

St. Paul's Lutheran Early Childhood Center



Parent Handbook Policies and Procedures

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St. Paul's Lutheran Early Childhood Center

WELCOME TO ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER!

St. Paul's Lutheran Early Childhood Center (SPLECC) serves children from 6 weeks to 5 years of age, it is licensed by the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services. The center serves families Monday – Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. from the Council Bluffs and Omaha areas. The program's goal is to provide a Christ-centered, high quality preschool program meeting each child's needs, including children with disabilities and those from a diverse background.

Mission:

St. Paul's Lutheran Early Childhood Center is committed to *excellence* by providing a Christ-centered learning environment for children and families.

Philosophy

We believe:

- children, their families and the community benefit from high-quality early childhood programs.
- serving the needs of young children by providing a high quality, culturally diverse early childhood program within a safe, nurturing Christian environment promotes learning.
- there is a critical link between a child's early experiences and later success in life.
- children learn best through their play, interactions and experiences.
- innovative learning activities and various teaching strategies enhance learning.
- effective learning produces life-long skills.
- leaders should never lose sight of best practices.
- teaching the importance of citizenship benefits the school and the community.
- productive discipline incorporates control, consistency, and care.
- memorable and enjoyable activities foster learning.
- school, home and community cooperation facilitates and reinforces learning.

Goals for Children:

- Children will grow in their faith, knowing that Jesus loves them.
- Children will show competency in social/emotional, physical, cognitive, and language development skills.
- Children will be enthusiastic and curious learners.
- Children will be safe and healthy.

Goals for Families:

- Families will feel welcome in the classroom.
- Families will work with the school in a meaningful partnership to help their children be better prepared to learn.
- Families will advocate for their children.

Goals for SPLECC:

By the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit, St. Paul's Lutheran Early Childhood Center staff will:

- provide a loving and developmentally appropriate environment to encourage each child to grow spiritually, socially, emotionally, physically, cognitively and creatively.
- nurture developmental readiness skills to ensure a successful kindergarten experience.
- provide experiences in Christian living both in formal settings such as the classroom or chapel time, and informal settings such as the playground and free time.
- offer opportunities to explore individual interests and differences through multi-sensory activities.
- provide experiences outside the school setting to further explore principles and concepts learned in class.
- encourage children and their families to accept God's unconditional love as it is experienced through His Word and the loving, caring staff at SPLECC.
- maintain ongoing communication between parents and teachers through newsletters, parent meetings/conferences and other parent participation opportunities.

Access of Information

SPLECC has insured that all parents can access information and clearly understand the content of this handbook and information regarding center policies and procedures. All efforts will be made to provide services of an interpreter, translator, or any other special needs required by our families enrolled. Agencies that will be contacted may include Green Hills AEA and/or Iowa School for the Deaf.

Accident Reports

Whenever a child is injured, an accident report will be completed for the parent to sign and the parent will receive the white copy. A duplicate of the written notice will be placed in the child's file (yellow copy).

Parents or legal guardians will be notified immediately of any serious injury. Prompt arrangements will be made for medical treatment. In the event, the parent cannot be contacted; prior authorization for emergency treatment will allow the child to be treated.

In the event that your child receives a minor, non-life threatening injury during their time at preschool, our teachers will assess the situation and apply first aid as needed. Minor cuts and scrapes will be treated with soap and water and bumps will be treated by applying ice to the injured area. Any incident or injuries will be documented on a "Child Injury/Incident Report" form and a copy will be given to the parent within 24 hours of the incident.

Allergies

1. Parents would need to indicate their child's allergy on the child's Emergency Information and Medical Consent form. An Allergy Action Plan should be signed by the child's doctor.
3. Parents would need to keep the child's teacher and the director informed of any changes or concerns regarding the child's allergy.
4. Parents who have a child in class, where a child with a life-threatening allergy is present, would need to send in snacks that do not contain the allergic ingredients. Parents would also need to refrain from bringing in things containing the allergic material (e.g. dogs, cats, hamsters, etc.).
5. Parents would need to work closely with the staff to achieve the overall goal of helping their child become independent in identifying allergic situations that they need to avoid.

A child needs to have a doctor's note specifying an allergy or intolerance to a food in order for a certain snack food to be avoided. Other food choices that parents may choose for their child at home but cannot implement at the center: serving foods with no sugar; foods not containing certain oils; or foods that are not whole grain. Unless there is a specific food allergy documented by a doctor, we cannot abide by parental preferences after 12 months. It is a goal of SPLECC to provide nutritious menu items that are healthy food choices for children.

Arrival / Departure

Upon arrival parents are to walk their children to their classrooms to place their belongings in children's cubbies. **To prevent illness parents are asked to toilet and help their children wash their hands before entering the classroom.**

All motor vehicle transportation provided by parents, legal guardians or others designated by parents or legal guardians will include the use of age-appropriate, and size appropriate seat restraints.

When bringing your child to school, we ask that you park your car in the parking lot and turn off the engine before entering the building. Parents or legal guardians must accompany children to the classroom at the beginning of the day and sign them in as well as sign them out when they leave for the day. No child will be permitted to leave the building without an adult.

Other than parents or legal guardians, only persons on the Drop-Off/Pick-Up permission form will be allowed to pick up a child from the school. Anyone who is unfamiliar to teaching staff, including authorized individuals, will be asked to present photo identification before a child is released to them.

In the interest of students' safety, parents/guardians and authorized individuals are required to sign children in and out daily.

Attendance

Students are expected to be punctual for their arrival and departure. Classrooms are staffed according to the number of children in each classroom. Please call the center with the reason for an absence by 8:30. Irregular attendance interferes with the progress of your child and others.

