

Parent Handbook

**1 Bachrach Court, Decatur IL
62526**

217-424-9183

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St. Paul's Early Learning Center

MISSION STATEMENT

Our purpose is to serve the families of our church and our community who desire a Christ-Centered day care experience for their children. It is our intent to work in partnership with families who have the primary and most critical role in nurturing their children. St. Paul's Early Learning Center provides a quality, safe, caring, Christian environment where each child can develop Spiritually, Socially, Emotionally, Physically, and Cognitively.

AGES, DAYS AND HOURS OF OPERATION

St. Paul's Early Learning Center enrolls children 6 weeks old through age 12. The center is licensed for 151 children. Children will be placed in rooms according to similar age groups.

Our center is open Monday through Friday, 7:00A.M. to 5:00P.M.

Day Care Classrooms

- The **infant** room is for babies ages 6 weeks to 12-14 months.
- The **infant/toddler** room is for children 12/14 to 24 months.
- The **two-year-old** room is for children who are 24 to 36 months. Children do not have to be potty trained to be in this room.
- To move to the **three-year-old** room, a child must be at least 3 years old and be *potty trained*.
- Children must be **four** to be in the fours room.

When the time comes for a child to transition into a new room the parent, teacher, and director will discuss the child's development and emotional maturity. All decisions will be made in the child's best interest.

School-age Program

This program is for children enrolled in elementary school. Children are allowed to be in our school-age classes until they *complete* their 12th year, or enter middle school, whichever comes first. Our center provides before and after school care, care for days out of school, and summer care.

PERSONNEL

Staffing, as stated by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services standards, is maintained at all times. Staff members are employed on the basis of child enrollment. All staff members have the required medical examination and the child care credentials required for their position. All personnel are CPR and First Aid trained and receive yearly continuing education. Highly qualified Christian professionals, dedicated to the teaching and nurturing of young children is of the highest priority for St. Paul's Lutheran Early Learning Center.

CURRICULUM

Learning Experiences appropriate for the child's development are planned in the following areas: gross and fine motor skills, self help skills, spiritual, language and cognitive development. Each teacher has a weekly lesson plan posted in their room and parents will receive a weekly newsletter via email, if requested, that includes upcoming activities. The weekly newsletter is also posted in the ELC reception area.

ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT

1. A pre-enrollment conference and classroom visit is required before admittance. The Director and parent need to be in agreement that St. Paul's Lutheran Early Learning Center is the best environment for the child.
2. A \$50 per family non-refundable registration fee is required to reserve their spot.
3. Enrollment will be taken on first come first served basis to all children who meet the age requirements.
4. At enrollment time, the parent will receive a parent handbook.
5. The child must have a copy of their birth certificate, a physical exam, a record of immunization including a Hepatitis B, a TB test, varicella (chicken pox) vaccine or proof of having had chicken pox, and a lead screening. The physical must be dated within the six months of admittance unless transferring from another licensed center and is dated within the last 2 years.
6. All necessary forms must be filled out, signed, and returned to the center office prior to admittance. All information must be kept current.
7. In circumstances where a court order is in place dealing with custody of the child, it must be on file at the Center. If there is not a permanent or temporary order in place with respect to child custody, then both parents have equal rights.
8. St. Paul's Lutheran Early Learning Center does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national origin in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.
9. No child will be dismissed from the center unless or until every effort has been made to help the child to conform with the rules through a cooperative effort on the part of the staff, parents, and Director.
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FEES

1. Every week's tuition must be received on the first day of attendance. If tuition is not paid by closing time on the first day of attendance of each week, a \$15 late fee will be charged.
2. No child shall attend the center more than 10 hours daily, unless there is a serious emergency that has been reported to the center office. If 2 late situations, more than 10 hours daily, occur in any 30 day period, possible termination of enrollment could occur.
3. If a child is left at the center after 5:00p.m., a fee of \$15 for every 5 minutes will be charged. The police will be called after 45 minutes.
4. A \$35 fee will be charged for every payment returned by the bank for non-sufficient funds and must be replaced by cash.
5. Full tuition will be charged for the following legal holidays:

New Years Day	Labor Day
Good Friday	Thanksgiving Day
Memorial Day	Christmas Eve
Fourth of July	Christmas Day (no tuition)

