

Emmanuel-Faith Little Blessings Preschool

Parent Handbook

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Welcome to our Preschool! Throughout this handbook, you will find our policies and procedures that have been put in place to ensure that our school is safe and secure for your child. We encourage you to read through the handbook and ask any questions you may have. We are here to be a partner with you in your child's well-being and education! **Please sign** and return the last page with your child's enrollment paperwork.

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MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY

Mission Statement

Building Disciples of Christ through Faith-based Education

Proverbs 22:6

Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old, he will not depart from it.

Vision Statement

Little Blessings Preschool provides a loving and caring environment, recognizing one another as fellow members of the body of Christ and valuing each person's uniqueness as a gift from the Lord. We strive for excellence in our preschool by fostering spiritual, academic, and social growth.

Our dedicated, Christian staff cares, disciplines, guides, and teaches each child for a successful Christian life.

Parents and teachers work together to prepare our students to be lifelong learners, who can apply their knowledge and skill in meeting life's challenges.

Philosophy and Goals of Little Blessings Preschool

Little Blessing is Christ-centered. The children's care, well-being, and spiritual growth are our priority and focus. We believe children are to see themselves as a special creation loved by God. They are to see Jesus as their very best friend. We know that preschool children learn by doing, requiring a hands-on approach to learning. We provide an interest-centered learning approach, where freedom of choice is balanced with specific activities which are designed to stimulate curiosity, enhance learning, and promote imagination, inventiveness, and independent thinking. Child-directed activities and play interspersed with teacher-directed activities for age-appropriate lengths of time provide a child a balance of experiences, encouraging both independence and group socialization. Children learn and develop in four areas simultaneously: *cognitively, emotionally, socially, and physically*. Our program seeks to especially emphasize emotional growth, striving to instill positive and lasting self-esteem in each child. We therefore treat each child with love and respect and encourage them to respect themselves, others, and other's property. We recognize each child as unique with special gifts, interests, and talents. Attention is given to individual needs and rates of development. Positive guidance techniques are consistently integrated in the fabric of the program through role-modeling, positive reinforcement, redirection, and parental support and involvement. Our teacher's behavioral expectations match the children's development capabilities. Parent involvement in the preschool is desirable and encouraged as we work together to help children reach their potential. Consistent, open, and honest communication with parents will be stressed through many personal and written means. We feel it is our duty to keep parents informed and involved regarding their children's preschool experiences. Our staff will strive to make apparent their desire for cooperation and a trusting, working relationship with parents by their demeanor, professionalism, and friendliness. We believe that parents are the first and most important teachers in the life of each child. Special signs and notices will be posted to update you on miscellaneous information

such as classroom news, special activities, or contagious illnesses circulating your child's group. Conferences will be scheduled. You may request a conference at any time to discuss your child's accomplishments. Please give us prompt notification of a change in address or phone number and also if there is a change in the child's care provider. We reserve the right to suspend or terminate care to a child if the child or parent has threatened or made the school environment an unsafe place. We will contact parents first to talk over the situation that has occurred. If a parent has a concern/grievance/question, please talk to the staff about any of these. Our door is always open.

PROGRAM

Our program recognizes that certain psychological conditions exist in every child. When these conditions, such as individual differences, readiness, motivations, purposes, and interests are met, the child can learn. Each child will be treated with respect and love, and the program will be geared to incorporate activities relevant to his/her individual needs.

We offer Religion, Experimental Natural Sciences, Large Muscle Development, Fine Motor Development, Counting and Name Recognition, Rhythm Band and Music, Safety, Quiet and Active Play, Story Time, Creative Dramatics, Painting, Crafts, Listening Skills, and Cooking. These are incorporated into units such as Community Helpers, Transportation, Animals, Families, Seasons, Space, and many more.

We are in prayer at least three times a day. We read a Bible story and say the Lord's Prayer. We also pray before eating. Jesus Time is a session of 10-15 minutes that centers around Jesus, My Best Friend. We also have chapel twice a month for all four classes.

We offer a "**centers approach**" to learning. The children participate in Free Choice Play Time.

Children participate with these developmental domains daily:

- **Approaches to Learning**
- **Creative Arts**
- **Health and Physical Development**
- **Language and Literacy Development**
- **Social and Emotional Development**

Things we will work on during the school year include:

- identifying and naming colors
- writing names
- recognizing their names, alphabet, address, birthdays, shapes, and numbers
- learning sequences for the older children (Pre-K)
- knowing the meaning of the phrases- in front of, behind, besides, on top, on bottom, etc.
- naming the days of the week in order and the months of the year (for the older children)
- being able to sit for an amount of time depending on the different age groups
- knowing their phone numbers
- writing simple words (Pre-K class only)

We will do all of this during circle time, large group time, art or science time, and at free play time. We encourage the children to use their words and not their hands when it comes to their peers. We teach the children to use their manners-excuse me, thank you, please, may I, etc. We also encourage the children to solve their own problems. For example, if they just come and tell the teacher without trying to solve it for themselves, we encourage them to solve it themselves. We will help out, but we ask them what they should say and how they could make this problem better.