Behavior

The teaching staff at SPLECC is trained, to be responsive, respectful, and purposeful. The teachers anticipate and take steps to prevent potential challenging behaviors. They evaluate and change their responses based on individual needs. When children have challenging behaviors teachers promote pro-social behavior by:

- interacting in a respectful manner with all children.
- modeling turn taking and sharing as well as caring behaviors.
- helping children negotiate their interactions with one another and with shared materials.
- engaging children in the care of their classroom and ensuring that each child has an opportunity to contribute to the group.
- encouraging children to listen to one another and helping them to provide comfort when others are sad or distressed.

Teaching staff will guide children to develop self-control and orderly conduct in relationship to peers and adults. Children will be taught social, communication, and emotional regulation skills. If a child displays persistent, serious, and challenging behavior, the teaching staff, parents, and AEA support staff will work as a team to develop and implement an individualized plan that supports the child's inclusion and success.

Aggressive physical behavior toward staff or children is unacceptable. Teaching staff will intervene immediately when a child becomes physically aggressive to protect all of the children and encourage more acceptable behavior.

Permissible Methods of Discipline:

For acts of aggression and fighting (biting, scratching, hitting) staff will set appropriate expectations for children and guide them in solving problems. This positive guidance will be the usual technique for managing children with challenging behaviors rather than punishing them for having problems they have not yet learned to solve. In addition, staff may: (1) Separate the children involved; (2) Immediately comfort the individual who was injured; (3) Care for any injury suffered by the victim involved in the incident; (4) Notify parents or legal guardians of children involved in the incident; (5) Review the adequacy of the teaching staff supervision, appropriateness of program activities, and administrative corrective action if there is a recurrence.

Prohibited Practices

The program does not, and will not, employ any of the following disciplinary procedures:

1. Harsh or abusive tone of voice with the children nor make threats or derogatory remarks.
2. Physical punishment, including spanking, hitting, shaking, or grabbing.
3. Any punishment that would humiliate, frighten or subject a child to neglect.
4. Neither withholds nor threatens to withhold food as a form of discipline.

Birthdays

Birthdays are very special for young children and we want to recognize that day. However, we ask that the celebrations remain low-key (no balloons, please). For example, a special snack (not lunch) or a book donated to the class with your child's name in it. **Food that comes from home for sharing among the children must be either whole fruits or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory-sealed containers. For special events such as family nights or parent breakfasts, homemade foods may be brought in at the director's discretion.**

We prefer no cake or cupcakes due to the messiness. If you would like to provide a special treat for your child's birthday, please schedule the date and time with the teachers in your child's classroom. Parents are asked to check with the teachers beforehand to ensure that allergies will not be an issue. Invitations to parties outside of school that do not include the entire class will not be distributed at school.

Biting

One of our primary goals is to provide a safe and loving, learning environment for all children. The program provides an environment that encourages and promotes cooperative interaction, respect for others, and non-aggressive problem solving between the children. Biting is a normal stage of development for young children who are teething and who are still developing their language skills. Biting normally occurs between thirteen and twenty-four months of age, however by preschool age we expect this issue to have been resolved.

For safety and health concerns, we take biting seriously. When it happens, it's very scary, frustrating, and stressful for children, parents, and teachers. It is also not something to blame on children, parents, or teachers, and there are no quick and easy solutions to it. Children bite for a variety of reasons: simple sensory exploration, panic, crowding, seeking to be noticed, or intense desire for a toy. Repeated biting becomes a pattern of learned behavior that is often hard to extinguish because it does achieve results: the desired toy, excitement, attention.

Our policy for handling a biting incident is the following:

- The biter is immediately removed from the group. The bitten child is consoled and comforted to restore a sense of security and safety and the bitten area washed with soap and water. If necessary, ice is applied to reduce any swelling or bruising. The biter is not allowed to return to play and is talked to on a level that he/she can understand, and then redirected.
- A written incident report is given to the parents of all children involved when they are picked up that day. The name of a biting child is not released because it serves no useful purpose and can make an already difficult situation more difficult.
- Each biting incident is looked at intensively for a pattern in an effort to prevent further biting behavior.
- Staff work with each biting child on resolving conflict or frustration in an appropriate manner.
- Center staff try to adapt the environment and work with parents to reduce any child stress.
- Teachers make special efforts to protect potential victims.

Bottles

Parents of bottle-fed babies will need to provide labeled plastic bottles, nipples and lids. All breast milk must be dated and labeled with the child's name. Fresh breast milk will be stored for 24 hours in the refrigerator or up to two weeks in the freezer. Milk that exceeds this time frame will be discarded. Contents remaining in any bottle must be discarded within two

hours. Only breast milk, formula, or water will be placed in a child's bottle. **No bottles will be served with cereal or any other food product in them.** Parents are welcome to come and bottle-feed or breastfeed their infants at any time. Bottles are **not** heated in the microwave, as this will produce "hot spots" in the formula or breast milk, and are warmed by running them under warm water from the sink.

Formula bottles need to be prepared on site and cannot be brought in pre-made.

Older Infants and Toddler

Children who are 12 months and older will be given the snacks that are being served and drink whole milk. If formula is to be served past 13 months, a doctor's note must be in the child's file. Breast milk is considered the equivalent to cow's milk and does not require the note from a child's doctor to continue.

Older infants will be sitting in chairs with trays or a small table with chairs; toddlers will be at tables and chairs to eat meals. Toddlers and some infants will use sippy cups or regular cups and eating utensils. Children who are 12 months old will use a sippy cup rather than a bottle.

C Child Assessment

Assessment of young children should be purposeful, developmentally appropriate, and take place in the natural setting by familiar adults. The results of assessment will be used for planning experiences for the children and to guide instruction. Assessment will never be used to label children or to include or exclude them from a program. A family's culture and a child's experiences outside the school setting are recognized as being an important piece of the child's growth and development. All results will be kept confidential and placed in each child's file.

Children are assessed through staff observation, documentation, and record taking. All assessments are aligned to the Iowa Early Learning Standards.

Assessment information will be shared formally with families during Parent Teacher Conferences in the fall and spring. In addition, a progress report will be sent home at conference time. The lead teacher will communicate weekly regarding children's activities. Informal conferences are always welcome and can be requested at any time.

