

Welcome to

**PRESCHOOL**

Mater Dei Academy  
Preschool Handbook  
2024-2025



MATER DEI ACADEMY PRESCHOOL  
29840 Euclid Ave  
Wickliffe, Ohio  
440-585-0800

## **WELCOME**

It is indeed a pleasure to be able to share in the development of your child. One of the most important issues in the educational world is the instruction of young children. Educational research indicates that the early years are most crucial for learning and that the environment of these years permanently affects the child's total personality.

Therefore, any effective education program begins with the very young child in the family and, then, the school.

The goal of this handbook is to bridge the gap between home and school relationship. We hope it will answer any question you may have. If not, please feel free to contact us. You may reach us through the school office, (440-585-0800) or email.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

The Mater Dei Academy Preschool program operates with the knowledge that:

1. All children placed in an environment designed to challenge, without frustrating, will develop secure and trusting feelings about God, others and the world around them. They, at the same time, will develop a true love for learning, allowing themselves to become free, open and interested learners.
2. All children come as individuals.
3. Children learn in an orderly, continuous and gradual manner. It is our primary goal that your child will grow spiritually, socially, emotionally and intellectually to their fullest potential.
4. Learning takes place as the children are able to freely manipulate the materials and activities available to them, therefore, making the curriculum truly child centered.

## **ADMISSION POLICY**

Mater Dei Academy admits students of any race, color, nationality and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at its school. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of our educational and admissions policies.

Families registering for Mater Dei Academy are encouraged to be active church members. We respect and encourage your religious beliefs and practices. It is impossible to teach religious values, however, unless they are also practiced within the family. Children of registered parishioners are given first preference and non-parishioner children are accepted as space permits.

## **WITHDRAWAL POLICY**

Registration for the Preschool is for the entire school year which is September through May. If it becomes necessary to withdraw your child early, we request one month's notice. The child will be officially withdrawn when the office has been notified in writing.

## **REGISTRATION/PLACEMENT POLICY**

Admission to Mater Dei Academy Preschool is made through formal registration beginning in February.

**Three year old class:** Your child must be three years old on or before September 30. Classes meet Tuesday and Thursdays from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. with a maximum size of 12 with 1 adult/15 with 2 adults. Child must be completely toilet trained, no pullups.

**Four year old class:** Your child must be four years old on or before September 30. Classes meet Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. with a maximum size of 12 with 1 adult/20 with 2 adults. Child must be completely toilet trained, no pullups.

**PreKindergarten class:** Your child must be 4 years old by September 30th. Classes meet Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. with a maximum class size of 14 with 1 adult/20 with 2 adults. Child must be completely toilet trained, no pullups.

**Potty Training Policy per State of Ohio:** Ohio law states that a child must be completely toilet trained and independent in all areas of bathroom hygiene in order to attend a state accredited preschool. Some children may have an occasional accident at this age, however your child will be withdrawn from his/her preschool program if:

- the child is not independent in his/her bathroom hygiene
- or the child has frequent accidents, such as three in one month

**Registration Requirements:** Birth Certificate, Immunization Record, Tuition Deposit, Physical Examination and Baptismal Certificate "if applicable". NOTE: Registration is official once all these requirements are met.

**Medical Requirements:** The State of Ohio Health regulations require children entering school to present documentation of complete immunization per State of Ohio Regulations.

A physical examination for children 3 years or older at the time of admission, shall occur within twelve months prior to the first day of school. An updated physical exam is required every 13 months. **NO CHILD WILL BE ADMITTED TO MATER DEI ACADEMY WITHOUT THESE MEDICAL RECORDS.**

Mater Dei Academy Preschool will accept handicapped and special needs children based on our ability to provide for their needs.

## **STAFF**

Classrooms are staffed with certified/trained teachers and teacher aides. Teachers and aides are continuously updating their certification through various classes and workshops. Parents are encouraged to participate in our program at any time.

## **CURRICULUM**

Through activities at school, it is our purpose to concentrate on the development of the whole child. All equipment, materials, games and toys that are used in the classroom have been carefully chosen so that they are developmentally appropriate for preschool children. The majority of them are designed so that the child is an active learner. In other words, the child will learn through his /her becoming actively involved with the materials. Natural curiosity and individual level of development will lead the child to the materials he or she is ready for. They will be learning every moment that they are at school, whether they are involved in a structured activity or an everyday task. All of our preschool classrooms use the Diocesan Preschool Curriculum.

