

He took the child in His arms and said to them, 'Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me. Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.' Mark 9:36,37 and 10:14

WELCOME TO ST. PAUL LUTHERAN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

We heartily welcome you and your child to the St. Paul family. We wish your year to be one filled with happy times of learning, growing, exploring, creating, and discovering.

We look forward to working with you, to help your child develop into the unique individual God intended him to be. We will provide enriching experiences for your child to participate in, and will encourage him to do things for himself...from taking off and hanging up his own coat and cleaning up after his snack, to creating his art projects in his own unique way.

This policy book will provide you with necessary information for the coming year. You will also receive weekly schedules and monthly calendars to keep you informed and connected with the early childhood program.

We encourage your active participation. You are extremely important to your child and to us. Please feel free to contact us at any time about any concerns.

May God bless our year together!

EARLY CHILDHOOD ADMISSION POLICY

All preschoolers must be 3 - 5 years of age by August 1 and toilet trained for admission into the early childhood program. In regard to enrollment, preference will be given to members of St. Paul regarding general enrollment and preference of session until March 1, for the following school year. After March 1, students will be enrolled in the following order based on date of registration.

1. Children of previously enrolled families
2. Children of other Lutheran congregations
3. Children of new tuition families

ST. PAUL EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Our weekly theme units or projects, learning center environments, Project Construct curriculum (described on back page), and parental involvement are designed to enhance a child's growth in six developmental areas:

1. **Spiritual:** Children will learn that God created everything, that He loved them and sent His Son, Jesus, to die for their sins, that He cares about their daily needs, that through faith the Holy Spirit draws them into His family, and that He has prepared a mansion for them in Heaven.
2. **Social/Emotional:** Children need to feel positive about themselves, that they are special and can do things well. They will learn that others are special too, and will respect their feelings and ideas through socially appropriate behavior.
3. **Physical:** Children can discover more about themselves through body movement. Physical well-being and fitness help them develop their fine and gross motor abilities.
4. **Language:** Children will improve their listening skills through hearing and retelling stories, listening to songs, and following directions. Their expressive language will develop through sharing their ideas with others, communicating their needs, singing songs, and acting out stories. Children will also be encouraged in developing their written language skills.
5. **Cognitive** Children will learn problem solving, sorting, classifying and seriating through "hands on" learning experiences. They will also learn more of the world around them, and the community in which they live.
6. **Creative:** Children will create using a variety of materials as a means of self-expression, and self-satisfaction, daily individual or group projects relating to the theme unit we are studying.

EARLY CHILDHOOD HOURS

The early childhood will be in session from 8:00 AM to 11:30 AM on Monday through Thursday mornings and 12:30 PM to 3:00 PM on Monday through Thursday afternoons for the 4-day sessions. The 2-day afternoon sessions for early childhood will meet from 12:30 - 3:00 PM. Children will be admitted to the classrooms after 7:50 AM for the morning session and after 12:20 for the afternoon session. Students will enroll in either morning or afternoon sessions, not both.

We will follow the same school calendar as St. Paul School regarding holidays and snow days. On days in which St. Paul School has designated half days for the elementary school, early childhood will dismiss at 11:30 AM also, and no afternoon sessions will be held.

For weather cancellations, listen to radio stations KREI 800 AM, KTJJ 98.5 FM or KFMO 1240 AM between 6-8:00 AM.

ARRIVAL AND PICK - UP

We ask that you walk into the classroom with your child each day and sign your child in. Please make sure the teacher or aide is in the room when you drop off your child. Children may wait for the morning session to begin in the gym/cafeteria area beginning at 7:30 AM with the supervising teacher.

Please arrange to pick your child up on time and sign him out. Our teachers have other commitments and will not be able to stay after early childhood hours. In case of an emergency in which you're unable to pick your child up on time, please call the school office. Do let us know if someone other than the parents will be picking the child up after school.

VISITS TO EARLY CHILDHOOD

Parents are encouraged to visit the early childhood at any time, announced or unannounced. We would be happy to have you! If you would like to be a helper in the classroom on a regular basis, let the early childhood teacher know.

TUITION

Tuition fees are updated annually and are printed on the registration form. Registration fees are nonrefundable unless the school is unable to enroll your child due to overfull classes. This fee is used to purchase supplies, art materials, learning games, and snack items.