If, through observation or information on the progress report, the teacher feels that there is a possible issue related to a developmental delay or other special need, she/he will communicate this to the family, sharing documentation of the concern. Suggestions for next steps may include the following, with the knowledge and consent of the parents:

- The teacher requests assistance from the Green Hills Area Education Agency (GHAEA) as an early intervention process. This team engages in problem identification, plan interventions, provide support, and make outside resources available to those individuals requesting assistance. The GHAEA is available and functional for all students and teachers in the building.
- A request made to the Green Hills Area Education Agency for support and additional ideas or more formalized testing.
- The program provides families with information about programs and services from other organizations such as Green Hills AEA, DHS, Child Care Resource and Referral, and medical professionals, etc.

The preschool director and teacher would assist in arranging for developmental screening and referral for diagnostic assessment when indicated.

C Child Protection Policy

The health and well-being of every child in our care is of the utmost importance and the protection of children is our responsibility. An applicant or volunteer must execute and submit an affidavit of clearance from any and all crimes against a child or families.

The program has a written policy for reporting child abuse and neglect as well as procedures in place that comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws. The policy includes requirements for staff to report all suspected incidents of child abuse, neglect, or both by families, staff, volunteers, or others to the appropriate local agencies.

Classroom Animals/Pets

Parents or legal guardians are welcome to bring family pets after speaking with the lead classroom teacher. The teacher will ensure that the animal does not create an unsafe or unsanitary condition. The teacher will also ensure that staff and children practice good hygiene and hand washing when coming into contact with the animal. Teaching staff supervise all interactions between children and animals and instruct children on safe behavior when in close proximity to animals.

Any children allergic to the pet will not be exposed to the animal. Reptiles are not allowed because of the risk for salmonella.

Clothing

Children will be learning through creative, active play that can be messy. Children should wear comfortable, washable clothing as well as rubber-soled and closed-toe shoes to school. **Flip flops may not be worn as they are not appropriate or safe.**

Tennis shoes are the best for running and climbing.

The use of paint smocks or shirts during art projects is encouraged but, we can't guarantee that spills or stains will not occur. Clothing should be free of words, graphics, or pictures that are profane, immoral, illegal, or disruptive in nature. All families are asked to provide an extra set of clothing in case of an "accident" or messy play that will be kept in children's cubbies.

These items should include: outfit, socks, and underwear in a zip lock bag. Please clearly label the clothing with your child's name to reduce the possibility of mistakes. Should items arrive which aren't labeled, we may label them for you-our philosophy is "better to be labeled than lost". Please rotate clothing with the change of the seasons and the growth of your child.

Communicable Disease

Staff and teachers provide information to families verbally and in writing about any unusual level or type of communicable disease to which their child was exposed, signs and symptoms of the disease, mode of transmission, period of communicability, and control measures that are being implemented at the program and that the families should implement at home.

Communication with Families

SPLECC will promote communication between families and staff by using written notes as well as informal conversations or e-mail. Families are encouraged to send written notes with important information so all the staff who work with the child can share the parent's communication. Parents are encouraged to maintain regular, on-going, two-way communication with the teaching staff in a manner that best meets their needs--e-mail, in person, notes, or phone calls.

Our monthly newsletter will keep you informed about scheduled events and activities. Check the parent information board for information regarding our curriculum, schedule, events, etc. Lesson plans will be posted outside the classrooms. As you pick up your child each day, check his/her cubby for special notes or information. If you have any questions or concerns at any time, please contact your child's teacher or the director.

Curriculum

Curriculum is a framework for learning opportunities and experiences. It is a process by which learners obtain knowledge and understanding, while developing life skills. It is continually revised and evaluated to make learning fun and exciting.

The preschool program uses Creative Curriculum, a research and evidence based comprehensive curriculum designed for infants to 6 year olds. It addresses all areas of early learning: language and literacy, math, science, physical skills and social skills.

The Creative Curriculum approach allows the staff to meet the individual developmental needs of all children. The program uses developmentally appropriate practices to help children grow and learn in an environment that encourages exploration, creativity and problem solving. The program provides a balance of activities that are busy and quiet; individual and group; indoor and outdoor and staff-initiated and child-initiated. The children are encouraged to strengthen gross motor skills in daily physical activities. Reasonable accommodations are made for children with special needs.

The One in Christ Religion Curriculum also uses a variety of multi-sensory approaches to teach the Gospel and encourages children to grow in their faith. Handwriting Without Tears is also a multi-sensory curriculum used to teach handwriting skills.

Daily Activities

A consistent daily schedule is planned to offer a balance of learning activities. Learning is both formal and informal. Play is planned for every day. Listening is balanced with talking, group activities with solitary time, indoors with outdoors, quiet play with noisy play. Your child will have the opportunity for the following types of activities every day. Bible lesson or Chapel, large and small group activities, outdoor activities (weather permitting), self-directed play, music, individual activities, story time, snack and learning center activities such as art, science, writing, games and building toys, book center, blocks and wheel toys and dramatic play.

The daily schedule for the children is a guide. It provides a framework for planning and organizing the daily routine and play activities for the children. The daily routines for children may be a little different based on the age of your child. Infants follow their own biological needs. They are fed, changed, and nap when they need it. Toddlers are changed/taken to the toilet before transitions in the day and as needed. Adjustments to the schedule are made as your child gets older and his/her needs change. You may also notice that as your child gets older, they may alter their own schedule to fit in with the group. Some common changes you may notice in your child's behavior after enrollment in any group care situation include altered sleep/wake patterns (staying awake for longer hours or napping more frequently for short periods of time) or changes in appetite.

The following daily schedule is an outline of a typical day. Keep in mind again that, if needed, the schedule will include children's individual needs based on their age. This is a *sample* that includes the different types of components to the daily schedule.