*These are also the holidays the center is closed. If the holiday falls on **Saturday**, we will be closed on **Friday**. If the holiday falls on **Sunday**, we will be closed on **Monday** unless otherwise notified.*
6. Families are allowed five vacation days AFTER every six months of consecutive attendance. These must be taken in the same calendar week and children are not expected to attend. These vacation days can not accumulate past one year.
7. One week notice is required when a child leaves the center. If not given, the full week tuition will be charged.
8. The second child in the family will receive a discount of 20%. Each additional child will receive a 15% discount. The discount will be computed on the lower fee.
9. If your child participates in a field trip, a fee may be charged to cover costs.
10. A financial statement will be given out at the end of each month upon request.
11. If your account becomes past due, you may forfeit your child's position at the center. Please contact the Director as soon as possible if you have a problem with payment.
12. When a child is withdrawn from the center, the center must be given **one week's written notice** prior to withdrawal. **If the center is left with a balance of tuition, it must be paid in full within 2 weeks, otherwise the account will be turned over to a collection agency. The parent will then be responsible for applicable fees and court costs.**
13. Please place your tuition payments in the designated collection box near the computer sign in. The center accepts credit and debit cards, checks, and money orders for payment. ***For families enrolling after January 1, 2021, we are requiring participation in automatic payments through Tuition Express. You may use a checking or savings account, or credit/debit card to set up your payment. Families must be registered for automatic payments by 2 weeks after their child's start date.***

14. If the center is closed for inclement weather, announcements will be made on WSOY radio and WAND-TV stations as St. Paul's Early Learning Center. Fees will not be charged for that day, but are charged on days the center closes early due to inclement weather.

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ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Upon arrival, the parent must sign their child in on the computer at the designated check-in area, accompany the child to his/her classroom and make sure an adult worker acknowledges their arrival. Office staff will teach parents/guardians to sign children in and out on the computer.

All children must be picked up by an authorized adult. The child's enrollment and emergency forms indicate those persons the parent has authorized. Persons will be asked to provide a photo ID, so that the staff knows that this is an authorized person. No unauthorized person will be allowed to take the child. The parents must go to the office to add or delete authorized persons. The welfare of the children is always our primary concern.

On the first day, plan to arrive a little earlier than usual to allow time for separation. Please feel free to help your child get involved in an activity, show where belongings will be kept, and reassure your child that you will return. You are welcome to call at any time to see how your child is adjusting.

Please drop off your child by 10:00 am daily if possible. Late arrival times make it difficult for your child to adjust, and it often disrupts the routine of the classroom.

NEEDS

Clothing and Dress

A change of clothing for each child is needed at all times. These items should be marked with your child's name and should be appropriate for the season, including: shirt, pants, socks, and underwear.

Children should wear comfortable clothing for inside/outside play year-round along with sturdy, closed-toed play shoes that fasten securely on their feet. Children will play outdoors when the "feels like" temperature is between 25 degrees and 90 degrees. Please send labeled hats, gloves, etc. when the temperature calls for it.

Nap Time

Please send a blanket and travel size pillow (if desired) for naptime. A soft animal or doll may also be brought to help the child feel secure. Please mark all items with your child's name. These items will be sent home at the end of each week to be laundered. The center is responsible for weekly sanitizing of cots and laundering of sheets.

Toys

Please do not send toys or electronic items from home. The center provides plenty of toys.

We cannot be responsible for any unmarked items.

DISCIPLINE

Children are expected to show respect and kindness to those in authority and other children.

A child must behave in a manner that does not disrupt the learning process or threaten safety of him/her self or others. The center uses "time out" method of discipline. Before "time out" is used, the incident will be discussed with the child and the child will be redirected to another activity. If "time out" is needed, the child will be placed in time-out for an appropriate length of time (one minute per year of age). Parents will be consulted if discipline problems persist.

No child will be dismissed from the center unless or until every effort has been made to help the child conform with the rules through a cooperative effort on the part of the staff, director, and parents.

FOOD PROGRAM

Breakfast, lunch and afternoon snacks are provided for all students which are prepared in accordance with USDA food program regulations. Snacks and meals will be served following a regular time schedule which will be posted in your child's room. Monthly menus will be posted outside of classrooms. Each week the menu will be posted in the newsletter.

- **Breakfast:** From 8:00-8:45 breakfast will be served. Times vary based on the ages of children.
- **Lunch:** From 11:00-11:45 lunch will be served. Times vary based on the ages of children.
- **PM Snack:** From 3:00-4:00 snack will be served.

