

Early Childhood Parent Handbook

ST. PAUL'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SCHOOL

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2014-2015 School Year

Welcome

God's love knows no racial bounds; therefore no racial distinctions or prejudices will be tolerated in St. Paul's School. St. Paul's will admit students of any race, color, nationality or ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at this school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, nationality or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admission policy or other school programs

Forward

This handbook has been prepared for the purpose of acquainting parents with St. Paul's Early Childhood Enrichment Center. We hope that it will answer some of the questions you may have concerning our routine and procedures. This is but one of the many ways that we can come to know each other better. Our staff hopes that we can work together very closely in the Christian education of your child. Because this is only a handbook, some of your questions may not be answered. If you still have unanswered questions, please let us know. Your interest will be interpreted as a concern and love for your child.

May the Lord bless your joint efforts to feed His lambs, your children, the Bread of Life.

Program Goals

St. Paul's Christian Education Program exists for the purpose of aiding and assisting parents in their God-given command, "Bring your children up in the training and instruction of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4), and serving the Christian Church by teaching God's Word and making disciples. This school is dedicated to the purpose of preserving and strengthening the Christian Church so that the Gospel of Christ can be spread effectively from generation to generation.

To this end, children attending our Early Childhood program will daily hear the truths of God's inspired word, the Bible. They will also be offered a wide variety of activities that will work to develop the whole child: spiritually, physically, intellectually, socially, emotionally and creatively. We will establish a program that reflects the developmental level of each child through active and quiet, individual and group, and indoor and outdoor activities. We believe in providing a program that offers a warm, nurturing environment with varied educational experiences.

All training and instruction will be designed with the intent of *"Touching Tender Hearts with the Love of God"*, so that faith in Jesus, our Savior, will be strengthened.

Our Objectives

1. Daily opportunities to hear and apply God's Word as it is taught in its truth and purity. (Spiritual Development)
2. An educational experience in a Christian environment that will provide developmentally appropriate

activities in basic language arts, communication skills, science, math and reading readiness. (Intellectual Development)

3. Daily opportunities to develop large and small motor skills. (Physical Development)
4. Daily opportunities to develop social skills which are based upon Christ-centered, God-pleasing principles of love and concern for each other's safety and well-being. (Social Development)
5. An atmosphere in which each child can feel accepted and loved as a redeemed child of God. (Emotional Development)
6. Daily opportunities to develop self-expression through art, music and movement. (Creative Development)

We believe in fostering positive parent/teacher relationships by providing daily opportunities for interaction. We encourage involvement and open and honest communication.

Our Program

We will provide daily opportunities to help children see the wonder of life around them in a safe and loving environment. We believe that young children learn best through play and "hands-on" experiences. Our program is based on a thematic approach through the use of learning centers. Our students will explore and discover appropriate concepts in the areas of God's Word, science and the senses, math and reading readiness, dramatic play, block play, language, art and music. In addition to learning centers, large and small group activities will enhance individual needs through Bible stories, games, movement and FUN!!

Below, is an overview of the various learning centers that are found in our classrooms.

The Worship Center: We help children discover themselves as a person who is a loved and redeemed child of God. We provide daily opportunities for the children to hear Bible stories, learn prayers and memory treasures. Materials in this center reinforce the basic Bible truths that are presented at Jesus Time through our Christ Light curriculum.

The Art Center: The art center provides the children with unstructured activities to encourage freedom of expression. Art in this form helps to develop creativity, fine muscle control, language skills and a sense of personal accomplishment. Activities may include cutting, drawing, painting and printing, collage, gluing and three dimensional art.

The Block Center: Our block center encourages creativity by allowing children to take apart, sort, stack and assemble various materials. When children play with blocks, they learn about shape, pattern, and concepts like tall/short and above/below. They develop sorting and classifying skills, large and small motor control, visual memory and an understanding of the world around them. When children use blocks together, they learn to share and cooperate.

Carpet Toys: The materials in this center are meant to enhance small and large motor development, thinking skills and cooperative play. The children have a chance to "spread out" and build with their imaginations.