Typical Daily Schedule Sample

6:30-9:00	Classroom Activities
9:00-9:30	Group Time
9:30-9:45	Snack
9:45-11:15	Classroom Activities and Outdoor Time
11:15-11:30	Group Time
11:30-12:00	Lunch
12:15-2:15	Nap Time
2:30-2:45	Snack
3:00-3:30	Group Time/Outdoor Time
3:30-5:30	Classroom Activities

Note: The infant room functions on a much different schedule than any other classroom. Younger infants who are not yet on a consistent schedule are able to eat and sleep as needed.

Diapering

Parents provide diapers, wipes and diaper rash cream for children in the infant/toddler/PS2 room. Children will be changed at regular intervals throughout the day as needed. Baby powder will not be used. The use of powder has been linked to childhood asthma and other respiratory difficulties. Due to sanitation purposes, cloth diapers are not allowed.

Discipline

We believe in using positive guidance, redirection, and planning ahead to prevent problems. Teachers will encourage appropriate behavior through the use of consistent clear rules, and involving children in problem solving to foster the child's own ability to become self-disciplined. Teaching staff will encourage children to respect other people, to be fair, respect property and learn to be responsible for their actions. Teaching staff will use discipline that is consistent, clear, and

understandable to the child. They will help children learn to persist when frustrated, play cooperatively with other children, use language to communicate needs, and learn turn taking.

If a child exhibits a behavior that is unacceptable they will first be reminded of the rule they are breaking. If the behavior continues, the staff member will redirect them to a different activity. Should there still be a problem; the child will be removed from activities for a few minutes to give them time to process their actions and the consequence of those actions.

Emergencies

SPLECC has in place Emergency Procedures binders that describe the following situations and procedures to follow:

- Emergency phone numbers
- Fire procedures
- Utility Failures
- Severe weather
- Bomb threats
- Physical Threats/Armed Intruder
- Evacuations
- Media Procedures

This binder is in each classroom. Procedures are reviewed by each staff member at the beginning of each school year. All staff has immediate access to a device that allows them to summon help in an emergency. The telephone numbers of the Fire Department, Police Department, and Poison Control are posted by each phone with an outside line. Emergency contact information for each child and staff member is kept readily available. A list of emergency telephone numbers and copies of emergency contact information and authorization for emergency transport will be taken along anytime children leave the facility in the care of facility staff.

Equal Educational Opportunity

It is the policy of St. Paul's Lutheran Early Childhood Center not to discriminate in its education programs or educational activities on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, marital status or disability. Students are educated in programs, which foster knowledge of, and respect and appreciation for contributions of diverse cultural groups, as well as men and women, to society.

Ethics / Confidentiality

Staff follows an important code of ethics to guide their involvement with children and families. It is essential to protect the confidentiality of all information concerning children and their families. Maintaining a professional attitude includes being responsive to the needs of children and their families while balancing the need for confidentiality. No information about any particular child shall be shared with another child's parent. We continually strive to model such qualities as patience, tolerance, cooperation, acceptance, understanding of others, and enthusiasm for children as well as for adults.

Family Involvement

SPLECC encourages families to be very involved in their child's education. Family members are welcome to visit at any time during class sessions.

Program staff communicate with families regarding children's activities and developmental milestones, shared care-giving issues, and other information that affects the well-being of children. Family teacher conferences are held in both the fall and spring semesters, as well as when either party requests. At least one Family Night is held during the year.

SPLECC values the time spent talking and interacting with families and developing strong, reciprocal relationships. Families are encouraged to share any concerns, preferences or questions with the preschool teacher or administration at any time.

Although in-person daily contact cannot be replaced, preschool staff also rely on notes home, e-mails, phone calls, newsletters, and bulletin boards as alternative means to establish and maintain open, two-way communication.

SPLECC invites you to become involved in one or all of the following ways, and welcomes other ideas as well.

1. Support your child's daily transition to school by sharing information about your child's interests and abilities. Keep the teacher informed of changes and events that might affect your child.
2. Return all forms and questionnaires promptly.
3. Attend Parent-Teacher Conferences in the fall and spring.
4. Check your child's cubby daily.
5. Share some of your talents in your child's class through activities such as: reading or storytelling, cooking, art, music, sewing, crafts, hobbies, your profession, or artifacts from trips you have taken.
6. Share your family's cultural traditions, celebrations, or customs.
7. Read all the material sent home with your child.

Fire Safety

A fire extinguisher is installed in four areas of the preschool (both front entrances, the kitchen and outside the infant room) with a tag indicating its annual service date. The fire alarm system is serviced annually. Smoke detectors, fire alarms, and carbon monoxide detectors are tested monthly. Fire drills are conducted monthly and recorded on a log.

First Aid

A first aid kit is located in all classrooms. It is inaccessible to children, but readily available for adult use. It is fully equipped according to guidance from Healthy Child Care Iowa.

The first aid kit is taken to the outdoor play areas as well as on field trips and outings away from the site.

Staff is trained in basic first aid and will administer minor treatment as needed. In the event that a child receives a minor, non-life threatening injury during time at the center, teachers will assess the situation and apply first aid as needed. Minor cuts and scrapes are treated with soap and water and bumps are treated by applying ice to the injured area. Any incident or injuries are documented on a "Child Injury/Incident Report" form and a copy is given to the parent within 24 hours of the incident.

Grievance Policy

Open and honest communication between families and the early childhood program is essential. Parents and guardians need to be confident that children are being well cared for and obtaining quality experiences. If there is ever a time you have a concern regarding your child, we want to encourage you to address your concern to your child's teacher.

If you have a concern regarding some aspect of the program or policy, please contact the Director or Pastor Sherrill.

As part of our program assessment, in the spring of each year, we also provide parents/guardians with a family questionnaire to evaluate the program. This information helps us to assess how the program is meeting the needs of families and children, as well as to identify strengths and weaknesses.

