorize Open Arms to administer medical assistance in case of an emergency. I understand that in case of a medical emergency, 911 will be called. Upon arrival, EMS will administer emergency assistance and if necessary, my dependent will be transported to the nearest medical facility for treatment. I understand that I will be contacted immediately by Open Arms staff via the phone numbers I provided at the check-in desk. I understand that I will be responsible for payment of all EMS, hospital, and physician charges for emergency services for my dependent.
- I have fully disclosed to Aldersgate United Methodist Church all pertinent facts about my dependent's special needs and accept full responsibility for failure to do so.
- The Open Arms Ministry and their volunteers are not responsible for any injury which may be suffered by the participant while traveling to, during, or returning from the activity. This ministry has no medical insurance and any costs associated with an injury stemming from or aggravated by this activity will be the responsibility of the participant.

By signing below, I have read and understand the above listed items and agree to hold Open Arms harmless should any such circumstances arise as mentioned above. I authorize Open Arms at Aldersgate United Methodist Church to care for my dependent this afternoon.

Parental/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Coordinator Review: _____ Date: _____

Operational Procedures

*** Attendance**

Open Arms is a 1:30 – 5:30 pm time commitment for our volunteers. Please call the Open Arms Coordinator at (972)841-0355 or (972)492-6891 as soon as possible, if you will be late or need to cancel.

*** Boundaries**

All participants and adults must stay within the designated areas approved for Open Arms. Changes will be reported in the 1:30 pm meeting.

*** Medical Information**

A nurse must administer all medication and medical procedures. All parents/guardians who have medications for their adult/child, or who need to report any changes in medial conditions must speak to a nurse before leaving their dependent.

*** Notification**

Please notify the coordinator, the nurse, and the parents/guardians of any unusual incidents, accidents or changes in behavior or conditions that occur during the course of the afternoon. The nurse should be notified for any emergency. The nurse will contact Carrollton Police and Fire Department for emergencies.

*** Isolated Situations/Restroom Policy**

Do not put yourself in a position where you are alone with one or more participants. There should always be at least two adults present in secluded situations (such as the restroom). This is for the volunteer's protection as well as the participants.

*** Strangers**

Anyone associated with Open Arms must have a nametag. Please refer anyone in the Open Arms area not identified by a nametag to the Open Arms coordinator.

***Food**

Snacks will be provided. The Open Arms Coordinator should be advised of any allergies to food or any conditions, such as diabetes, which would require special food.