Materials such as floor puzzles, Legos and other building toys give the children the freedom to explore and manipulate. Language skills are encouraged as friends work together to complete a project.

Dramatic Play: Our dramatic play center encourages children to interact with each other. It also stimulates language skills and self-expression. Imagination and creativity are developed when children create make-believe situations and roles. The dramatic play center may be a dress-up area, pumpkin farm, airport, living room skating pond, puppet theater, campsite or restaurant, etc.

The Manipulative Center: Manipulatives help a child develop eye-hand coordination and visual perception skills. Freedom to count or sort objects, string beads, play a memory game or build with pattern blocks helps to develop math concepts such as sets, patterns, number, seeing likenesses and differences and perception of space and shape. Activities and materials in this center are based on the Mathematics Their Way curriculum. Small muscle development is also encouraged as the children manipulate small objects.

The Reading Center: Our reading center helps to promote language and reading readiness skills. Children will also develop an appreciation for quality literature and hopefully a love for reading. This center includes a cozy area to sit and read or review stories read at Group Time. Materials include books related to the theme of the month, basic skills or just for fun stories.

The Science Center: The science center helps children explore the world around them through the use of their five senses. The activities in this center are designed to stimulate cognitive development by encouraging children to reason, analyze, explore and classify. Areas of study may include magnets and mirrors, sound, simple machines, water, air and materials from nature. The sensory table is also part of the science center. It allows the children to explore various materials; discovering properties of rice, water, sand, salt, etc.

The Writing Center: The writing center encourages exploration with letters and how they are formed. Alphabet games, stamps and stencils are the tools we use for beginning writing. This center promotes awareness of the written word and provides practice with name writing, lists, vocabulary and even fine motor skills. As time goes on, children will become more adept at letter writing and understanding the connection between the spoken word and the written word.

As stated earlier, our curriculum is based on a thematic approach. That means that each month's activities center on a specific theme. Below is an overview of this year's monthly themes.

September: Hooray For School
October: Fabulous Fall
November: I Am Thankful
December: Our Savior is Coming
January: Winter Wonderland
February: The Wild, Wild West
March: Up, Up and Away
April: Spring Has Sprung
May: Happy Trails

In addition, the following activities are part of our classroom experiences:

Letter of the Week: We will focus on a specific letter of the alphabet each week. Activities, songs and writing practice will help the children recognize and name each letter. In Junior Kindergarten, the “Letter People” will also make an appearance.

Color and Shape of the Month: Each month there will be two days set aside to celebrate a specific color or shape. Your monthly calendar will indicate those days.

The following activities are part of the Junior Kindergarten class:

List of the Week: The children will be asked to answer a question that is related to our theme. This is a language activity and will give us a chance to share opinions and make decisions.

Graph of the Week: Again, a question will be asked with the answer being recorded in graph form. As a math activity, it allows the children to grasp the concept of more and less.

Snack: The children will make their own snack, usually once a week. Most of the time the snack will correlate with that day’s theme and aids in math, science skills and decision making.

Family Project: We want to encourage our families to spend some time together on a project that will be done at home and brought to school.

A Sample Morning Schedule

8:30-8:45 Welcome Activity, Learning Centers

8:45-9:15: Jesus Time

9:15-9:30 Bathroom Break, Prepare for Outside

9:30-9:50 Outside or Large Muscle Activities in the School Gym or Classroom

9:50-9:55: Wash Hands for Snack

9:55-10:10 Snack

10:05-10:30: Large Group Activities, Theme-related fun, Language Experiences

10:30-11:10: Learning Centers, Art, Dramatic Play, Science/Sensory, Language/Literacy, Blocks, writing, Planned Art Activity, Small Group Experiences

11:10-11:15: Clean Up

11:15-11:45: Letter of the Week, Games, Stories, Songs, Wrapping up our Day

11:45: Meet your caregiver in the Hallway for Pick-Up, or Spend Your Afternoon in Extended Care

* Please Note: Our schedule is subject to change due to field trips and other special activities.