Hand Washing

Frequent hand washing is the key to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Teachers teach children how to wash their hands effectively. Posters of children using proper hand washing procedures are placed by each sink. The program follows these practices regarding hand washing:

Staff members and children are taught hand-washing procedures. Hand washing is required by all staff, volunteers, and children and reduces the risk of transmission of infectious diseases to themselves and to others. Staff assists children with hand washing as needed to successfully complete the task.

Children and adults **MUST** wash their hands upon arrival for the day, after using the toilet, after handling body fluids (e.g., blowing or wiping a nose, coughing on a hand, or any touching of mucus, blood or vomit), before meals and snacks, preparing or serving food, or handling any raw food that requires cooking (e.g., meat, eggs, poultry), after playing in water that is shared by two or more people, after handling pets and other animals or any materials such as sand, dirt, or surfaces that might be contaminated by contact with animals.

Adults also must wash their hands before and after administering medication, before serving snacks, after blowing/wiping noses, after assisting a child with toileting, and after handling garbage or cleaning.

Proper hand-washing procedures are followed by adults and children and include using liquid soap and running water, rubbing hands vigorously for at least 20 seconds, including back of hands, wrists, between fingers, under and around any jewelry, and under fingernails; rinsing well; drying hands with a paper towel, or a dryer; and avoid touching the faucet with just-washed hands (e.g., by using a paper towel to turn off water), wet, soap, scrub, rinse, dry, and turn off water with paper towel.

Harassment Policy

SPLECC is committed in providing a learning environment that is free from harassment in any form. Harassment of any student by any other student or staff is prohibited. SPLECC will treat allegations of harassment seriously and will review and investigate such allegations in a prompt, confidential and thorough manner.

Health - Immunization Certificates

Within 30 days after a child begins the program, health records that document the dates of service shall be submitted that show the child is current for routine screening tests and immunizations according to the schedule recommended and published by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

When a child is overdue for any routine health services, parents, legal guardians, or both provide evidence of an appointment for those services before the child's entry into the program and as a condition of remaining enrolled in the program, except for immunization for which parents are using religious exemption.

Health - Safety Records

Health and safety information collected from families will be maintained on file for each child and will be kept in a locked cabinet. Files are kept current by updating as needed. The content of the file is confidential, but is immediately available to administrators or teaching staff who have consent from a parent or legal guardian for access to records; the child's parent or legal guardian; and regulatory authorities, upon request.

Child Health and Safety Records will include:

1. Current information about any health insurance coverage required for treatment in an emergency;
2. Results of health examination, showing up-to-date immunizations and screening tests with an indication of normal or abnormal results and any follow-up required for abnormal results;
3. Current emergency contact information for each child, that is kept up to date by a specified method during the year;
4. Instructions for any of the child's special health needs such as allergies or chronic illness (e.g., asthma, hearing or vision, impairments, feeding needs, neuromuscular conditions, urinary or other ongoing health problems, seizures, diabetes);
5. Individual emergency care plans for children with known medical or developmental problems or other conditions that might require special care in an emergency (allergy, asthma, seizures, orthopedic or sensory problems, and other chronic conditions; conditions that require regular medication or technology support; and
6. Supporting evidence for cases in which a child is under-immunized because of a medical condition (documented by a licensed health professional) or the family's beliefs. Staff will implement a plan to exclude the child promptly if a vaccine-preventable disease to which children are susceptible occurs in the program.

Holiday Closings

New Year's Eve Day	Independence Day	Friday after Thanksgiving Day
New Year's Day	Labor Day	Christmas Eve Day
Good Friday	Thanksgiving Day	Christmas Day
Memorial Day		

Illness Policy

For the health and safety of all the children, it is mandatory that sick children not be brought to school. If your child has any of the following symptoms during the night, he or she will not be admitted the following morning for the safety of the other children.

- Fever greater than 100-degree F
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Pink eye with drainage
- Cough with congestion and excessive nasal discharge
- Cold sores or lesions
- Rash, if contagious

The center's established policy for an ill child's return:

- Fever free for 24 hours
- Chicken pox: one week after onset (or when lesions are crusted)
- Strep: 24 hours after initial medication
- Vomiting/diarrhea: 24 hours after last episode
- Conjunctivitis: 24 hours after initial medication or without drainage
- Cold sores or lesions with signs of healing (scabbed over)

Upon arrival at school, each child is observed by teaching staff for signs of illness or injury that could affect the child's ability to participate comfortably in the daily activities. Children will be excluded when a child is not able to participate comfortably; if the illness requires more care than staff is able to provide without compromising the needs of the other children in the group; or if keeping the child at school poses an increased risk to the child or to other children or adults with whom the child will come in contact.

When a child develops signs of an illness during the day at preschool, parents, legal guardians, or other persons authorized by the parent will be notified immediately to pick up the child. For this reason, please be sure that we have current, accurate phone numbers for you, your authorized emergency contact person and your child's pediatrician. In the meantime, we will provide the child a place to rest until the parent, legal guardian or designated person arrives under the supervision of someone familiar with the child.

Impaired Parents

Persons under the influence of drugs or alcohol will not be permitted on the premises of SPLECC. Although we cannot physically stop the parent from taking his/her child, we will take certain measures to ensure the safety of the child. Staff members are Mandatory Child Abuse Reporters and are required to report abusive situations that would endanger the safety of children.

Inclement Weather

In the event that SPLECC must be closed due to bad weather, the Council Bluffs Community School District will be followed for closing. The exception to this will be when Council Bluffs Community Schools close for cold days and the roads are clear, SPLECC will remain open. This will be announced via email and or text message.

Blizzard/Ice Storms:

SPLECC will close if Council Bluffs Community Schools are dismissed early or cancel school for the day due to weather conditions or any other building emergency. The preschool will also close for safety concerns if the following conditions exist:

- Public transportation shuts down;
- If the highway patrol and Sheriff's department ask people to stay off the roads;
- If we have already received 4 or more inches and they are predicting several more inches of snow during the day.