Tuition is due on the first day of each month, and is delinquent after the 15th day of the month. The tuition must be paid by the 15th in order for your child to be able to attend the remainder of the month. Tuition can be mailed or delivered to the school office or given to the early childhood teacher. Checks should be made payable to St. Paul Lutheran Church.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

If a medical emergency should arise during school hours, every effort will be made to contact the parents of the child concerned. But, there may be circumstances that sometimes make this impossible and immediate treatment is necessary. On your emergency form you have given permission for us to take whatever measures necessary for immediate medical care and treatment. Should any changes occur in phone numbers, place of employment, etc., please let us know so that we may be as prepared as possible.

CHANGES IN FAMILY CIRCUMSTANCES

It helps us to better understand and work with your child if you could keep us informed of any major changes that occur at home--a death or serious illness, a parent away from home, a new baby, and so on. You don't need to give details, but can just say that there has been a change in family circumstances. These things do affect a child greatly, and our awareness will help us better care for and understand your child.

ILLNESS

If your child is sick or has a fever, please keep him at home. Please call the school office that morning to let us know of his absence. Should your child become ill at school, you or others listed on your emergency form will be contacted to come and pick him up. If he is well enough to come to early childhood, he is well enough to participate in the regular program, including indoor and outdoor activities. (Tuition is not refunded for absences.)

BRINGING THINGS FROM HOME

We will not have an organized "show and tell" time, but do encourage children to bring something related to the theme of the week as it is appropriate (no more than one item per day, please).

Don't allow your child to bring something too precious to let others touch, or that the possibility of loss or damage would cause great upset. The staff will do their best to take care of shared items, but will not be responsible for replacing them.

Each child will have a cubby in which no other children are allowed to touch their things, otherwise items will be shared. DO NOT send play knives, guns, Power Rangers, or other cartoon characters or other items which encourage violence.

FOOD, GUM, CANDY

The children will prepare or be provided nutritious snacks each day, and will be encouraged to enjoy and appreciate them. In keeping with this policy, please DO NOT send gum or candy to school with your child.

You may be asked to help with a special theme snack occasionally. Parental help is always welcome and appreciated. A sign up sheet will be provided. Parents are encouraged to sign up to bring snacks two or three times during the year, other than their child's birthday.

On your child's birthday (or on a selected date if your child has a summer birthday) we invite you to attend early childhood during snack time, if possible, and provide a special nutritious snack for the class, preferably not cupcakes or candy. Some ideas might be frozen yogurt or ice cream, fruit roll-ups, fresh fruit and dip, etc. If you need ideas check with the early childhood teacher for some recipe books you may borrow.

DISCIPLINE

Our philosophy of discipline is "teaching the child what behavior is appropriate and acceptable." Explaining to a child why his or her particular behavior is inappropriate provides an opportunity for the child to learn how to function acceptably with others. The child is encouraged in an alternate behavior and sent back into the situation to practice the new behavior. We will try to be positive and consistent in following the early childhood rules. If serious misbehavior occurs, parents will be notified. If that behavior continues, a conference with the parents will be scheduled, and the principal will be consulted. Corporal punishment is not practiced.

FIELD TRIPS

We try to plan field trips to expand and enhance a child's understanding of our project/thematic unit. To be able to take these trips, parents are needed to provide transportation or supervision as we walk to our destination. You may indicate your willingness to accompany us on the information form. We would greatly appreciate it! We usually end the year with an all day trip inviting parent to join us. Triple C (if funds are available) will provide buses for us for this trip.

Occasionally, all class sessions will be invited to participate in a field trip on the same day. If this is not your child's regular day to attend early childhood he or she may join us if accompanied by a parent. A field trip may be canceled if we don't have enough parents to transport or supervise safely.

CLOTHING

In order for your child to be comfortable and eager to participate in all activities, we ask that he wear comfortable clothing that cannot be harmed by paint, spilled food, or soil.

Play shoes with rubber soles are also necessary. It is very difficult to run and climb in cowboy boots, slippery soled dress shoes, or thongs, so please leave these at home.

Label each item that will be taken off and on, such as boots, hat, mittens, scarf, coat, etc. with child's name.

Please dress your child warmly on cold days. We will play outside weather permitting. In case of rain or extreme cold, we will play in the gym.

COMMUNICATION

Our goal is to keep you informed of and an active participant in the early childhood program. This will be done through weekly schedules and the school newsletter (sent home on Thursday). An early childhood newsletter and calendar of monthly activities will be sent home at the beginning of each month. Other information will be posted on the early childhood news board immediately outside the school classroom.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Formal conferences will be scheduled in the spring after developmental screening has been completed. However, if you have any questions or concerns, the staff will always be happy to talk with you.

