

Trinity Lutheran School
Bloomington, IL

Early Childhood Handbook Preschool (3's) through Young 5's



Trinity Lutheran School exists to develop
well-rounded, lifetime, Christian Disciples

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Trinity Lutheran School Early Childhood Handbook

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TRINITY LUTHERAN SCHOOL EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

The central goal of Trinity Lutheran School, both in its Day school program and its Early Childhood Program, is to provide a **CHRIST-CENTERED LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**. Within this environment, our mission is to develop well-rounded, lifetime Christian disciples.

Trinity Lutheran School's Early Childhood curriculum focuses on developing the total child. Our goals are on the spiritual, academic, emotional, social, and physical needs of each child as an individual. We lay the foundation for later school success by providing a stimulating, challenging and caring environment that allows the child to develop.

Teachers endeavor to know, understand and treat each student as a special and unique God-given individual. In this school community, all strive for friendliness, care for one another, trust and respect for each person, service to others, and especially service and witness to Christ.

Parents are the primary educators of their children. The goal of Trinity Lutheran School is to establish an environment for Christian learning, which aids parents in the development of the whole child. Our goal is to establish open and effective lines of communication between home and school, allowing us to serve each child better.



Our Mission Statement

Trinity Lutheran School exists to develop well-rounded, lifetime, Christian Disciples.

Our Relationship with Home

Children are a special gift from God, and we desire to support you in the responsibility of bringing up your child to honor and respect the Lord. We are honored when parents entrust their child's education to us at Trinity. We want to be in close contact with the home because we want to serve the need of parents and children.

Parents are involved in the following ways:

- “ Parent Teacher Conferences are scheduled in the fall. Conferences occur in the spring upon request. Please feel free to contact the teacher with any questions or comments about the school or your child.
- “ Fast Direct is our electronic communication system. You will be set up with an account at the start of the school year. Teachers may send messages through this system. You are also able to track tuition and your child's lunch account.

Staff Qualifications

All staff members meet and exceed the educational and experience qualifications for their positions according to the Department of Children and Family Service. The Early Childhood Director is a certified teacher with a Masters in Early Childhood Education/Administration.

All staff members are trained in First Aid and CPR. Staff will take appropriate measures to protect themselves and student incidents involving bodily fluids.

Most importantly, our staff members are Christians who respect and love God, know their Savior, Jesus Christ, and teach by example how to enjoy abundant life in Christ.

Mandated Reporters

Our staff cares about the students and desires them to be protected and free from harm. All employees of Trinity are mandatory reporters and will notify Child Protection Services if there is suspicion of abuse or neglect.



ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

PRESCHOOL: Children registering for Preschool must be three (3) years of age on or before September 1st of the current school year. In addition, they must be potty-trained (see full definition and policy on page 11). This includes being able to attend to bathroom needs on their own. Our teachers provide minimally and the least intrusive assistance possible when assisting with toileting.

PREKINDERGARTEN: Children registering for Prekindergarten must be four (4) years of age on or before September 1st of the current school year. In addition, they must be potty-trained (see full definition and policy on page 13). This includes being able to attend to bathroom needs on their own. Our teachers provide minimally and the least intrusive assistance possible when assisting with toileting.

DOCUMENTATION: If your child has been tested or screened for speech, social or learning difficulties, we ask that documentation is provided at the time of enrollment.



Transportation

The parents provide transportation to and from school. Parents may form carpools if desired. We require written authorization from parents if another person brings or picks up your child at school. Children will not be released to unauthorized person(s).

Field Trips

Preschoolers do not participate in field trips or other excursions off-site.

Pick-up for All-Day Programs

Our school day ends at 3:10 p.m. We understand that there are times when extenuating circumstances occur and parents are unable to pick-up at dismissal. Please call the office (829-7513) and inform us that you are running late.

In other instances, children will remain in the classroom with the teacher until 3:30p.m. At this time, if the child has still not been picked up, they will be placed in after-school care, and the parent will be charged \$30.00. If the child is left longer than 30 minutes, another charge of \$30.00 will be assessed.