To find out if SPLECC has closed:

- Check to see if an e-mail or text message has been sent out to the families

If it begins to sleet or snow during the work day, and they are forecasting conditions to worsen throughout the day, the program would greatly appreciate any children being picked up early. Sometimes an ice storm or blizzard develops during the time the children are in attendance, which makes it difficult for parents to pick up their children. The children will remain at the program until such a time that the parents can safely pick up their child. No teacher or parent that has not been previously given written permission to pick up a child may attempt to deliver the child to his or her home, either by vehicle or by foot.

If parents do not arrive to pick their child up from the program, the center will notify families of an early closing. If parents are unable to be reached, the emergency contact person will be notified to pick up the child.

Inclusion

The center will provide for all children, including those with disabilities and unique learning needs as much as possible. Modifications may be made in the environment and staffing patterns in order to include children with special needs. Staff is aware of the identified needs of individual children and will be trained to follow through on specific intervention plans. It is our belief that inclusion in our program will enrich the experiences for teachers, students, other children and their families.

Medical/Dental Emergencies

In the event of an emergency, SPLECC personnel will use the Emergency Information and Medical Consent form completed by all parents for authorizations to obtain EMERGENCY/DENTAL CARE even if the childcare center is unable to immediately make contact with the parents/guardians. During an emergency the childcare provider is authorized to contact the emergency contacts on the form when the parent or guardian cannot be reached. The entire cost and fees for emergency/medical/ dental treatment for the child will be covered by the parents/guardians with the authorization given on the consent form.

Medication Policies /Procedures

Policy: The school will administer medication to children with written approval of the parent and an order from a health provider for a specific child. Because administration of medication in the school is a safety hazard, medication administration will be limited to situations where an agreement to give medicine outside school hours cannot be made. Whenever possible, the first dose of medication will be given at home to see if the child has any type of reaction. **Fever reducing products will not be given.**

Procedure: The director or school secretary administers medication during school hours only if the parent has provided written consent and the medication is available in an original labeled prescription or manufacturer's container that is child-resistant.

For prescription medications, parents or legal guardians will provide the school with the medication in the original, child-resistant container that is labeled by a pharmacist with the child's name, the name and strength of the medication; the date the

prescription was filled; the name of the health care provider who wrote the prescription; the medication's expiration date; and administration, storage, and disposal instructions.

For over-the-counter medications, parents or legal guardians will provide the medication in a child-resistant container. The medication will be labeled with the child's first and last names; specific, legible instructions for administration and storage supplied by the manufacturer; and the name of the health care provider who recommended the medication for the child.

Instructions for the dose, time, method to be used, and duration of administration will be provided to the teaching staff in writing (by a signed note or a prescription label) or dictated over the telephone by a physician or other person legally authorized to prescribe medication. This requirement applies both to prescription and over-the-counter medications.

Medications will be kept at the temperature recommended for that type of medication, in a sturdy, child-resistant container that is out of reach of children and prevents spillage. This container will be located in the office or kitchen refrigerator.

Medication will not be used beyond the date of expiration on the container or beyond any expiration of the instructions provided by the physician or other person legally permitted to prescribe medication. Instructions which state that the medication may be used whenever needed will be renewed by the physician at least annually.

A medication log will be maintained by the school staff to record the instructions for giving the medication, consent obtained from the parent or legal guardian, amount, the time of administration, and the person who administered each dose of medication. Spills, reactions, and refusal to take medication will be noted on this log.

Staff will be trained in cleaning techniques, proper use of protective barriers such as gloves, proper handling and disposal of contaminated materials. Staff receives Universal Precautions training yearly.

Objects from Home

Because the preschool program provides ample toys and learning materials for your child, we ask that you DO NOT bring toys from home. If your child brings an "attachment" item from home, we ask that it is small enough to fit inside his/her backpack or cubby. Please do not allow children to bring gum, candy, money, or toy guns to school. The program cannot be responsible for lost or broken toys brought from home.

Open Door Policy

Parents and legal guardians are always welcome to visit the preschool classroom. A doorbell is located at the front to gain entrance to the facility. As a safety feature, visitors must sign in at the office, located at the main entrance.

Outside Play

Children have daily opportunities for outdoor play as the weather permits and provided the weather air quality and environmental safety conditions do not pose a threat. This allows children the opportunity to develop their large muscle skills, get exercise, and be active. The Child Care Weather Watch guidelines produced by Healthy Child Care Iowa to determine if the Wind Chill Factor or Heat Index is safe for outdoor play. In cases when we cannot go outside (due to weather conditions) children are given the opportunity to use indoor equipment and are supervised at the same level as with outdoor equipment.

In order to make sure that your child can play comfortably outside, it is important to dress him/her according to the weather. When it is cold outside he/she needs a warm coat, mittens or gloves and a hat (labeled with your child's name). For the warmer days dressing your child lightly is just as important. For those in between days dressing your child in layers is a practical idea.

There are areas on the playground for children to be in the shade and still be active. We encourage you to send a hat or other clothing to wear as another protection from the sun. A face stick and sunscreen spray labeled with the child's name needs to be provided for outdoor play. Staff will apply the provided sunscreen with written permission. We will also use an insect repellent (only with your written permission) to protect your child from insect bites when necessary.

Parent Orientation

Parents looking for preschool or childcare are offered a tour of the facility and are invited to sit in for class observation. In August, a parent orientation meeting is held before school begins. At this meeting parents are informed of all school policies, and procedures. Items highlighted include center hours and school closings, drop off and pick up routines, tuition, illness and allergy policies. There is also a Q& A for all additional questions or concerns.

A “Sneak a Peek” is held approximately one week before school begins. Parents and children are invited to visit their classroom and meet their teacher. At this time child are also able to drop off school supplies for an easier transition on the first day of preschool.

Parent Teacher Conferences

All Lead Teachers conduct formal conferences in the fall and spring. During the conference the teacher will share results of classroom assessments and samples of child’s work. Parents and teachers will collaborate to make a plan to continue to encourage child’s growth and development.