1. LICENSING:

Little Blessings strives to meet and exceed all child care licensing regulations. Little Blessings is licensed by the State of Nebraska Child Care Licensing Department. Parents will be notified of any changes or infractions in the Licensing agreement. DHHS will make two unannounced visits a year to make sure that the preschool is in compliance.

Our facility is licensed for children ages 3-6. Capacity for the preschool is 38 children during the school year. Children must be potty-trained before they can be accepted into our program.

2. ADMINISTRATION:

Little Blessings Preschool is an agency of Emmanuel-Faith Lutheran School. Emmanuel Lutheran Church and Faith Lutheran Church together operate and support Emmanuel-Faith Lutheran School through which is offered a Christian education for children in Preschool through 8th grade.

3. ENROLLMENT:

All children are welcome, regardless of race, religion, sex, or national ancestry. All required state forms must be completed and returned prior to the first day of class.

Nondiscrimination Policy

Little Blessings Preschool admits students of any race, color, sex, and national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, and national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship, and other school administered programs.

A parent or guardian may apply for enrollment by completing the enrollment packet and submitting an enrollment deposit. Once complete, parents will be notified if the child is accepted.

The enrollment packet includes:

- Enrollment Form
- Signed Receipt of Parent Handbook
- Copy of Child's Up-to-date Immunization Records
- Photo Release Form

4. TUITION AND FEES:

There will be a one time a year registration fee of \$25.00. This fee is non-refundable. The fee will help cover the cost of materials for each child.

The monthly tuition is due on the first class day of each month.

1. \$85 for children attending the two-day program that are members of Emmanuel or Faith Lutheran congregations
2. \$90 for children attending the two-day program that are non-members of Emmanuel or Faith congregations
3. \$95 for children attending the three-day program that are members of Emmanuel or Faith Lutheran congregations
4. \$100 for children attending the three-day program that are non-members of Emmanuel or Faith congregations

If tuition for any given month is not paid on the first class day of the month, the student may attend preschool for that week. If, however, tuition is not fully paid on the first class day of the next month, then the student may no longer attend preschool; and a student on the waiting list may be allowed to fill the vacancy. Payments after the 15th will be charged a \$5.00 late fee. Checks should be made payable to Emmanuel-Faith Lutheran School and handed to Mrs. Brouillette. **PLEASE DON'T PAY IN THE OFFICE!**

3- & 4-Year-Old Classes meet on Tuesdays & Thursdays

8:30 – 11:00 am (morning class) 12:30-3:00 pm (afternoon class)

Pre-Kindergarten Classes meet on Mondays/Wednesdays/Fridays

8:00 – 11:00 am (morning class) 12:30 – 3:30 pm (afternoon class)

5. CONFIDENTIALITY:

Information about your child and family is confidential. The state recently passed a law for Early Childhood Centers that keeps us from giving out class lists or phone numbers.

Release of Children

Children will not be dismissed with anyone except a parent or someone designated by parents. In the event that it is necessary for someone other than those named on the emergency contact file sheet, a written note or phone call to the teacher is necessary.

All child files will be kept in a locked file cabinet or in a locked computer server. Parents or guardians are permitted access to their child's file at any time.

EXCEPTIONS TO CONFIDENTIALITY: By law and licensing regulations, all staff of Little Blessings are mandated reporters and must report any and all suspected child abuse and neglect.

6. PARENTS RIGHT TO IMMEDIATE ACCESS:

Parents are welcome to visit Little Blessings at any time and are encouraged by the teacher to do so during the normal operations and have access to their child's information file upon request

unless parental contact is prohibited by court order. Grandparents, who sometimes are more available during the day, are also encouraged to participate.

1. Visit your child's classroom at any time.
2. Share your cultural or ethnic background with your child's class.
3. Join your child's class for special days or parties.

7. ARRIVAL AND PICK-UP PROCEDURES:

Please accompany your child to the classroom each day. We ask that you **arrive no earlier than 10 minutes prior to school starting**. Promptly pick up your child at the end of the session. If you need to bring your child earlier than 10 minutes before class or pick up 10 minutes after class, please let us know ahead of time. **For those children that are brought in earlier or later than the specified time, we will charge an extra fee.**

PICK-UP

When picking up a child from Little Blessings, the parent must come inside of the building and wait for the teacher to escort your children down the stairway to the lobby of the church. Once a parent or guardian has their child, they are then solely responsible for supervising their child while on premises. Only those who are listed on the child's emergency contact form will be permitted to pick up a child. If any staff are unsure or have not met the adult, a form of ID will be required. Parents or adults picking the child up are required to sign any incident/accident reports from that day at pick up. Staff/Director will notify 911 or the police if an unauthorized person or authorized person who is visibly under the influence of drugs or alcohol requests to pick the child up.