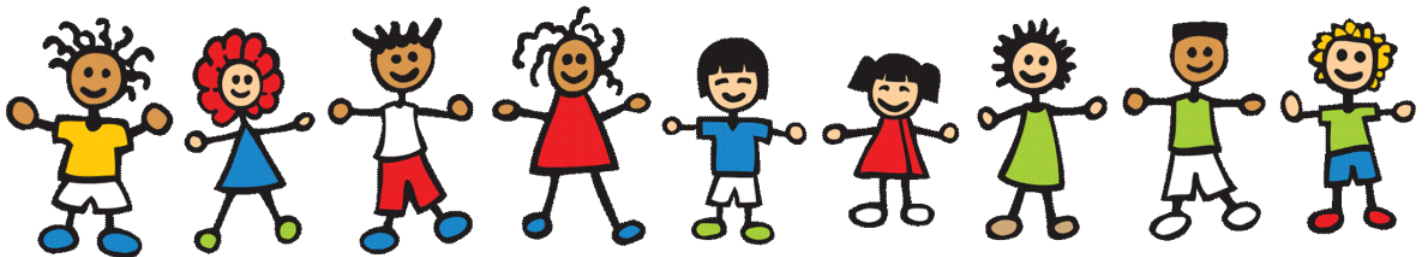
Before and After School Care

Three and Four-Year-olds: There is a separate Before and After school care program for our three and four-year-olds. A snack is provided in the afternoon.

The hours are 7 to 8 a.m. and 3:15 to 5:30 p.m. If a child is not picked up by 5:30 p.m. an extra \$30.00 fee will be assessed. If no one can be contacted within 30 minutes and parental/guardian communication has not occurred, the extended care staff must notify the local police department and place the child in their care.

The cost of the Before and Aftercare is charged monthly, whether use is made of the program every school day or only several days per week.

There is an Extended Care Handbook available on the school website.



INFORMATION NEEDED

EVIDENCE OF BIRTH DATE

You will need to provide your child's state issued birth certificate (original or photocopy) to enter our Early Childhood program. Non-American children will need to provide a passport or visa.

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

Illinois law requires that every child be fully immunized against:

DIPHTHERIA, TETANUS, PERTUSSIS (Whooping Cough), POLIO, MEASLES, RUBELLA, MUMPS, CHICKEN POX, HEPATITIS B and HAEMOPHILUS INFLUENZA E TYPE B (Hib) before entering school.

The law requires evidence of a physical examination by a qualified physician within 12 months of entering school.

The following immunizations fulfill the necessary requirements as stated by law:

DPT OR TD: 4 or more doses, with the last dose qualifying as a booster and received on or after the 4th birthday.

POLIO: 3 or more doses with the last dose qualifying as a booster and received on or after the 4th birthday.

MEASLES/MUMPS/RUBELLA: One dose of the Rubella and Mumps vaccines administered at 12 months of age or older. Two doses of the measles vaccine are required for kindergarten admission, the first dose must have been received on or after 12 months of age, the second dose no less than one month later.

CHICKEN POX: One dose of the Chickenpox vaccine or proof of having had the disease.

HEPATITIS B: A 3-dose vaccination requirement for children 2 years of age or older.

HAEMOPHILUS INFLUENZA E TYPE B (Hib): One dose for children 2 years of age or older entering a school program below the kindergarten level.

At all times, your private physician's recommendations should be followed. If for some reason your child cannot receive these immunizations, please notify the school.

DISCIPLINE GUIDELINES

Behavior Management Policy:

Trinity Lutheran School strives to display our faith in Christ by word and example. To accomplish this task at school, we use the following guidelines:

Behavior Expectations - Our students will show their love for Jesus by:

1. Showing respect for self, other children, staff, facility, and supplies/equipment.
2. Showing kindness to others through positive encouragement and interactions
3. Following directions and rules.
4. Having fun!

