

Bethlehem Preschool Parent Handbook

2023 - 2024



Bethlehem Lutheran Church Preschool

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Preschool Program

Bethlehem Preschool is a ministry of Bethlehem Lutheran Church. *Our church desires to provide a quality program of Christian education for young children in our congregation and the surrounding communities.*

Bethlehem Preschool is a non-profit organization. Our program is licensed by the province of Alberta, and meets all their requirements. The teacher has an **Early Childhood Development Diploma** and a **Bachelor of Arts Degree (Elementary Education)**. She has many years of teaching experience with children at the preschool level. Professional development is a priority.

Our preschool program is planned to provide a safe, secure environment in which to encourage children in all areas of their development. Classroom activities are designed for children to experience success. Our program strives to:

- 1) Help children learn about **God's love** for them, and that **Jesus is their friend and Savior.**
- 2) Enhance the **social development** of children by providing a climate for the development of **positive, loving relationships**. Group skills such as co-operation with others, sharing and turn-taking, and listening and talking clearly are encouraged.
- 3) Foster the **emotional development** of children by helping them **adjust happily** in a setting away from home, and become more independent. Aiding children in verbalizing their feelings and expressing them in a constructive way is important.



4) Enhance the **intellectual development** of children by encouraging a **sense of curiosity and the love of learning**.

Experiences and opportunities are provided to lay the groundwork for subsequent education. Sharing information, developing new ideas, and investigating and experimenting with materials are encouraged.

5) To encourage **creative development** in children by offering a variety of **art, music, language arts** and **dramatic play** opportunities.

6) To promote **physical development** through **large and fine motor activities** in our classroom, on the grounds outside, and on neighborhood walks to the local park.



Our program strives to meet the developmental goals through **many different themes and activities**, and active and listening times.

Children are encouraged to grow and play at their own rate. **Each day's activities include a devotion time.**

Animated Literacy Program

The **Animated Literacy Program** by **Jim Stone** is used to introduce **alphabet letters and sounds**. For each letter of the alphabet **one or two puppets** tell a story that highlights the letter sound of the day. Then children learn an action song, and answer questions about the story. They practice writing the letter, and often do an art activity with it. Theme activities complement alphabet learning. **The children love this program!**



A Typical Preschool Day

9:00: Children arrive and play in **learning centers**. Feature educational activities, often theme-related, are set out.

9:45: **Cleanup time.**

9:50: **Group Time #1: A devotion is given.** This includes a **Bible story** or lesson about a Christian principle, a praise song, a memory verse, and prayer. **Theme activities** and the **alphabet letter of the day** are introduced.

10:15: **Art/Fine Motor Time:** Children participate in an **art or craft activity** (painting, gluing, coloring, cutting, tracing, or lacing.)



10:25: **Bathroom Break:** Children use the **washroom** and wash their hands.

10:35: **Snack Time:** The children are served a **nutritious snack** and are encouraged to use good manners.

10:50: **Large Motor Play:** In the **gymnasium**, children participate in action songs and group games. Then they play in small groups or independently with balls, hoops, and other equipment. In **outdoor sessions**, children play games in the preschool yard or play at the neighborhood park 1½ blocks away.

11:15: **Grouptime #2:** Children pick a book to look at on their mat. They sing songs, learn fingerplays, and listen to stories.

11:25: **Children get ready to go home.**

Preschool Items To Bring

- 1) A pair of **indoor shoes with non-marking soles**. Please label them in case another preschool child has the same style of shoes. *Shoes with shoelaces are not recommended because they are a tripping hazard.*
- 2) A **change of clothes** (in case of an accident).
- 3) A **backpack**.

Dress Code

Please send your children to school in play clothes. Children are asked to wear aprons for messy art activities and water play, but sometimes still get stains on their clothing. Play clothes are also most suitable for large motor play.



Communication

A periodic **newsletter** (at least once a month) highlights **themes and special activities**. Important information is often reinforced by verbal reminders or notes on the door outside our classroom.

The teacher communicates information about your child's preschool experience informally on a regular basis. Occasionally, a phone call is made. Periodic photos and mini videos of preschool activities are emailed. Additional updates are available on our Facebook Page @**BethlehemLutheranPreschool**.

At the end of the school year each child receives a **memory book** with certificates, photos, special art and other projects, and a comment card highlighting positive behaviors, interests, and strengths.

The teacher works hard at providing a stimulating, developmentally appropriate program. **Parent input is valued.** Please feel free to contact the teacher at any time to discuss questions, concerns, or ideas you have for the preschool program, your child, etc.