Pick Up Time

St. Paul’s Lutheran ECC strives to serve each family and their individual schedules. SPLECC makes staffing choices based on the number of children enrolled for these time periods. Parents need to make arrangements to pick up their children on time. If a child is going to be picked up late, please contact the office. **Families late in picking up their child from preschool or childcare will be charged a late fee of \$5.00 for the first 10 minutes after the end of class time/childcare and \$1.00 for every minute thereafter.**

Shoe Free Infant Room

In order to provide a clean, safe, and healthy environment in the Infant Room, a “shoe-free” policy is enforced. Adults entering the carpeted area of the infant room will slip off shoes. This action is taken to prevent outside contaminants from being brought into the room and spread onto the carpet, particularly during the cold weather with the snow and salt. The infants spend much of their time exploring on the floor, so it is best that these areas be kept as clean as possible.

Sleeping

Infants nap according to their own schedules. If an infant should fall asleep while being rocked, lightly bounced, or taken for a walk, they will be put in their cribs, on their backs, to continue their sleep. When a child begins to attempt climbing out of a crib, sleeping will be encouraged. All bedding is provided by the center. Children who are on cots may bring a soft stuffed animal or other soft attachment item (no cups or bottles). Children only sleep in cribs or on cots. Children are not left to sleep in car seats at drop off. Children are not placed in cribs to play; only to sleep.

Practices may be different at home and that some children have unique situations (e.g.-twins that may sleep together in the same crib). However, SPLECC must follow licensing guidelines and adhere to the above stated policies. It may or may not be difficult for some children to adjust if they are used to sleeping in a different position or with a parent/sibling.

Smoke and Vape Free Facility

In compliance with the Iowa Smoke Free Air Act of 2008, SPLECC building and grounds are smoke and vape free. A “No Smoking” sign meeting the law’s requirements is posted at the entrance to the building to inform people that they are entering a non-smoking place. No smoking/vaping is allowed on the school grounds or within sight of any children.

Snacks, Foods, Nutrition

Consistent with the Council Bluffs Community Schools and the Department of Health, **no homemade treats are allowed in our facility.** Please check to see if your child’s class has anyone with a food allergy, such as nuts.

Attitudes about food develop early in life. The food children eat affects their well-being, their physical growth, their ability to learn, and their overall behavior. We have an opportunity to help children learn about foods, to enjoy a variety of foods and to

help them begin to appreciate that their bodies need to be strong, flexible, and healthy. Eating moderately, eating a variety of foods, and eating in a relaxed atmosphere are healthy habits for young children to form.

Children attending the AM session are served a snack within 2 hours after the beginning of class. Two food groups will be represented at each snack time, as outlined in USDA guidelines. Children attending a full day session have lunch at 11:30 AM and parents are required to bring a sack lunch. Please note we are unable to heat any items. PM snack is served at approximately 2:30 p.m. A written snack menu is posted at the parent information board and available for families. The preschool serves a variety of nutritional snacks and encourages children to expand their tastes by at least trying the food offered.

All snack portions are served in accordance with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines. Clean, sanitary drinking water is made available to children throughout the day. Staff discards any foods with expired dates. Foods that are hotter than 110 degrees Fahrenheit are kept out of children's reach. Foods requiring refrigeration will be kept cold until served.

For each child with special health care needs, food allergies, or special nutrition needs, the child's health care provider should provide the program an individualized care plan prepared in consultation with family members and a specialist involved in the child's care. Children with food allergies shall be protected from contact with the problem food. With family consent, the program posts information about the child's allergies in the food preparation area and in areas of the facility the child uses to serve as a visual reminder to all adults who interact with the child during the day. Program staff will keep a daily record documenting the type and quantity of food a child consumes when any child with a disability has special feeding needs and provide parents with that information.

High risk foods, often involved in choking incidents, will not be served. For children younger than four years, these include hotdogs, whole or sliced into rounds; whole grapes; nuts; popcorn; raw peas; or chunks of raw carrots or meat larger than can be swallowed whole.

Infants-Young infants will be fed according to their own schedule. As they grow and start eating solid foods, their eating needs will change and the eating times will be adjusted toward the group schedule. Parents with children younger than 12 months will have the option of choosing our food or providing the food. A parent may bring in breastmilk if desired. There is no reduction in fees when a parent provides food.

Sudent Records

Student records containing personally identifiable information, except for directory information, are confidential. Only persons, including employees, who have a legitimate educational interest, are allowed to access a student's records without the parent's permission. Parents may access, request amendments to, and copy their child's records during regular office hours.

Supervision /Access

No child will be left unsupervised while attending SPLECC. Staff will supervise primarily by sight. Supervision for short intervals by sound is permissible as long as teachers check every two to three minutes on children who are out-of-sight (e.g. those who can use the toilet independently etc.). Indoor and outdoor spaces will be zoned by the teaching staff with special attention given to areas where injuries are more likely to occur.

Unauthorized visitors shall not have access to the children while at the facility. Children are under constant supervision and are in ratio with authorized staff. The entrance doors will remain locked during the day. Persons who are in the building and have not been cleared with a background check will be monitored and supervised by a staff person at all times. The staff will be responsible for monitoring and supervising these visitors. Center staff is trained to approach any stranger on the property of the center.

Toilet Learning

Toilet learning is an important time in a child's development. SPLECC requires all children three years and older to be potty trained prior to enrollment in the three year old class. However, for children who may have an occasional accident, the following procedures are in place:

- Clothing that is soiled by urine or feces are immediately placed in a plastic bag (without rinsing or avoidable handling) and sent home that day for laundering.

- Potty chairs will not be used due to the risk of spreading infectious diarrhea.
- All families are asked to provide an extra set of clothing for their child in case of an “accident” or messy play. Please clearly label all the clothing sent to school with your child’s name to reduce the possibility of misplaced or lost items.

Transportation

Children will be transported by school bus for all off-site activities and fieldtrips, excluding those within short walking distances. Children shall remain in ratio at all times while being transported.