DAILY SCHEDULE

Each week or series of weeks, we will focus our learning on one theme or project. Songs, stories, projects, experiments, Bible stories, and even snacks will center around that one theme. The first two weeks of early childhood will be spent getting acquainted with our daily routine, investigating the various learning centers, and getting to know each other. Not only will we emphasize the care of the equipment and the early childhood rules, but also discuss the creative possibilities of each center.

To help the children adjust more easily, only half of the class at a time, will attend school during the first week. A schedule will be mailed to you before the beginning of the school year.

It will help the children if they know what to expect during the early childhood day. Please use this flexible schedule as a guide to share with your child what will happen at school each day.

FREE CHOICE LEARNING CENTERS

As the children arrive, they may become involved in any of the dozen learning centers, and freely move from one to another as their interest directs. The children will "plan" their free choice time when they arrive, and later share how they completed their plan or, they may choose to help the teachers with a special projects as they plan for the day. Pre-kindergarten students will use a portion of this time to write in their journals about something they have been learning.

OPENING ROUTINE, STORY AND JESUS TIME

We will gather in the Big Group Center for the calendar, weather, and name board. The calendar is used to learn the days of the week, counting, and remembering what we have studied. We also watch for special days that are approaching. The name board will have individual cards with each child's name on them. As the names are called or recognized (as the children learn to read) they will be placed by the child on the "school" side. If someone happens to be sick at home, we hang their name on the "home" side.

We will remain in the Big Group Center to share a Bible story or Jesus message. The story will

tie in with the theme of the week. (For example, when studying rain, rainbows and wind, we will learn about Noah and the ark.) The theme of the week will also be discussed and a story or other activity will be shared.

SMALL GROUP LEARNING/PROJECT TIME

We will divide the class in half for project time. The aide will work with one group and the early childhood teacher will work with the other. This is the time to discuss the theme of the week, work experiments, and do special art projects or demonstrations.

SNACKS

The snack routine will usually include preparation of the snack by the child or sharing a snack brought from home. The routine will include the child washing his hands and getting his glass with his name on it. Crackers with peanut butter will be our 'stand by' snack if nothing else is scheduled. As a class we may cook a snack that relates to our theme - bake bread, fry a pancake, make a fruit salad, etc. Each child will throw away his napkin, put his cup in a dishpan to be washed, and clean up his own mess.

GROSS MOTOR TIME

During nice weather we will play outside, either on our playground equipment, or in a group game. If it is raining or too cold, we will go to the gym for games or free play.

CLOSING ROUTINE, STORY AND DISMISSAL

All preschoolers and toddlers will join in the Big Group Center for stories, videos, dramatizations, songs, dancing, marching, playing rhythm instruments, or whatever activity ties in with our weekly theme.

We ask that parents arrange to pick their children up BY 11:30 AM for those attending the morning session and 3:00PM for those attending the afternoon session. Check with the teacher or the aide to make sure your child has everything they need to take home. Most take-home items will be put in his cubby.

PROJECT CONSTRUCT

This curriculum format has been designed for use in early childhood education by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and Center for Educational Assessment, University of Missouri-Columbia. It is a process-oriented curriculum and builds upon the way that young children learn.

SOCIOMORAL DOMAIN

Social Relationships

- Build relationships of mutual trust and respect with adults.
- Build relationships with peers.
- Consider the perspectives of others.
- Negotiate and apply rules.

Dispositions

- Be curious.
- Take initiative.
- Be confident.
- Be creative.

COGNITIVE DOMAIN

Logico-Mathematical Knowledge

- Discover the various ways things may be classified.
- Order things according to relative differences.
- Construct numerical relationships.
- Construct spatial and temporal relationships.

Physical Knowledge

- Act on object and observe reactions.
- Act on objects to produce desired effects.

Conventional Knowledge

- Know personal information.
- Know about the community.
- Know conventional notations, manners, and customs.

REPRESENTATIONAL DOMAIN

Symbolic Development

- Represent ideas and feeling, through pretend play, movement, music, art and construction.

Language Development

- Use language for a variety of functions.
- Expand and refine the form and organization of language.
- Construct meaning from language.
- Represent ideas and feelings through language.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENTAL DOMAIN

Motor Skills

- Develop motor skills for personally meaningful purposes.

Health and Safety

- Develop healthy living practices.