Our curriculum includes:

### **QUIET PLAY ACTIVITIES**

Art materials and activities: easel painting, clay or playdough, watercolor painting, stencils, markers, chalk, scissors.

### **LANGUAGE ARTS ACTIVITIES**

Reading books and poems, dictating books, rhyming words, finger plays and poetry, talking about pictures, discriminating real from fantasy, alphabet recognition.

Pre-K and Pre-4 uses Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Splash into Pre-K series.

### **MATH ACTIVITIES**

Recognition and ordering of numerals, ordering objects according to size, shape recognition, one-to-one correspondence, measuring, balancing, making sets.

### **SCIENCE ACTIVITIES**

The Pre-K Science Curriculum addresses the areas of scientific inquiry, earth and space science, life science, physical science and science and technology.

### **SOCIAL STUDIES ACTIVITIES**

Field trips and resource persons exploring the world and different cultures, looking back in time, holiday observations.

### ***LIBRARY***

Pres-3/4 and Pre-K have library once a week.

### ***TECHNOLOGY***

Pre-K has technology once a week.

### ***MUSIC***

Pres-3/4 and Pre-K has music once a week.

### ***PHYSICAL EDUCATION***

Pres-3/4 and Pre-K have gym once a week.

### ***ART***

Pre-3/4 and Pre-K have art once a week.

Just as important, is the learning of social skills and the process by which each child learns he/she is a unique individual. This type of learning goes on continually throughout the day as children interact in a positive environment. For a more in-depth explanation of the curriculum, please reference the handout given to you by your preschool teacher.

### **NAP/REST TIME**

In a room where children are napping or resting, if all children are at least eighteen months of age, the maximum number of children per preschool staff member shall, for a period not to exceed one and one-half hours in any twenty-four-hour day, be twice the maximum number of children per preschool staff member established in the Preschool Licensing Rules paragraph (O) of this rule if all the following criteria are met:

- (1) At least one preschool staff member shall be physically present in the room at all times during nap/rest time;
- (2) The preschool staff member(s) assigned to a room where children are napping shall be responsible for the care and supervision of the children in the room and shall be able to summon other child-care staff members without leaving the room.
- (3) There shall be enough preschool staff members readily accessible within the building in which the program is located to ensure that the maximum number of children per preschool staff member as required by the Preschool Licensing Rule paragraph (O) of this rule is met at all times; and

(4) Nap/rest time preparation shall have been completed and all napping children shall be resting or sleeping on blankets and pillows provided from home.

### **QUIET INDEPENDENT CHOICE AND ART ACTIVITY**

Children may use table games, puzzles, books, living center, art supplies, blocks, manipulatives, trucks, science materials.

### **RELIGION**

Christian principles are learned through development of social skills and the process by which each child learns who he/she is as a unique individual. Teachers are certified, through the Diocese of Cleveland, as catechesis for young children. Preschoolers use Christ Our Life Series.

### **STORY TIME**

Children are read or told a story at this time.

### **SNACK TIME**

During this time, after the children have washed their hands and are seated at the table, a prayer is said. All snacks should be nutritious. Pre 3, Pre 4 and Pre Kindergarten parents will provide a daily snack for their child. Good manners are stressed at the snack table. Please DO NOT send snacks that contain any type of nut product.

### **ACTIVE PLAY INSIDE OR OUTSIDE**

During this time the children may use the large blocks, and other large motor equipment while they are inside. Musical games and skill work also take place at this time.

Children are supervised at all times in the classroom and indoor/outdoor play areas while maintaining the required teacher / student ratio.

Each classroom is equipped with an inter-school phone having the capability to make 911 calls. Teachers carry walkie talkies and /or cell phones at all times while indoor/outdoor. The school office is notified prior to any outdoor activities.

### **PREPARING FOR DEPARTURE AND LEAVING CIRCLE**

Children are encouraged to dress themselves and gather their belongings. They will certainly be assisted when necessary.

