

St. Paul's Lutheran  
**Preschool**  
with Extended Care

*NLSA Accredited*



**Parent Handbook**  
2010-2011

*a ministry of*  
**St. Paul's Lutheran Church**  
1700 Carridale Street SW Decatur AL 35601  
256.353.1353 [www.stpaulsdec.com](http://www.stpaulsdec.com)

# **St. Paul's Lutheran Church Preschool with Extended Care**

## **Church Mission Statement**

St. Paul's Lutheran Church glorifies God by connecting people to Jesus through teaching, serving, caring and telling!

## **Preschool Mission Statement**

St. Paul's Lutheran Preschool with Extended Care provides a quality early childhood education program guided by Christian philosophy and doctrine and acts as a mission outreach of this congregation to the community.

## **History of Program**

St. Paul's Lutheran Church initiated a Mother's-Morning-Out program in the Fall of 1991 and introduced the Preschool curriculum in the Fall of 1995. Classes were held in the east wing of the campus prior to the addition of the Christian Life Center; in the Fall of 2000, classes then moved to the educational wing of the new addition.

Seeking acknowledgement of the quality of our program as well as accountability to our community, participants and congregation, the Preschool began the rigorous national accrediting process by NLSA in 2008. Accreditation is a means to evaluate and improve our unique ministry as a Lutheran school not only in the quality of our academics and programs, but also, most importantly, in the spiritual dimension of our school. The Preschool was awarded accreditation on July 31, 2009 by NLSA, the second largest accrediting entity supported by more than 2000 schools. NLSA assures parents that a quality Lutheran school exists wherever NLSA accreditation is found.

While St. Paul's Lutheran Preschool meets the needs of member families and families in the community by providing a half day Preschool, there is a barrier to enrollment for others due to the need for Extended Care before and/or after Preschool classes. With the educational emphasis of the Preschool's core hours of instruction remaining central to the ministry of the Preschool, Extended Care is now offered beginning Fall 2010 to students who enroll in Preschool classes. Quality education and Christian teaching of our Preschool will be maintained during these extended hours.

## **Statement of Philosophy**

St. Paul's Lutheran Church believes that parents are the first and foremost educators of their children. The Preschool with Extended Care at St. Paul's Lutheran Church partners with families to meet the spiritual and educational needs of our member families and serves as an outreach to families in our community. We teach and make disciples of the children that God has entrusted to us, as commissioned in Matthew 28:19-20. Children are valuable gifts whom God loves and has forgiven through the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus. They learn best when taught in a Christ-centered environment that meets the spiritual, social, emotional, cognitive, and physical needs through developmentally appropriate play and structured learning. In preparing lesson plans, teachers utilize curricula that include flexible and varied methods providing experimentation and creative learning activities.

## **Goals**

The goals of St. Paul's Lutheran Preschool with Extended Care are to:

- Provide a safe and nurturing Christian environment where children experience the love of Jesus.
- Provide a quality resource that addresses the early childhood educational needs of our community.
- Prepare older children for kindergarten.
- Help parents and children deal with "breaking away" anxieties.

Our Preschool program strives to be a laboratory for young children to explore themselves and God's world about them through experimentation and imagination and by using all their senses.

## **Policy Authority - Preschool Board**

The St. Paul's Lutheran Preschool with Extended Care Advisory Board, reporting to the Parish Education Team, sets and/or approves all policies regarding the Preschool.

## Personnel

The Director is an employee of St. Paul's Lutheran Church and is responsible to the Preschool Advisory Board. The Director meets regularly with the Preschool Advisory Board and is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Preschool. Together with the teachers, the Director plans a curriculum that is age-appropriate, Christ-centered, and faith-integrated and meets the stated mission of the Preschool program. The Director does not determine policy, but ensures that procedures are being followed. Qualifications of the Director include a college degree with prior experience and on-going training in early childhood education programs as well as certification in infant/child CPR.