AGENCY'S RIGHT TO REFUSE DAILY ATTENDANCE

Little Blessings Preschool reserves the right to refuse a child's attendance for any of the following reasons, not limited to:

1. Parent's failure to provide accurate, up to date records
2. Parent's failure to complete and return required documentation in a timely fashion
3. Staff deems the child to be ill

8. TRANSPORTATION/FIELD TRIPS:

Little Blessings Preschool does not offer transportation. With this, unfortunately, due to new state laws for preschools, we won't be taking any field trips that require the children to be driven. We will still take our last day field trips, but we require parents to drive their own children.

9. INCLEMENT WEATHER/SCHOOL CLOSING PROCEDURES:

If school (at Emmanuel-Faith Lutheran) is cancelled due to bad weather, our classes will also be canceled. If a two-hour late start occurs, there will not be classes for the morning preschool sessions. If afternoon classes are to be dismissed early due to snow or icy conditions, we will call you if classes are already in session. If weather is looking bad, please listen to the local radio and/or television stations for late starts and cancellations.

10. FIRE/EMERGENCY DRILLS:

Fire and emergency drills will be conducted throughout the preschool according to Nebraska State Fire Marshal and Child Care Licensing Standards. The drills are done once a month with

documentation about the drill posted in the classrooms. Each classroom will have both plans visibly displayed, and these drills will be practiced with all children. In case of emergency or disaster, the children will be evacuated to a nearby building (parsonage), and parents will be notified as soon as possible.

10.1 EMERGENCY EVACUATION POLICY-

Blizzard:

Cancellation or early closure is determined by weather reports and Emmanuel-Faith School; parents will be contacted as soon as possible to pick up children. We will have quiet play time until all children have been picked up. Staff will stay with children until all have been picked up.

Earthquake:

As determined by staff, children and staff we will go to the hallway near the bathrooms. If outside, children and staff will move away from the building. If there is structural damage to the building, children will walk with staff members to the field to the east. The children will be counted, and parents will be contacted as soon as possible to pick up their children.

Bombs:

Any staff informed of a bomb threat will communicate with all other staff members in the building through telephone or personal contact. All children will be taken to the open field across the street to the south of the school. Police will be contacted, and further evacuation procedures will be followed under police direction. If there is cold or inclement weather, children and staff will go to the Holthus Field House to the south of the school. Children's emergency forms will be taken when leaving the building. Parents will be contacted as soon as possible to pick up children.

Fire:

When a fire emergency is detected, we will evacuate according to fire drill instructions posted in classrooms. The children will be counted. When possible, children's emergency forms will be taken. If the weather is inclement, children and staff will walk to the parsonage. Parents will be contacted as soon as possible to pick up children.

Tornado:

When tornado drills are sounded or other determination of danger is verified, children will be moved to the basement hallway away from windows. The children will be instructed to cover their heads in a crouching position. If structural damage occurs, then police will be notified. If structural damage occurs, staff members and children will walk to Holthus Field House. Children's emergency forms will be taken if leaving the building.

Power Failure:

Children will remain in classrooms, and we will continue to follow scheduled activities if possible. We will contact parents to pick up children if early closing is necessary.

Intoxicated Parents:

Staff members will attempt to detain the parent. Another staff member will contact another person from the emergency contact list and request pick up. We will inform the intoxicated

parent of the pick-up plan. If unable to contact another pick up person, the child must be allowed to leave with the parent. We will inform the parents that the police will be called. Staff will call the police to inform them of the situation.

Intruder:

If it is determined that an intruder may be harmful, then staff members will be instructed to take children out the back door and go to the parsonage. Staff members will attempt to assist the intruder while another staff member will contact the police depending on the situation. We will proceed as instructed by the police. If determined necessary, staff members may be instructed to take the children to the parsonage (if the situation becomes volatile or as instructed by police). All parents will be contacted if necessary.

Lost or Abducted Children:

One staff member will remain with children while a second staff member will alert others in the building to assist in the search for the lost child. If the child is not found in ten minutes, staff will contact parents and the police. Staff will proceed as directed by the police.

Chemical Spills:

Staff and children will leave the area immediately. A staff member will contact the York Fire Department and follow their directions. Staff and children will evacuate the building according to fire department instructions, if necessary, children and staff will go to Holthus Field House across the street. Staff will take children's emergency records if leaving the building and will call parents if necessary.

10.2 ALTERNATIVE SAFE LOCATION-

In the event that the Little Blessings Preschool must be evacuated, staff will take the children to an alternative location. Once the children are safely at the alternative location, staff or the Director will contact all parents beginning with the first person listed on the child's emergency contact form. Children must be picked up within 45 minutes of notification.