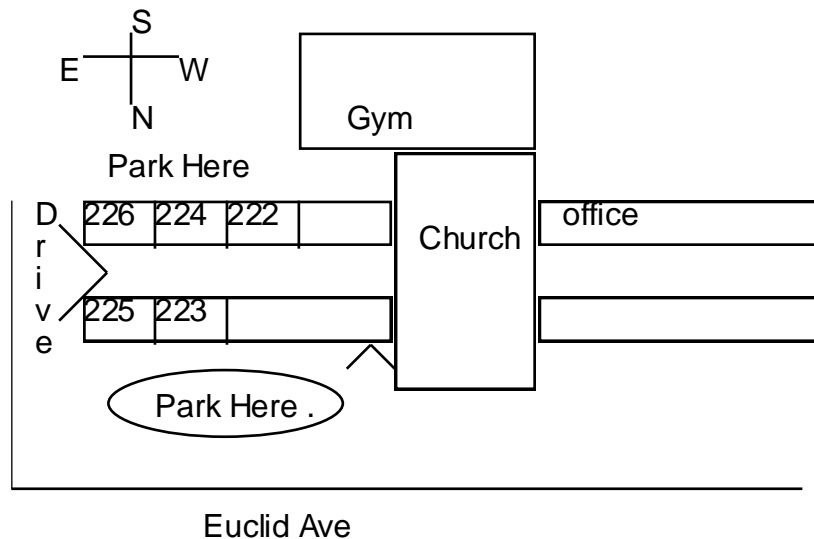
## SAFETY POLICY

First and foremost, no child is ever left alone or unsupervised. They are accompanied to the restrooms as the need arises. We have two responsible adults on the premises at all times.

## TRANSPORTATION

Parents provide their own transportation.

## PARKING



## ARRIVAL

Preschool children will meet the Aides by the drop off door starting at 7:50am. Encourage children to be as self-sufficient as possible regarding the taking off and hanging of coats. **Make sure the teacher knows the child is present before you leave.** Parents are asked to kiss your child good-bye and depart. It is best not to linger. **Doors will be locked at 8:00 a.m. If you arrive after that time you and your child will need to enter via the west front circle door off Mt. Carmel Drive.**

## ARRIVAL

Park behind building and enter by side door (door #5). Doors open at 7:50 for ALL Preschoolers. **DO NOT DROP YOUR PRESCHOOL CHILDREN AT THE GYM DOORS WITH AN OLDER SIBLING. YOU MUST WAIT BY THE PRESCHOOL DOORS. THE AIDE WILL OPEN THE PRESCHOOL DOORS. THERE IS NO SUPERVISION FOR YOUR PRESCHOOL CHILD IN THE GYM.**



## **DISMISSAL**

**Please be prompt at dismissal time.** Preschool parents will park behind building and wait at side door (door #5). The children will be brought out to meet you. The children will be brought out to meet you at 2:00 p.m.

If you are car-pooling, make sure that messages get passed along. Parents are responsible for informing the teacher about how the child will be coming and going home and to whom the child may be released. No child will be released to anyone other than a parent unless we have written permission to do so. If you plan to car pool, one permission slip will suffice for the whole year. (Please be sure that messages get passed along in writing).

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Parents must give written permission for each field trip in the form of the official school field trip form. We ask parents not to bring siblings on the field trips so complete attention can be given to the children assigned to the parent on the trip. (Parents are asked to help with supervision of children.)

## **FIRE AND WEATHER ALERT INSTRUCTIONS**

A fire drill is held once monthly for all staff and students. At the sound of the bell all children must stop what they are doing immediately and line up in a single row at the door and become silent. At this time the teacher will count the children to make sure all are present. Children will exit the building by way of the east door in the hallway. If need be, children will exit by the north or south door in the hallway. All exits are marked by a lighted "EXIT" sign above them. Fire emergency plans are posted in the classroom.

Children will be advised that in the event of a severe weather alert, to stop what they are doing at the signal of the bell. They are to line up quietly in a single row by the door. The teacher will count to make sure that all children are present. Children then move into the hallway and kneel down with their hands covering their heads. Emergency calls, of any nature, may be made at all times on the school's telephone which is located in the school office and in the library. All emergency records and authorizations are kept on file in the school office.