St. Paul's Lutheran School
Early Childhood Enrichment Center
Phone: (414) 421-1833 Principal: Mr. Nathan Schulmeister

3-Year-Old Preschool Teachers: Mrs. Patti Krizan and Ms. Dawn York
Junior Kindergarten Teachers: Mrs. Nancy Willms and Mrs. Mary Tripoli
Extended Care Teachers: Ms. Dawn York

St. Paul's Early Childhood Enrichment Center is a part of St. Paul's Lutheran School. We serve families with children age 3 through 8th grade. In order to accommodate family schedules, we provide extended care in the early morning and through the afternoon. Our hours are: 6:30 AM - 6:00 PM, Mondays through Fridays.

Eligibility: In order to enroll, children must be 3 or 4 years old by September 1st of that year. Children not turning 3 by September 1 will need to re-enroll in preschool the following year in order to meet the September 1 requirement for Junior Kindergarten. Children **MUST** be potty trained. Extended care is available for children enrolled in our preschool. After school care is available for children enrolled in St. Paul's School.

Arrival and Dismissal: Preschool and Junior Kindergarten begin promptly at 8:30 AM. We highly recommend that your child arrives 10-15 minutes before that time. This will give him/her a chance to say good-bye to you and to settle into the classroom before we begin our day. Separation can be difficult for some children. It's best to leave quickly after hugs and goodbyes. Sessions end at 11:45 AM. Your teachers will escort the children to the main hallway for pick-up.

Reminder: Please call the school if your child will be absent (421-1833)

What to Wear: Sometimes children work on messy art projects, or during snack, things get spilled. It is important that your child wears comfortable and washable clothing to school. Also, please dress your child in clothing that he/she can manage easily, especially in the bathroom. Shoes should be comfortable with closed toes for outside play. Sandals or shoes without heel support are not safe for tiny feet. Flip-flops are not allowed. Please make sure your child's outdoor clothing is appropriate for the weather. We do go outside every day, weather permitting. Hats and mittens are necessary when the weather is chilly and boots and snow pants are a must in the snow.

Discipline: Effective discipline stems from careful planning and consistency. Your child's teacher will strive to develop a positive relationship with each individual and redirect unacceptable behavior. Proper Christian discipline will be maintained and exercised in a loving manner in keeping with the Gospel. Therefore, our form of discipline will not be physical, emotional or demeaning in any way, but will always seek to use the loving example of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Teachers use a variety of positive guidance techniques, and consequences are developed which are immediate, consistent and logical. When positive discipline and guidance are not effective, a parent/teacher/administrator conference will be held to determine the need for further intervention. Your

teachers will regularly communicate with you, the parent regarding any behavior concerns.

Toys from Home: Please discourage your children from bringing personal toys to school. It is difficult for them to share these possessions and conflicts with tears result. We also would not like to see anything become broken or lost. We will have special days throughout the year when you will be asked to bring in theme-related items. In short, we need to keep “home toys” at home and “school toys” at school. Thank you for your help in this matter.

** Note:* Children who stay for extended care may, however, bring one stuffed sleeping “buddy”, a small blanket and a crib sheet to be used at rest time. These items will be stored in your child’s nap cubby.

Parent Involvement: As parents, it is important to keep aware of classroom “happenings”. We would like you to work closely with your child’s teacher in order to make your experience here the best possible. Please:

- Check your child’s backpack DAILY
- Read your weekly newsletter for new information.
- Inform your child’s teacher if there are any changes at home that may affect your child’s behavior at school
- Watch for field trip information and return permission and payment on time.
- Arrive at school promptly and call us before 8:30 if your child will be absent.
- Make tuition payments on time (on or before the 15th of each month). Extended Care payments are due each Monday.
- Tell us of any changes of address, phone numbers, immunizations, etc., so our files are up to date.

Birthdays: You are welcome to send a treat for your child’s birthday. Check with us as to the number of students attending that day. Please keep the treats simple and ready for distribution (individualized). Also keep in mind that our classrooms are **peanut-free** due to allergies. Children who have birthdays in the summer months will celebrate on their “half” birthday.