Tuition

SPLECC is a private Christian preschool that depends upon tuition for its operation. Monthly tuition is due by the 1st Friday of the month. Weekly tuition is due the Friday before the week of attendance. Tuition Express is the method of collecting and processing tuition and fee payments. **A \$35.00 fee will be assessed for insufficient funds.** Because our costs remain constant, there is **no rebate for absence** due to illness, holidays, vacations or other causes. **Families late in picking up their child from preschool or childcare will be charged a late fee of \$5.00 for the first 10 minutes after the end of class time/childcare and \$1.00 for every minute thereafter.**

Universal Precautions

Our staff will use universal precautions when dealing with infectious material, blood or body fluids. All staff will use non-latex gloves when performing any duties that involve body fluids. Any clean-up materials will be disposed of properly to insure safety for all.

Video Monitoring

St. Paul’s Lutheran Early Childhood Center utilizes video surveillance systems on its campus to enhance the safety and security of students, staff and visitors. Video surveillance systems are used to monitor activities inside the building. All video surveillance cameras are capable of being recorded continuously by a digital video recording system. Recorded video is used exclusively by the early childhood center’s administration for internal investigation of security and safety incidents. The capability to view recorded video is limited to members of the early childhood center’s administration. Recorded video is not made directly available to students, staff, parents, visitors or the general public. Requests to provide video recordings will not be accommodated. St. Paul’s Lutheran Early Childhood center will comply with subpoenas from the court system for video recordings.

2017

Volunteers

Parents, friends, grandparents, and other adults are encouraged to take an active part in the educational process of the children. Please contact the teacher, the center director, or our office secretary if you would like to be a school volunteer. For safety’s sake, if a volunteer will be working with children they are to have a background check and fingerprinting done at the volunteer’s expense. In addition, no person with a substantiated report of child abuse or neglect will come in contact with children in the program or have responsibility for children. If a volunteer works more than 40 hours per month with children, he/she will also need to provide a current health assessment, not more than one-year-old.

Waiting List Policy

St. Paul's Lutheran Early Childhood Center - Waiting List Policy

2-5-Year-Old Children

Openings for enrollment at SPLECC will be filled in this order:

1. Families with children currently or previously enrolled at our center, employees of our center, and members of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church will have first priority in the following when enrolling.
 - a. Students who are currently enrolled and would like to return the following year will be given a spot. Spots will be held for students who are in the infant class and will need to move up after their second birthday.
 - b. Employees who would like to enroll children at our center will be given priority when enrolling.
 - c. Families with children who are currently enrolled who would like to send siblings to our center will be given priority when enrolling for the next school year.
 - d. Families who are members of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church who would like to send a child or children to our center will be given priority when enrolling.
2. Families with a note of referral from a family with a child or children currently enrolled will be given next priority after families stated above.
3. After each family stated above has been given (a) spot(s) for their child(ren), openings will be filled on a "first come, first serve" basis.

St. Paul's Lutheran Early Childhood Center - Waiting List Policy

6 Weeks – 2-Year-Old Children

1. Openings for enrollment in the infant classroom will become available as each existing infant has his/her first birthday or second birthday for the toddler classroom.
2. Enrollment in the infant/toddler classrooms is based on a first come first serve basis.
3. Children that are not born are not eligible for any infant openings.
4. When the infant/toddler classroom is at capacity, families can be placed on a waiting list. Families will be notified as soon as possible of any vacancy and will pay a \$150.00 registration fee at that time.

February 2016

Water Activities

We have water tables for children to stand and play with their hands in the water. During water play children are involved in active experiences with science and math concepts. Children with sores on their hands are not allowed to participate with others in the water table to ensure that no infectious diseases are spread. Children are not allowed to drink the water during water play activities. When the activity period is complete, the water table is drained and refilled with fresh water before a new group of children comes to participate. Outdoor water play is limited to tubs and buckets or containers as well as the water table. We do not participate in swimming pool activities. Staff supervises all children by sight and sound in all areas with access to water in tubs, buckets, and water tables.

Weapons

No student shall carry, have in his or her possession, store, keep, leave, place or put into the possession of another student any real weapon or look-alike weapon on any school premises, in any school vehicle or any vehicle used by the school or for school purposes, in any other buildings or premises used for school functions, whether or not any person is endangered by such actions. "Look-alike weapon" means any item that resembles or appears to be a weapon. *A zero tolerance policy on dangerous weapons (real or toy) is in effect; i.e., gun, squirt guns, water rifles or pistols, slingshots, toy guns, toy grenades and other similar items knives, etc.*

Withdrawal

Should a child need to be withdrawn from any SPLECC program, we ask to be notified as soon as possible so that a child on the waiting list may be offered enrollment. At minimum we require a 2-week written notice and fees are assessed to that date. Should a child need to be withdrawn for a period of time and possibly re-admitted, his/her spot cannot be held or guaranteed.

Worship / Sunday school

If you and your family do not have a church home, you are always welcome to join us for worship.

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

239 Frank Street

Council Bluffs, IA 51503

Phone: 712-322-4729

Pastor: Rev. Nathan Sherrill

Feel free to contact the church for more information, or to speak with Pastor Sherrill.

Worship

8:00 a.m.

10:45 a.m.

Sunday School / Bible Study

9:30 – Ages infant – Adult

Revised June 2016

Parent Acknowledgement and Receipt
of the SPLECC Parent Handbook

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the SPLECC Parent Handbook. I understand that it contains important information on policies and procedures. I realize this handbook is not intended to cover every situation which may arise but is simply a general guide to refer to.

I understand that it is my responsibility to familiarize myself with the information and that I agree with the policies and rules of the school.

I further understand and acknowledge that SPLECC may change, add or delete any policies or provisions in this handbook as it sees fit in its sole judgment and discretion.

I acknowledge and understand that this Parent Handbook supersedes and replaces any and all prior handbooks or materials previously distributed.

Student's Name _____ Class _____

Parent's Printed Name _____ Date _____

Parent's Signature _____