## **YOUR CHILD'S ADJUSTMENT TO PRESCHOOL**

1. Let your child know that the teachers will be available to assist him/her when they need it.
2. Make sure your child has had enough rest the night before school days.
3. **Be prompt** for arrival and dismissal.
4. Plan the morning so that you and your child do not feel rushed.
5. Tell your child your plans for the time period while he/she is at school.
6. Let your child know you will miss him/her.

Each child will be given a transition to preschool plan prior to the first day of school. These transition plans will be created by the teacher and parent to help the child prepare for school. Included in these plans are ideas for families to complete at home to help the transition to school go smoothly.

Once at school, don't be disappointed if responses to your question, "What did you do at school today?" is "Nothing". More appropriate questions might be, "Who did you see at school today?" Some children do not want to share what goes on at school, especially when they are first dismissed or get home, much to your disappointment. Often, throughout the remainder of the day they will excitedly give you bits and pieces of their day at school.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Building good habits is one of the goals toward which we work in Preschool. In helping with this, we urge regular attendance during the year.

It is good for children to get in the habit of coming to school on time. As you well know, children of this age are slow in eating and dressing. This slowness is a phase in child development and should be accepted with patience and understanding. Hurrying a child unduly makes him/her irritable and tense. Before school starts in September it would be wise for you to check the length of time it takes for your child to eat and get ready for school so that on each school day you can plan to allow the necessary time for preparation. The child who arrives at school unhurried and happy usually has a pleasant and satisfying day. Children who arrive tense and unhappy tend to stay that way.

Please be prompt about picking up your child at the end of the session. It is a frightening experience for your child to be the only child still at school. In case of emergencies that delay you, please be sure to phone so that we can explain this to the child.

## **ABSENCE**

Regular attendance is important if a child is to fully benefit from school. If a student is ill and must be absent from school, the parent or guardian must call the Office (440-585-0800) before 9:00 a.m. each day. If the school office is not notified, the home will be called. If going on vacation, **a note must be turned into the teacher before leaving.**

When a child returns to school, a dated excuse written and signed by the parent/guardian specifying the days and dates, and reason for the absence is required by state law for class re-admittance, even though a phone call has been made.

## **SCHOOL CLOSING**

Our Preschool will follow Mater Dei Academy, Willoughby-Eastlake City Schools and /or Wickliffe City School closings due to weather conditions. Please listen for school

closings on local radio and television stations. It will also be announced through One Call and social media.

## **HEALTH AND ILLNESS**

The State of Ohio laws require that each child must be examined by a licensed physician. An Annual Medical form must be signed by your physician and returned to us along with the completed Emergency Medical Form, Medical Health Information Form, and Record of Immunizations. These forms will be on file at the school at all times and should be submitted before admission.

In an emergency situation, we will contact a parent immediately or the persons you have listed on the Emergency Medical Form. Please notify us in writing any change in doctors, phone numbers, other persons to call, or if you plan to be out of town.

If your child shows any sign of illness, please do not send your child to school. Your child should stay at home if he/she was ill during the night, has a sore throat, an upset stomach, diarrhea, a cold, a rash, or could not eat breakfast. We cannot provide supervision for children who cannot go outside. If you feel your child should not play outside due to a cold, etc. please plan to come for him/her early before the class goes outside.

Please remember that it can be an upsetting experience for your child to become ill at school and need to be picked up before the session is over.

### **PLEASE PHONE THE SCHOOL IF:**

- 1. Your child has a contagious disease such as chicken pox, strep throat or scarlet fever.**
- 2. Your child is taking a medication which may cause a behavior change.**
- 3. You will be out of town and someone else is responsible for your child's care.**

We have first-aid supplies on hand at all times and the school has two responsible adults on the premises at all times. At least one of these adults has First Aid Training. All children, teachers, and helpers wash their hands at school after toileting, before food preparation times, and before eating to aid in the control of communicable disease.

State law prohibits us from administering any medication to any student without the signed directive from physician and parent(s). First-aid may be given. **ALL MEDICATIONS MUST BE KEPT IN THE CLINIC ONLY.**

Following are the laws pertaining to the administration of **any** medication to a student.

- 1. MEDICATION** prescribed by a physician for a student **SHALL NOT** be administered to that student unless the designated person **HAS ON FILE** the official written forms (forms are available in the clinic or main office):
  - a. Physician's statement for child to take medication at school,**

- b. Parent statement granting permission for child to take medication at school.
2. All drugs must be received by the person authorized to administer the medication in the container in which they were dispensed by the prescribing physician or licensed pharmacist.