Snack: Each class includes a daily snack in its schedule. Please send in 1 large box of crackers (pretzels, grahams, goldfish, microwave popcorn, etc.) and a large bottle of juice at the beginning of each month--enough to feed 24 children. There is a refrigerator, microwave and toaster in or near the classrooms. Please inform us of any food allergies your child might have.

Field Trips: During the year, we will go on several field trips. You will receive information as each planned trip approaches. There is an additional cost and payment is expected before the trip and separate from your tuition check. If we have not received the payment and a completed permission slip by the day of the trip, your child may not be permitted to go. Chaperons are limited to 6 per class.

Illnesses: You will be contacted if your child becomes ill at school. You will be required to pick him/her up within one (1) hour of notification. Your child may return to school when he/she is free of symptoms for 24 hours. Some reasons for pick-up could be, but are not limited to: fever of 101 degrees or more, flu-like symptoms (vomiting), and diarrhea. Please help us to contain these illnesses by keeping your child home when he/she is ill. NOTE: We go outside to play EVERY DAY and all children are expected to participate. If your child is too ill to go outside, he/she is too ill to be at school. Fresh air does not cause illness.

Medication Policy: When it is a necessity that a student receive medication at school:

1. A written parental request must be received before any medication is administered. Medication forms are available from your child's teacher.
2. Medication **MUST** be in its original container and plainly labeled with the child's name, dosage and time to be given.
3. Medications are **NOT** to be in the child's possession.
4. All medications will be kept in a safe place out of children's reach.
5. Any medication that is administered will be recorded in the ECEC medical log.
6. If medication is brought to school without written parental consent, the medication will not be administered and will be returned to the parent.

Extra Clothes: Please make sure your child has a set of extra clothes at school. Include the following: Shirt and pants (appropriate for the season), 2 pairs of underwear and 2 pairs of socks. It's nice to have a set of clean clothes if and when spills occur. **PLEASE LABEL EACH PIECE OF CLOTHING WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME** and replace any used items. The extra clothing will be kept in a provided basket and will be stored near your child's coat hook.

Admission and Discharge Policy: St. Paul's Lutheran School is operated by St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church and practices the teachings of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. As such, all programs, activities and educational philosophies will strive to display and communicate the love of God as seen in His only Son, Jesus Christ. While our school will not discriminate against anyone because of race, color, nationality or ethnic origin, it is both logical and necessary to require all children to participate in Christian devotional activities, Bible stories, prayers and songs as practiced and taught by St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church.

St. Paul's Early Childhood program reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of a child for the following reasons:

1. Non-payment or excessive late payment of fees and tuition. Please refer to our payment policies and procedures found on the back of your Tuition Price List.
2. A child has special needs which St. Paul's cannot meet.
3. We do have at our disposal the expertise and resources of our local public schools and they are available to evaluate and refer children for their early childhood programs. If your child's teacher observes that an individual may need additional help in speech and language, learning difficulties or other developmental areas, she will, with the parent's knowledge, recommend that an evaluation be done by these professionals. It is then the parent's responsibility to follow through with any recommendations that are made and to make every effort to work with the school to give their child the help he/she may need.
4. Physical and/or verbal abuse of teacher or children by parent or child.
5. Verbal abuse is defined as: Foul, vulgar, abusive language or gestures, language intended to belittle, degrade, intimidate, threaten, or language that includes words denoting race, ethnicity, gender or disability which cause fear or physical or mental distress.

Singing in Church: Several times during the school year, we have the privilege to sing during church services. This is a wonderful way for your child to share the Gospel message with others. Please make an effort to attend these special days.

Family Devotions: Parents are to be active partners in the Christian Education of their children. It is essential for spiritual growth of the family that they pray and study God's Word together. Parents are therefore encouraged to have a regular plan for family devotions. A good place to start is by sharing and discussing the Christ Light materials that are sent home from our Jesus Time studies.