Teachers are employees of St. Paul's Lutheran Church and are responsible to the Director. Under the direction and supervision of the Director, the teachers plan, implement and evaluate the curriculum in accordance with the mission and philosophy of the Preschool program. Teacher qualifications include prior experience and on-going training in early childhood education programs as well as certification in infant/child CPR.



## Curriculum

The Preschool uses the *Learning Foundations Curriculum* and incorporates aspects of *High Reach Learning* and the *Creative Curriculum* recommended by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the State of Alabama. The Preschool also incorporates *Voyages* and *The Blessing Place* curricula from Concordia Publishing House of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

The combination provides:

- Spiritual/Social Living
  - Language Development
  - Number Recognition and Concepts
  - Expressive Arts
  - Discovery about the World
- Planning for the year includes monthly themes, concepts, interest centers, music, field trips, and special celebrations.
  - The program offers an exciting and stimulating curriculum that is appropriate for each child at his or her own level of understanding.
  - The children participate in Chapel time weekly in the Sanctuary with the Pastor or Director of Children's Ministry.
  - Children attend music classes weekly with the Director of Children's Ministry.
  - Teachers create weekly lesson plans and communicate learning and schedules to parents on a regular basis.
  - Physical Education classes are offered weekly for children in the 3 and 4 year old classes.



## **Class Sessions and Composition**

### **Toddler Program (Ages 15 through 23 months)**

Class size is limited to 5 children per adult.

Children attend 2 days per week minimum.

### **Two-year-old Program**

Class size is limited to 6 children per adult.

Children attend 2 days per week minimum.

### **Three-year-old Program**

Class size is limited to 8 children per adult.

Children attend 2 days per week minimum.

Children must be potty trained.

### **Four-year-old Program**

Class size is limited to 12 children per adult.

Children attend 3 days per week minimum.

- Children are placed according to their age as of September 1.
- All classes meet from 8:45 am – 12:45 pm.
- Extended Care is available before and after Preschool classes beginning at 7:00 am and ending at 5:30 pm.

## **Enrollment**

- The following forms must be kept on file in our office:
  - Registration Form/Tuition & Fee Agreement
  - Health & Immunization Record
  - Parent Authorization Form
- Enrollment is accepted on a first-come, first-served basis except during Pre-Registration in the Spring. At that time, priority is given in the following order:
  1. Children already in the program
  2. Children of congregation members
  3. Children on the waiting list
  4. Other children
- Children may be enrolled at any time during the year provided that there is space in their age group.

**Tuition and Fees**

A non-refundable \$30 deposit is required upon registration and will be deducted from the supply fee.

	<b>Preschool Only</b>		<b>Preschool w/ Extended Care</b>	
	<u>Monthly</u>	<u>Annual</u>	<u>Weekly</u>	<u>Annual</u>
	<u>Tuition</u>	<u>Supply Fee</u>	<u>Tuition</u>	<u>Supply Fee</u>
2 days (T/TH)	\$120	\$ 85		
3 days	\$150	\$ 100		
4 days	\$185	\$ 115		
5 days			\$130	\$150

- Families with multiple children: The first child’s tuition will be 100%, with a 10% discount offered on the tuition of any additional children.
- A charge of \$2 per meal for those wishing to participate in Thursday Pizza Day may be included with the tuition.
- New students shall pay the total month’s charge if the child is enrolled prior to the 15th of the month and one-half of the month’s charge if the child enters on or after the 15th of the month.
- The Director must be given a two-week written notice if a child is to withdraw from the program. If a child withdraws after the program begins, the parent is responsible for tuition for the entire month in which the child withdraws.
- A \$5.00 late fee will be charged for tuition not received by the date set forth in the tuition agreement. If you need to revise your tuition fee schedule, please discuss this with the Director.
- A \$5.00 late fee will be charged for each five minutes a child is not picked up after normal departure time:  
Preschool – 1:00 pm; Extended Care – 5:30 pm.
- Additional fees may be charged for field trips, special projects, etc. as deemed necessary.
- NSF checks will be charged a \$35 fee for each incidence. The fee, as well as the amount of the original payment, must be paid in full within 4 working days of the request.