11. DISCIPLINE:

The guidance philosophy used at Little Blessings is based on positive reinforcement. The basic premise of this concept is that it is better to acknowledge positive behavior whenever possible rather than punish negative behavior. We also believe the more interesting things children have to do, the less likely there are to be discipline problems.

Time outs are used as a last resort. This gives the child time to "cool-off" and calm down and decide to comply with the rules. The child is always placed where they can be seen and heard by the teacher. The length of the time-out will never exceed one minute for each year of age. Spanking is **NEVER** used as a form of discipline.

Please do not be discouraged if your child is disciplined. Children act out and test boundaries as an approach to learning, and this is expected in all stages of development. Little Blessings staff promises to work together with parents in order to be consistent in reinforcing positive behaviors both at home and at school.

We understand that discipline is not the same thing as punishment. Rather, discipline equals discouraging behavior and promoting good behavior through guidance, teaching, and role-modeling. Discipline is an on-going process and an integral part of the curriculum. It is our ultimate goal to foster self-discipline and self-control in the young children we affect.

12. TOYS:

Please discourage your child from bringing personal items unless it is his/her preschool show and tell time. Many children playing with a toy could mean accidental breakage or loss; Little Blessings Preschool will not be responsible for any lost or damaged items brought from home.

12.1 SHOW AND TELL-

Your child has the privilege of bringing show and tell. Children may bring toys, books, photographs, and other items of interest to talk about. Please label anything delicate or precious so we can keep it strictly to “look at but don’t touch.” Please, **NO** toy guns or weapons. Pets may visit us in the classroom if the owner will bring them in. Any such visits should be arranged beforehand with the teacher, in case there would be any allergies.

13. SNACKS:

Parents will be asked to provide snacks for their child’s class several times during the school year. We need to comply with licensing and provide a nutritious snack. We would like 2 foods from 2 different food groups, such as apples and crackers, cheese and crackers, carrots and bread, muffins and slices of apple or orange. Remember this is a snack, not a meal; small portions of both foods are very appropriate. The drink will be furnished.

SHOW AND TELL & SNACK SCHEDULE GO TOGETHER!

The **SNACK & SHOW AND TELL BUCKET** will rotate through the class list. We will try to send home the bucket a day or so before you need to bring a snack; if for some reason the bucket does not come home with your child, bring a show and tell and snack in the school bag. The snack list will be given at the beginning of the month.

14. CPR/FIRST AID:

All staff at Little Blessings will be trained by an approved entity in CPR and First Aid.

14.1 HAND WASHING-

All preschool staff will be trained in proper hand washing techniques and will model those techniques with children prior to meal times and after toileting. Staff are required to properly wash their hands before snack and after helping a child with toileting.

14.2 COMMUNICABLE DISEASES-

Little Blessings will inform you of any communicable disease your child may have come in contact with while in our care. Children with detection of illness, communicable disease, or unusual conditions or behavior will be given a quiet place to rest until a parent or other authorized person can pick up the child. ***Please do not send your sick child to preschool.*** We do our best by hand washing and sanitizing to prevent the spread of germs, but we need your help in preventing exposure to contagious diseases by keeping sick children at home.

If your child has any of the following symptoms within the last 24 hours, he/she should not attend preschool:

temperature over 100.4 degrees	rotavirus
head lice	ringworm
influenza	severe coughing
diarrhea	pink eye
impetigo	scabies
RSV	yellowish skin or eyes
vomiting	fifth disease
chicken pox	

14.3 DISPENSING OF MEDICATIONS-

It is our policy that **NO** medications will be administered by our preschool staff.

15. ORIENTATION:

The following suggestions are made to assist you in helping your child in their orientation to Little Blessings and in assuring a smooth, successful transition for the parent and child. An “orientation night” will be scheduled before the first day of school. Parents are encouraged to participate in the scheduled orientation time. This allows the child an opportunity to observe or participate for the first time with the security of a parent present. At this time, parents are encouraged to visit with the staff members, asking any further questions they might have.

If your child has difficulty separating from you on the first days, the following suggestions are helpful: 1- Don’t prolong good-byes; 2- Cheerfully tell your child you love him/her and you know that they’ll have a fun day and finally what time you will return to pick them up; and 3- Give him/her a big hug and kiss, then firmly and quickly walk away.

Little Blessings Preschool Director/Teacher, Libby Brouillette
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Phone: 402-362-3000

Emmanuel-Faith Lutheran School Principal, Brad Wellmann
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Child's Name

I have read and agree to the terms of the Little Blessings handbook and understand the policies, procedures, and payment agreement explained in it.

Parent Signature

Date

I have read and understand the Little Blessings Preschool Emergency Disaster plan.

Parent Signature

Date