School and Emergency Closings: In the event that hazardous weather, very heavy snow or other emergencies make it necessary to call off school, an announcement will be made over the local television stations. Listen for the announcements for St. Paul's Lutheran School--Franklin. Also, when Franklin Public Schools are closed, so is St. Paul's.

Extended Care: In order to accommodate our families' schedules, the St. Paul's Early Childhood Enrichment Center is open Mondays through Fridays from 6:30 AM - 6:00 PM. Care beyond the Preschool and Junior Kindergarten hours (extended care) is available at an extra charge. Please see your child's teachers for more information. The Early Childhood Enrichment Center follows the same calendar as St. Paul's School. You will receive a calendar of days off at the beginning of the school year.

Extended Care is not available on days when school is not in session.

We will be CLOSED on the following days:

August 29: Labor Day Weekend

September 1: Labor Day

October 30 and 31: State Teacher's Conference

November 7: Parent/Teacher Consultations

November 27 and 28: Thanksgiving

December 24 through January 2: Christmas Break

February 5 and 6: Winter Break

March 5 and 6: Metro Teacher's Conference

March 27: Parent/Teacher Consultations

April 3: Good Friday

April 6 through 10: Easter Break

May 25: Memorial Day

General Information

1. Tuition checks and extended care payments may be given directly to your child's teacher or dropped off in the school office in the "Tuition Payment" box. Monthly payments are due on or before the 15th of each month. Extended Care payments are due each Monday. Tuition may also be paid in full at the beginning of the school year. Checks should be made out to:
2. Label ALL personal belongings with your child's name.
3. Please notify your child's teacher before 8:30 AM if your child is going to be absent.
4. Escort your child to his/her classroom upon arrival and make be sure to make contact with your child's teacher. At dismissal, wait for your child's teachers to bring him/her to the main hallway. Encourage your child's independence, but give the necessary assistance when arriving and departing from school.
5. We will have periodic Show and Tell days, usually in correlation to our themes. Items that represent weapons or violence will not be allowed at any time.
6. DO NOT leave your car running when you drop off and pick up your child. This is illegal and extremely dangerous. Other children should NOT be left in the car. Please use designated parking spaces. The area in front of the school doors is a NO PARKING zone--even for drop offs.
7. Please inform us with a note or phone call if another person is picking up your child from school. ID will be required.

Parents Ask...

There are no tests or grades in Preschool or Junior Kindergarten, but that doesn't mean we aren't noticing how your child is doing. We will be providing general assessments 4 times a year (November, January, March and May). There also will be 2 parent/teacher conferences scheduled on November and March for the Junior Kindergarten class. In the midst of your child's play, he/she is developing important skills and mental abilities. Here's what we will be looking for when we evaluate your child:

Word of God: Does your child listen attentively at Jesus Time, retell a story, participate in discussions, and demonstrate knowledge of basic Bible Truths?

Social Development: Does your child play well with other children? How does she respond to conflict? Can she take turns? Stand up for herself? Does she feel comfortable asking for help when she needs it?

Language Development: Does your child listen to a short story, follow directions, ask questions, repeat songs and finger plays, know his first and last name, speak effectively in short conversations, exhibit and interest in reading?

Cognitive Development: Can your child identify basic shapes and colors, sort objects, distinguish between

fantasy and reality, count to 10 or higher, detect a pattern, predict outcomes, recognize likenesses and differences in objects identify and name letters of the alphabet, begin to understand number concepts?

Motor Development: Does your child run, jump skip, gallop and climb easily and with coordination? Does your child have good control using a pencil, paintbrush, crayons and puzzles?

Emotional Development: How does he handle transitions during the day? If he cries when Mom leaves, does he bounce back quickly? Does he cry much during the day? Does he take responsibility for his actions?

Attention Span: Can your child sit still during story time? Does she concentrate for long periods of time when building with blocks (or another activity), or does she move quickly from one area to another?

Hygiene/Self Help: Can your child dress himself, begin to show an interest in tying shoes, use the bathroom independently, take care of toys, show responsibility for personal possessions?