## Arrival

- Children will be received for Extended Care beginning at 7:00 am. An adult must escort the child in and sign in at the Welcome Desk. Extended Care children will be escorted to their Preschool classrooms between 8:45 am and 9:00 am.
- Children who are enrolled only in Preschool will be received between 8:45 and 9:00 am in the Drive-Through Line to the Preschool Entrance.
- Those arriving after 9:00 am will need to call the Education Office or ring the doorbell for entrance.
- Toddlers may be brought to the classroom between 8:45 and 9:00 am for the first month of school. Park below playground and follow the sidewalk to the entrance.



## Departure

- Children attending only Preschool are to be picked up between 12:45 and 1:00 pm. Parents are required to use the Drive-Through Line where the children will be brought out to the car.
- The car name signs provided **MUST BE DISPLAYED** in the front window to speed up the pick-up process.
- Parents are not to leave their cars unattended in the Drive-Through Line.
- The Preschool will only release a child to his parent or guardian and those previously authorized on the Registration Form kept on file in the office. If someone not authorized on the Registration Form is to pick up a child, the parent is to call or send in a note informing the teacher of this change. For the safety and protection of your child, the person picking up a child should always be prepared to show picture identification..
- Extended Care children must be picked up in the building and signed out by an authorized adult.

## Inclement Weather Policy

Inclement weather announcements and closures will follow Decatur City Schools (DCS).

- With weather delays of more than 2 hours, Preschool Classes will be cancelled; Extended Care will meet according to the delayed time of DCS.
- For early dismissals, the Preschool and Extended Care will release children 30 minutes prior to the early pick-up time announced by the School system.
- If DCS closes schools for the day, Preschool Classes and Extended Care will be closed.



Listen to WDRM radio station 102.1 FM or any local television station.

**\*\*\* During rain or other severe weather, children will be dropped off or picked up under the portico at the Sanctuary entrance at the back of the church.**

## Dress

- Each child should be dressed for active play in simple, washable, practical play clothes with convenient fasteners for self-help
- Girls should wear shorts or leggings under skirts/dresses.
- The children play outdoors when the weather permits; each child should be dressed accordingly with an appropriate coat or jacket.
- A change of clothes (including socks) for each child should be sent to Preschool in a zip lock or plastic bag labeled with the child's name. Soiled or wet clothing will be returned home in the bag in case of mishaps.
- Loose articles of clothing (jackets, sweaters, raincoats, etc.) should have the child's name marked in the label.
- Children not yet potty-trained are to wear regular diapers and not the "pull-up style" while attending class unless they can be put on without undressing the child.
- Children should wear closed-toe shoes. We have found that crocks are not safe to wear, especially in the gym.

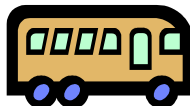
## What to Bring

- Each child needs to bring a lunch and drink in an insulated lunch bag. Children with a food allergy or strong dislike must have this noted on the Health Record.
- A snack will be provided before Preschool for children in morning Extended Care. A snack will also be offered in the afternoon after rest time for children in Extended Care. Children will be able to eat only during scheduled times.
- Extended Care children should bring a small blanket for rest time. The blanket will be returned weekly to be cleaned at home.
- Toys should not be brought to school except on designated "show and share" days. No toy guns or weapons will be allowed at school.



## Field Trips

- A Field Trip Permission Form must be signed and on file for each child to attend special outings. If a child cannot go on an outing, he or she is to be kept home that day, and the teacher is to be informed that he or she will not be attending.
- Children 2 and under must be accompanied by an adult. If that is not possible, on the day of the field trip, please contact the teacher to see if a substitute adult can be available.
- Children under the age of five are required by the State of Alabama to use car seats and booster seats until age six in cars, pick-up trucks, SUVs and vans (10 or less passengers). The church's 15 passenger van is equipped with seat belts and is often used for field trips. Alabama's seat belt law does not pertain, and booster seats are not recommended.
- Parents will be notified in advance of scheduled field trips and method(s) of transportation.