Lunch is provided by Aramark and breakfast and snack are provided through our kitchen. Our kitchen staff is trained in food sanitation. Our food program is also subsidized; therefore, families are required to fill out paperwork from time to time for record keeping.

Outside food is only permitted for special occasions, religious reasons, or if the child has a medical condition. The proper form must be completed to authorize any departure from the menu.

- **Birthdays:** Snacks purchased from a store may be brought for birthdays. Please notify your child's teacher if you would like to bring in a snack.
- **Parties:** Our classes have parties for holidays. If bringing in food items please bring store bought items.

HAND WASHING

Children's hands will be washed routinely and frequently with soap and water at the following times:

1. Upon arrival
2. Before and after each meal
3. During bathroom breaks
4. After wiping or blowing nose
5. After outdoor play time

6. At any other time the staff feels it is needed

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Staff's hands will be washed routinely and frequently with soap and water, which include the following times:

1. Upon arrival
2. After using the bathroom or helping a child use the bathroom
3. After changing a diaper (gloves are worn during diaper changes)
4. After wiping or blowing their noses, or helping a child to wipe or blow their nose
5. After handling items soiled with body fluids or wastes (gloves will also be worn)
6. After handling or caring for a sick child (gloves will also be worn)
7. Before or after eating or drinking
8. Before preparing, handling or serving food (gloves will also be worn)
9. Before dispensing any medication
10. Before and after administering first aid (gloves will also be worn)

FIELD TRIPS

Classes of three-year-old up to school-aged children take field trips from time to time. A permission slip is required for each individual field trip. Field trips may have an additional fee. Occasionally parent help will be needed with field trips. The center provides 14-passenger buses for transportation on field trips.

ILLNESSES

Children need not be excluded for a minor illness unless any of the following exists, in which case exclusion from the center is required:

1. Illness which prevents the child from participating comfortably in program activities.
2. Illness which calls for greater care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children.
3. Fever over 100.4 degrees (oral/ear); 99.4 degrees (underarm) in the past 48 hours.
4. Unusual lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing or other signs of possible severe illness;
5. Diarrhea (more than two incidences);
6. Vomiting two or more times in the previous 24 hours, unless the vomiting is determined to be due to a non-communicable condition and the child is not in danger of dehydration;
7. Mouth sores associated with the child's inability to control his or her saliva, until the child's physician or the local health department states that the child is noninfectious;
8. Rash with fever of 100.4 degrees or behavior change, unless a physician has determined the illness to be non-communicable;
9. Purulent conjunctivitis (Pink Eye), until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated;
10. Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated;
11. Strep throat (streptococcal pharyngitis), until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated and until the child has been without fever for 24 hours;
12. Head lice, until the morning after the first treatment;

13. Scabies, until the morning after the first treatment;
14. Chicken pox (varicella), until at least six days after onset of rash.
15. Whooping Cough (pertussis), until five days of antibiotic treatment have been completed;
16. Mumps, until nine days after onset of parotid gland swelling;
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18. Measles, until four days after disappearance of the rash; or
19. Symptoms which may be indicative of one of the serious, communicable diseases identified in the Illinois Department of Public Health Control of Communicable Diseases Code (77 ILL. Adm. Code 690).
20. COVID-19 (novel coronavirus), until a doctor or local health department approves the return of the student

If your child is absent for any reason, please notify the center office as early as possible. The child may not be brought to the center until they are fever free **without medication** and free of other symptoms for 24-72 hours. If the child becomes ill or injured during the day, the parents will be notified and expected to pick up the child immediately. If parents cannot be reached, the emergency contact numbers will be called in order of preference. Scratches and scrapes which are inevitable when children play, will be treated by washing with water, band aid, and tender loving care. An accident report will be completed by the teacher, signed by the parent, and kept on file in the center office.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Children who have been diagnosed with special needs will be given accommodations to the best of our ability in order that they may fully participate in classroom activities and interacting with classmates. For children who have nutritional issues, we will work within the doctor's written recommendations insofar as they do not conflict with the regulations of DCFS and the food program (which does allow variations in menu for medical necessity).

DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENINGS

Bright Start has been contacted about screening children each fall; as funding and scheduling allow, they are able to provide screening for each child aged 6 weeks to 5 years of age for whom we have a signed consent form.