For additional assistance **you may phone the church office at 780 477-2894** to be directed to a person in leadership.

Once a year an **evaluation form** is given to each preschool family. Parents are encouraged to fill it out and return it to school. The information gained is used in program planning.

Health and Safety Policy

Preschool children may begin arriving ten minutes before each preschool session begins. The teacher is usually there before this time, but is doing room set up and /or preparing activities for the day. **Children must be brought inside the church building and downstairs into our classroom by their supervising adult, who signs in the child(ren) on the attendance sheet.**

If the teacher has an emergency before class and is not present, parents are asked to stay with their children until the teacher arrives.

Children are dismissed to go home with a parent or someone authorized by the parent. Please let the teacher know in person, by written note or a phone call if someone other than a parent is picking up your child. **Children need to be signed out by their supervising adult on the daily attendance sheet.**

Please notify the teacher and keep your child at home if he/she is ill, i.e. has a runny nose that is colored, a bad cough not quelled by cough medicine, a high fever, diarrhea, stomach upset, or new unexplained rash or cough. This helps illness from spreading in the classroom.

Please notify us of the following:

- 1) If your child or immediate family comes in contact with whooping cough, pink eye, fifth disease, H1N1 flu virus, mouth, hand and foot disease, etc. so we can notify the other parents who need to know.
- 2) If your child is infected with lice. Your child must be treated before he/she can return to school. Other parents need to know so they can check their children for lice the following two weeks.

If your child comes to school and

- 1) the teacher observes the symptoms/illnesses listed above, or
- 2) your child requires greater attention than can be provided without compromising the care of other children in the program, or
- 3) displays any other symptom a staff member knows or believes may indicate that your child poses a health risk to other children,

a parent/guardian will be asked to pick him/her up immediately, (within two hours of being notified). Your child will be supervised by the teacher assistant/parent helper and kept comfortable in the southwest room adjacent to the main classroom until pick up.

Your child can return to the program if a written notice from a physician indicates that he/she does not pose a health risk, or the teacher is satisfied that your child does not pose a health risk to other children, caregivers or staff. Please contact the teacher to discuss a suitable return date after each illness.

If possible, administer medications at home before/after preschool. If medications must be given at school, the **Permission To Administer Medication Form** must be filled out.

Health care will be provided to a preschool child when

- 1) The written consent of the child's parent has been obtained.
- 2) The health care provided is in the nature of first aid

Your child must be toilet trained before he/she can begin preschool. If your child is using bathroom facilities fairly consistently at home, he/she is ready to begin in our classroom.

Please note: Government issued health procedures are followed.

Emergency Procedures

Bethlehem Preschool prioritizes the provision of a safe, happy environment for children to play and learn in. However, we are prepared to handle a medical emergency. The following procedures are in place:

- 1) The teacher holds a valid **First Aid In Child Care certificate**.
- 2) Emergency **phone numbers** and **procedures** are prominently posted.
- 3) A **portable emergency file** is taken along on field trips.
- 4) An **emergency evacuation and fire drill procedure** is in place.
- 5) **Medical aid** will be sought if necessary.

Emergency Evacuation and Fire Drill Procedure

The preschool is inspected periodically to fulfill the laws of the province, and is equipped with fire alarms and chemical extinguishers. The emergency evacuation and fire drill procedure is practiced monthly. This procedure is posted on the preschool bulletin board and in the kitchen. It is included in the **Parent Handbook**. Teacher assistants and preschool parents are asked to review it at the start of each preschool year and at the beginning of each helper day. Teachers review it monthly.

If the fire alarm goes off, the following method of evacuation will take place:

- 1) The teacher gets the portable emergency file. The teacher and teacher assistant/parent volunteer gather up the children. The children walk behind the teacher to the east double doors of the basement and line up.
- 2) The teacher asks the teacher assistant/parent helper to close all doors and windows and follow behind the children.
- 3) The teacher leads the children up the stairs and through the foyer to the white outside double doors (on the south side of the building next to the gym). Everyone walks in single file.
- 4) The teacher leads the children outside, and lines them up on the sidewalk to the southwest of the church. The teacher assistant/parent helper follows at the rear.
- 5) The teacher takes roll call.
- 6) Everyone returns to the building when permission is given.



If it is deemed unsafe to return to the school building, the class assembles at Take Five Donuts, located on 118 Avenue and 48 Street. Parents/guardians will be asked to pick up their preschool child from this location. The teacher contacts the local child care office to report the incident, and submits an Incident Reporting Form to them within two working days of the incident's occurrence.