## **Parent Involvement**

- Parent participation in special classroom activities, parties and field trips is encouraged. If a parent wishes to bring something from home to share, the teacher should be notified in advance so that the day's schedule may be adjusted.
- Special events will be planned throughout the year for the children including Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine's Day, Easter and End-of-the-Year. There will also be special "Open House" evenings. Parents are given an opportunity to help by signing up for these events with the classroom teacher.
- Due to confidentiality concerns, special events are not the appropriate time to approach a teacher about a child's progress or specific issues concerning your child. Please see the "Communication" section in this handbook.

## **Discipline**

- Corporal punishment will not be administered under any circumstance.
- Reasonable, age-appropriate behavior limits will be set; "time out" or restriction of play privileges will be used for unacceptable behavior (biting, hitting, fighting, etc.).
- If a child exhibits disruptive behavior, a conference with his or her parents and teacher will be arranged.
- If the conflict remains unresolved, further steps will be taken up to and including expulsion from the Preschool.



## **Attendance**

Children learn best in an environment of consistency and routine. Significant absences or repeated late arrival will result in a conference between parents, teacher and the Director to assess the appropriateness of the child's enrollment.

## Health Policies

- The Preschool can only accept well children to prevent the spread of germs and illnesses within the Preschool. When is your child too sick to attend school?
  - Fever
  - Vomiting
  - Diarrhea
  - Undiagnosed rash
  - Red eyes and/or drainage
  - Nose with colored discharge that require constant wiping
  - Headache that will not respond to ibuprofen or acetaminophen
  - Cannot participate in the daily activities of the program
- Your child can return to school once symptom free for 24 hours or as determined by your physician.
- A child should be kept home if, within the preceding 24 hours, the child has had a fever, sore throat, rash, an unusual cough or diarrhea or has vomited.
- Prescription medications will only be administered with doctor's orders. Over-the-counter medications will not be administered under any circumstance.
- If your child is exposed to a communicable disease, the parent should notify the teacher or Director. Parents will, in turn, receive notice of any possible exposure at the Preschool.
- If a child is injured at school, a Child Injury Report will be sent home. For more serious injuries, the parent or guardian will be notified IMMEDIATELY. The Preschool will take all necessary steps to see that the child is assured proper medical attention while under the Preschool's care as indicated on the Permission Form.
- The Preschool operates with the understanding that parents have adequate medical insurance coverage for their children.



## **Communication**

Communication between parents and teacher is a vital part of a successful educational program. If a problem arises, the parents and teacher will meet privately to seek a resolution. If the conflict is not resolved, the concerned parties will meet with the Director privately to seek a resolution. If the conflict is still not resolved, the concerned parties will meet with the Preschool Advisory Board.

Conferences are available with teachers or the Director at the parent's request at any time. It is encouraged that parents participate in a quarterly conference with the child's teacher during the year. The teacher will be able to give you information about your child's progress at these meetings as well as suggestions that might be beneficial to your child's overall achievement.

Bible classes, parent workshops or meetings may be held at various times throughout the year. Parents are encouraged to attend and join in the fellowship.



## **Non-Discriminatory Policy Statement**

St. Paul's Lutheran Preschool with Extended Care admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs and activities accorded our students or our school.

## **Accreditation**

The National Lutheran School Association (NLSA) awarded St. Paul's Lutheran Church Preschool accreditation on July 31, 2009. Accreditation assures parents that the school complies with national standards. It indicates the school's commitment to ongoing improvement. Parents can be certain that when a school is accredited by NLSA, it has been observed by a team of qualified educators, evaluated and recognized.

## **Professional Affiliation**

St. Paul's Lutheran Preschool is a member of the Lutheran Education Association (LEA), the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA), the Alabama Association for Young Children (AAYC), and the Tennessee Valley Association for the Education of Young Children (TV-AEYC).

## **Acknowledgment**

The *In His Hands* artwork is used by permission of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Board for Parish Services - School Services Unit

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