MEDICAL EMERGENCY

In the event of a medical emergency, 911 will be called and an ambulance will be dispatched to the center. The parents will be notified and asked to meet the staff member who will stay with the child until the parent arrives at the hospital.

MEDICATIONS

A doctor's note is required for any prescription medication, over-the-counter medication, and diaper ointment to be given by center staff. Medical consent forms must be filled out for any medication given out at the center.

Medical consent forms are available from your child's teacher or the office. All medicine needs to be labeled with the type of medication, your child's name, and dosage. For safety reasons, all medications will be kept in the center office.

SAFETY

Children are not to be left unattended in the hallways, parking lots, or in vehicles outside. The center cannot be responsible for children unless they are left in the staff's direct care.

St. Paul's Early Learning Center is a smoke free facility. Smoking is not allowed on the premises.

LEAD IN WATER TESTING

St. Paul's Early Learning Center is housed within St. Paul's Lutheran Church, which was constructed in 1998. As a result of updates in DCFS licensing, we were required to have our water tested by May 1, 2019. We had all faucets used by children (in any capacity) tested for lead on October 16, 2018. All of the faucets inside the ELC wing tested negative for the presence of lead. A few handwashing sinks outside of the ELC dedicated space did test positive for lead; these are used only by school-age children. We have trained the staff not to allow the students to drink from those faucets and posted signage indicating that they are for handwashing only. The full report is available on the parent board across from the ELC front desk.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION

In case of an emergency that would require evacuation, the children would be moved to New Beginnings Church of God, which is located at 2606 Route 121 NW, Decatur, IL 62526.

INSURANCE

St. Paul's Early Learning Center liability insurance coverage extends to all persons on the property and premises owned by St. Paul's Lutheran Church. This includes the center, playground, and parking lot.

CONFERENCES

St. Paul's Early Learning Center is committed to supporting parents in their role of nurturing their children. We feel communication is essential between teachers and parents. Parents are welcome to ask for a conference with the director or teacher if there is a situation that needs to be addressed. Teachers may also schedule a conference throughout the year to discuss your child's progress or individual situation. Periodically, progress reports may be sent home as another means of communication. Progress reports are not an evaluation of your child, but an observation of their skills. Your concerns or questions are always important to us.

We will offer opportunities for you to meet with your child's teacher formally two times a year. These times will be available in the evenings on a sign-up basis. If you are unable to meet during the designated time, you are welcome to contact your child's teacher to set up a more convenient time.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

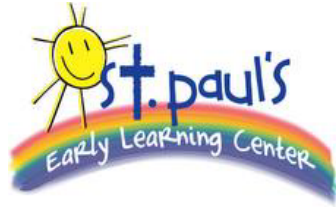
We encourage parent participation at our center. Some opportunities include:

1. **Special Events:** Parents and family members will be invited to special programs at various times throughout the year.
2. **Field Trips:** On occasion, parents may be invited to accompany a class on a field trip. Parents will be notified and a permission slip must be signed. There may be an extra charge for field trips. We do not have swimming as part of our program.
3. **Lunch:** Parents are welcome to eat lunch with their child. A small fee will be charged to cover the cost of the adult's lunch and advanced notice is necessary. No outside lunches may be brought to the center.
4. **Classroom Visits:** We welcome and encourage parents to drop in at our center. Please be sensitive to your child's separation anxiety when considering the time of day you visit. Visits in connection with drop off and pick up times may be less stressful on your child.
5. **Food Donations for Parties:** Parents may be asked to donate treats for classroom parties throughout the year. Teachers post sign up sheets for needed items prior to the parties. For safety reasons, all donated food items must be purchased from a store and be in the original container.
6. **Facebook:** St. Paul's ELC has a closed Facebook group. It is accessible only to current parents and staff, and is available by request only. It is updated regularly with activity and event information. Periodically, we will post pictures of the children that are taken in the classroom. If you would prefer not to have your child's photo posted, please notify the office staff in writing of this preference.

RELEASE OF INFORMATION

All personal information pertaining to enrolled children and their families is confidential. The one exception is evidence of child abuse or neglect, which by law, we are required to report.

Release of any personal information will be considered only if requested in writing and then approved by written consent of the child's parent.



I have received the January 2021 updated copy of the St. Paul's Early Learning Center Parent Handbook.

Child's Name

Parent Name

Parent Signature

Date