Procedure For Emergency Medical Help

Bethlehem Preschool will endeavor to reach parents in the event their preschool child is involved in a serious accident or is very ill. **Parents are asked to notify school immediately if there is a change of address or telephone number.** A separate emergency information sheet for each child is kept in a file in the classroom, and is taken along on field trips.

If an illness or accident requiring emergency medical help occurs, the following procedure will take place:

- 1) The injury/illness will be assessed by the preschool teacher.
- 2) The parent helper/teacher assistant will call an ambulance.
- 3) First Aid will be administered by the teacher for life threatening conditions. The parent helper/assistant teacher will help if necessary.
- 4) The parent helper/teacher assistant will call the parents of the injured/ill child.
- 5) If the child's parents cannot be reached the emergency contact person will be called.
- 6) When the ambulance arrives, the teacher will accompany the injured/ill child to the hospital. She will take the portable emergency file with her. She will report any details about the accident/injury to the medical staff.
- 7) The parent helper/teacher assistant will stay with the class until all the parents or emergency contact people come to pick up the rest of the preschool children. He/she can enlist the help of other preschool parents to phone parents and supervise children.
- 8) The teacher will stay with the injured/ill child at the hospital until the parents or emergency contact persons arrive.
- 9) The teacher will report the incident to the local child care licensing office immediately, and submit an Incident Reporting Form to them within two working days of the incident's occurrence.



If the illness or injury does not appear to be life threatening, parents will be called to arrange for transportation to a medical facility.

Child Guidance Policy

At Bethlehem Preschool, the teacher provides a climate to encourage **acceptable behaviors**. Classroom space is arranged to encourage **meaningful play**. Interesting activities are regularly introduced, and each day follows a **predictable routine**. There is a balance between individual, small group, and whole group activities, and active and listening times. Sometimes group activities focus on behavior skills. **Encouraging words** are given to reinforce good behavior choices.

At our preschool **children are treated with love and respect**, because they are God's gift to us. Children are listened to, because they are important, and we are interested. Their feelings are valued. Proper care of non disposable materials and equipment is promoted. A **safe environment** is facilitated. Play fighting is discouraged, as it can lead to someone getting hurt. Problems are seen as an **opportunity for learning**. Children are encouraged to give input about how problems can be solved. Children are expected to take responsibility for their actions.

The following child guidance strategies are used:

- 1) Rules, limits, and consequences are **stated clearly** so that children are aware of them.
- 2) **Choices** are given between two acceptable options.
- 3) A child is **redirected** to a new activity.
- 4) Group presentations and classroom discussions are held periodically to promote good behavior.

The following will not be used:

- 1) Any form of physical punishment, verbal or physical degradation, or emotional deprivation.
- 2) Denial or threat to deny a basic necessity.
- 3) The use or permission to use any form of physical restraint, confinement or isolation.

Children are encouraged to say "I'm sorry" and "I forgive you" when appropriate.

Enrolment Policy

Bethlehem Preschool operates as a **nonprofit** program of Bethlehem Lutheran Church.

Tuition Fees

Registration Fee: A one-time, non-refundable fee of **\$25.00** is required at the time of registration.

Monthly fee prices represent a \$75.00 per month grant per child from the Government of Alberta already deducted from fees.

Two mornings per week:

_____ **Tues./Thurs. a.m.** (9:00 – 11:30 a.m.) \$64.00 per month

_____ **Mon./Wed. a.m. class** (9:00 – 11:30 a.m.) \$64.00 per month

Three mornings per week:

_____ **Mon./Wed./Thurs a.m. class** (9:00 – 11:30 a.m.) \$100.00 per month

_____ **Mon./Tues./Thurs a.m. class** (9:00 – 11:30 a.m.) \$100.00 per month

Four mornings per week:

_____ **Mon./Tues./Wed./Thurs. a.m. class** (9:00 – 11:30 a.m.) \$135.00 per month

Additional subsidy is available for qualifying families. Visit **Alberta Childcare Subsidy**: <https://www.alberta.ca/child-care-subsidy.aspx> for information. *If your child qualifies for subsidy, you may not need to pay fees.*

The preferred method of payment is by monthly **post-dated cheques**. Please make cheques payable to **Bethlehem Lutheran Church**.

Registration Forms

The following registration forms must be completed and signed before your child begins preschool:

- 1) Registration Form
- 2) Health Record
- 3) Permission To Display Pictures Form
- 4) Class Selection Form
- 5) Permission and Waiver Form

Please fill out and return these forms as soon as possible.

Bethlehem Preschool is eager to serve your family. May you have an enjoyable time being part of this ministry!