What Did You Do In School Today?

Your child has been at school for three hours of more and you are dying to hear what he or she has been doing all that time away from you. Did he behave himself? Was she happy? Does he have friends to play with? Is she learning what she needs to learn?

You are not alone. All parents are curious about these things. But the information is usually hard to obtain. Children may decline to answer or say that they don't remember or give you the dreaded, "Nothing".

How can you find out what you want to know? What's the best way? Here are a few thoughts and ideas to help you better communicate with your child about school.

When you pick up your child from school, the child is in reunion mode. He's feeling relieved that someone did come back for him. It's a transition time and transitions are difficult for young children. They can use a hug, not questions about their day.

Put yourself in the child's place. After working all day, what do you want members of your family to say to you? Would you be happy if the first thing you heard was, "What did you do today?" We all need some time to unwind and relax before we even want to think about the day's activities.

The first thing to do with your child is to spend some time together again before you begin asking questions. Your child may start to tell you things that went on in school without any prodding. If you need to ask questions, make them specific: "Did you sing Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star?", "Did you have crackers for snack today?". You can even try a little humor: "Did a dinosaur come to school today?"

Reading your weekly newsletter will help you to ask pertinent questions about your child's day.

Play can elicit information as well. Children love to play school and will act out situations they have experienced themselves. They love to pretend to be the teacher. You can learn a lot about how they view their school experience by listening carefully to this pretend play.

Remember, our curriculum is based on play. Be happy when your child tells you he/she played that day and know that a whole lot of learning was going on.

If you have serious concerns about your child, it is best to voice them directly to your child's teachers. But it is important to do that the right way. Most importantly, you should always speak to the teacher in private.

Never ask a teacher about a child in front of the child.

Too often, teachers are put on the spot. A parent picking up a child will ask if he was a good boy that day. The child is standing right there listening for the answer, carefully scrutinizing the teacher's words, tone of voice and facial expression. He wonders if he was a good boy or not. He may wonder what will happen if the teacher answers in the negative.

From a teacher's point of view it is a difficult question to answer. What do you want to know and why? She knows that the child is listening and watching and does not want to talk about him as if he weren't there and she is also trying not to be rude to you. Sometimes there are other parents and children listening as well, making the situation even more difficult.

Parent/Teacher communication is considered to be extremely important at St. Paul's Lutheran School. Conferences are scheduled twice a year in Junior Kindergarten and upon request in Preschool. Parents are encouraged to communicate with the teachers whenever they have questions or concerns about their children. Parents should call the teacher, e-mail, send a note or verbally ask to schedule a conference.

It is also important for parents to remember to communicate with teachers about issues that might affect their children's performance in school such as an illness or death in the family or a move to a new home. Upcoming events such as a new baby, a wedding in the family or out-of-town visitors can also affect a child's behavior.

We at St. Paul's strive to create an environment where your child can feel comfortable, safe and loved. We cannot do that without our partnership with you, the parents.

...encourage one another and build each other up... 1 Thessalonians 5:11

What's in Your Backpack?

What's in your backpack?
It's empty today.
Where's your work?
Did you just play?

Out on the playground
I ran like the wind.
I learned to take turns
And helped a hurt friend.

In science I observed,

When I built with blocks
I learned about shapes
I balanced and shared-
Our skyscraper was great.

I played in the windy house
And talked with my friends.
I rocked a baby
And played pretend

Guessed and experimented, too.

The same things grown up
Scientists do.

Art was messy
I created and explored.
I solved my own problem
When I spilled glue on the floor

My fingers got a work out
With puzzles and clay.
Those same muscles
Will help me write one day.

I counted and sorted
And measured, too.
I used my brain
Like a math whiz would do!

Story time is what
I always like best.
I can use my imagination
And give my body a rest.

I sang and danced-
Learned a finger play, too.
I answered questions
and said, "Please" and "Thank you."

There will be time
For worksheets and tests
But talking and playing
Is how I learn best.

I love to go to school.
I'm glad I'm me.
An empty backpack
Means I'm learning, you see!