**“Oral” excludes the following: Eardrops, Epi-Pen, Cortisone ointment, creams, eye drops (pink eye).**

\*Your child may bring in cough drops in a labeled bag with written permission from the parent/guardian and will be kept in the clinic. The child may go down to the clinic to take a cough drop as needed.

## **COMMUNICABLE DISEASE POLICY**

All teachers have been trained through the American Red Cross in recognizing signs and symptoms of communicable diseases. One of the teachers will observe all children as they enter their group. The school will notify the parent or guardian by phone of the child’s condition, and he/she must leave school as soon as possible, when the signs or symptoms listed on the chart below are observed.

1. Diarrhea
2. Severe cough
3. Difficult or rapid breathing
4. Yellow skin or eyes
5. Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
6. 100F temperature
7. Infected skin patches
8. Dark urine/gray or white stool
9. Stiff neck
10. Unusual spots or rashes.
11. Sore throat/difficulty swallowing
12. Elevated temperature
13. Vomiting
14. Lice, scabies and other parasites

Children who are suspected of having a communicable disease shall be provided with a cot and blanket and are isolated. They will be within sight and hearing of an adult until a parent or guardian can come for them. No child shall be left alone or unsupervised. All linens are washed after being used. A communicable disease chart published by the Ohio Department of Health shall be posted, at all times for use by parents and teachers.

The children will be readmitted to the school when they are free of symptoms of the disease.

Children must be fever, diarrhea and vomit free for 24 hours. Your child must stay home for 24 hours after he/she is fever free. Please do not give your child medication in the morning if he/she has a fever or stomach issue, by 10:00 a.m. the fever will return

and they must go home. Any student with vomiting and/or diarrhea should be free from symptoms for 24 hours and be able to eat and drink before returning to school. Students should appear healthy and be strong enough to attend classes upon return. This is for the safety of all the children and faculty.

Please make sure we have the most current phone numbers to reach you and that someone is available to pick your child up should he/she become ill during the day.

We feel children who show minor cold symptoms do not necessarily need to be kept from attending school.

A phone call or note from a parent alerting us to minor cold symptoms will help us. In such cases, the child will be observed with the group for worsening conditions. Parents of other children in the school will be notified of exposure to communicable disease by way of a "medical alert notice" by email or book bag mail.

In case of a medical emergency or accident, one teacher will take over the class while the other teacher attends to the child. Parents will be notified at once.

## **DISCIPLINE POLICY**

It is our philosophy that preventative discipline is the best discipline. Our room arrangement, time schedule, watchful eye and availability of teachers can alleviate a situation before other types of discipline intervention are required. Redirecting children to other activities also prevents having to intervene, as does a careful explanation and reinforcement of classroom procedures.

When intervention is appropriate, the teacher, serving as a calm, collected role model helps the child positively verbalize his feelings or the problem. Teachers want the child to know that they understand how they're feeling and to avoid loss of self-esteem. At the same time children are helped to understand how others are feeling.

Our discipline policy consists of a three-fold-approach: Verbal correction in a positive manner; guidance by a staff member; removal from the group, if necessary, by a staff member for a short period of time to a "Thinking Chair" until the child is in control again. Following these methods, a staff member talks with the child and reintroduces the child to the group. Any further action will be decided by a conference between staff member and parent or guardian in order to work together to help the child exercise a sense of responsibility for his own action.

- (1) There shall be no cruel, harsh, corporal punishment or any unusual punishments such as, but not limited to, punching, pinching, shaking, spanking or biting.
- (2) No physical restraints shall be used to confine a child by any means other than holding a child for a short period of time, such as in a protective hug, so the child may gain control.

- (3) No child shall be placed in a locked room or confined in an enclosed area such as a closet, a box or a similar cubicle.
- (4) No child shall be subjected to profane language, threats, derogatory remarks about himself or his family or other verbal abuse.
- (5) Discipline shall not be imposed on a child for failure to eat, failure to sleep, or his family or other verbal abuse.
- (6) Techniques of discipline shall not humiliate, shame or frighten a child.
- (7) Discipline shall not include withholding food, rest or toilet use.
- (8) Separation, when used as discipline shall be brief in duration and appropriate to the child's age and developmental ability and the child shall be within sight and hearing of a preschool staff member in a safe, lighted and well-ventilated space.
- (9) The center shall not abuse or neglect children and shall protect children from abuse and neglect while in attendance in the preschool program.

## **CLOTHING**

School clothes should be play clothes. In order to avoid losing any clothing, be sure to label everything.

It helps children to develop independence if clothing selected can be easily manipulated by themselves.

Before purchasing raincoats, snowsuits, boots and mittens, be sure the child can put them on and remove them easily. The children are encouraged to dress and undress themselves at school. Difficult clothing is often the cause of unfair emotional strain; a child feels inadequate when others can dress themselves and he/she cannot.

Clothing should be appropriate for the weather. We will spend time outdoors on as many days as possible. Once again, it is not possible for one child to stay inside. Rubber soled shoes are the best shoes for the playground. No light up shoes as they cause distractions.

## **REPORTING TO PARENTS**

Each parent can feel free to contact the teacher when assistance is needed with problems or concerns related to our program. Your comments and suggestions are always welcome. Please make an appointment to talk at a time other than right before or after class.

Parents will receive a progress report twice a year. Teachers will complete the progress reports in January and in April. Progress reports will contain information about where

the child is developing, what are their strengths and where there are opportunities for growth. Teachers will partner with parents to develop goals for each child.

Individual conferences between parent and teacher will be held. In talking things over with you, we get an out-of-school picture of what your child is like. We try to supplement this by sharing our observations concerning the child's behavior in school. With the total picture in mind, we can plan together how to give the children the encouragement and support they need in order to develop in the best possible way.

If at any time before this you feel a conference is needed, please feel free to call or stop at school and set up a time.

The parents should check their child's take home folder in their book bag daily for information about the program. You are welcome to take the opportunity to discuss your child's needs and progress with the teacher.

A class roster of all children, with the exception of those whose parent indicate through written request not to be included, will be available.

In addition, weekly newsletters and calendars will keep you informed about the activities at Mater Dei Academy.

## **TUITION**

The yearly tuition is:

3 year olds -	\$1560.00
4 year olds -	\$2700.00
Pre-Kindergarten - All Day	\$5600.00

Tuition payments can be made one of three ways. You can pay your tuition in full, 10 monthly payments or pay half in July and half in January. Payment plans are set-up through Mater Dei Academy in Digital Academy.

## **PARENT PARTICIPATION**

Moms and dads are encouraged and welcome to volunteer throughout the year. Moms' and dads' involvement in their children's educational activities is a real boost for all. Upon entering the premises, parents are required to report to the school office. All in-school volunteers must attend a Virtus class and have a background check. The office can supply details.

## **OMBUDSMAN OFFICE**

There may be occasions when you, as parents, have questions, comments, suggestions, or even a complaint. Please feel free to contact us here at school: teachers or principal (440) 585-0800. We would be happy to meet with you to talk over your concerns.

The Department of Education in Columbus has an OMBUDSMAN office that would gladly entertain questions and concerns: (614) 466-0224.

## **RESOURCES**

Healthchek services are available for families that are eligible for Medicaid. Healthchek is Ohio's Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) Program. It is a service package for babies, kids, and young adults younger than age 21 who are enrolled on Ohio Medicaid.

The purpose of Healthchek is to discover and treat health problems early. If a potential health problem is found, further diagnosis and treatment are covered by Medicaid.

Healthchek covers ten check-ups in the first two years of life and annual check-ups thereafter and offers a comprehensive physical examination that includes:

- Medical history
- Complete unclothed exam (with parent approval)
- Developmental screening (to assess if child's physical and mental abilities are age appropriate)
- Vision screening
- Dental screening
- Hearing assessment
- Immunization assessment (making sure child receives them on time)
- Lead screening; and
- Other services and screenings as needed

If your children are enrolled on Ohio Medicaid, Healthchek services are available to them. If you are younger than age 21 and are also enrolled, you can receive Healthchek services, too.

If you are interested in more information about this service, please visit:

<http://medicaidohio.gov/FOROHIOANS/Programs/Healthchek.aspx>