Our early childhood program **will not** tolerate aggressive behavior(i.e., hitting, kicking, biting, etc.) (see the Aggressive Behavior Policy on the following page.)

In the situation where it has been determined that discipline is required, the following steps will be taken:

1. The child will be approached on a one-to-one basis by the classroom teacher/aide. The teacher will get down to the child's level, make eye contact, and speak in a calm and non-threatening manner.
2. The teacher will encourage and assist the child with solving the problem and coming up with a workable solution for all.
3. The teacher will explain (if necessary) and ensure that the child understands what is expected of him/her and why his/her actions were in question.
4. The teacher will redirect the child by offering choices.
5. Should the behavior persist, the teacher will give a verbal warning. The warning will be direct and with a natural consequence: e.g., "Keep the craft supplies on the craft table, or you will have to leave the table.
6. Parents will be contacted with a red slip when the behavior has led to the child being placed in timeout.
7. Should the unacceptable behavior continue throughout the day and/or it has become aggressive in nature, Trinity Lutheran's Early Childhood "Aggressive Behavior Policy" will be implemented.

Please note: We will keep parents informed either via email or phone call of any incidents that are recurring in nature. With two red slips within one week and the behavior is not aggressive, a meeting will occur with the parents and the teacher.

Disruptive Behavior Policy

Disruptive Behavior is defined as a disorderly act that might include but is not limited to that which disrespects, disrupts, and/or might threaten or harm property or person to the point that it interferes with an orderly classroom, teaching process and/or learning.

The steps of our Behavior Policy will be followed first, but when disruptive behavior interferes with the teaching process, the following steps will be taken:

1. The child will be removed from the group, and another teacher or administrator may be called to either cover the classroom so that the lead teacher can speak with and try to calm the child, or the administrator will remove the child from the classroom and try to help the child calm themselves. A red note will be sent home with the child, and then the teacher will contact you through email or phone by the end of the day.
2. If the disruptive behavior continues and/or a second red note is sent home, a meeting will be scheduled with the classroom teacher, early childhood director, and parent(s) to implement a behavior plan.
3. Once the behavior plan has been implemented, a two-week period will be given to use the plan. After two weeks, if the disruptive behavior continues, we will move on to steps #2, 3 & 4 of the Aggressive Behavior Policy.

Aggressive Behavior Policy

As Early Childhood Educators and administrators, we are responsible for ensuring the physical safety and total well-being of each precious child of God in our care. Trinity Early Childhood has adopted the following policy regarding aggressive behavior.

Aggression means “any physical act which may cause placing him/herself, other children and/or staff members within the program in an emotional, physical, harmful, hurtful or unsafe situation.”

If, after following the Behavior Management Policy, the student’s behavior continues to escalate, endangering self and others, we will implement the following procedures:

1. The child will be removed from the group, and the teacher will work to stop the aggressive behavior using different strategies; an administrator may be called if the child cannot calm themselves. Parents will receive a contact from the teacher by the end of the day.

2. If the aggressive behavior repeats itself during any of the following days or weeks, the parent/guardian or alternate pick-up person (in that order) will be contacted to pick up their child immediately.
3. The child may return to school the next day.
4. When the child is sent home, a meeting will occur asap to discuss behavior and strategies. This meeting will include parents, teachers, and an administrator so that the home and school are working together to support the child.
5. Once the parent/guardian has been called for pick-up on two occasions, the child's program privileges will be suspended until the following steps occur.

The following steps will be expedited:

6. The teacher and administration will meet to discuss the aggressive behavior.
7. A meeting with parent/guardian, teacher, and school administration will be held to discuss all strategies implemented and what type of plan or support is helping or if a behavior change is being observed.
8. After the second meeting, a decision will be made to impose one of the following:
 - a. limiting the child's hours of attendance
 - b. suspension of program attendance for an agreed-upon length of time
 - c. complete removal from the program.

Snacks/Milk/Lunch



Morning snacks are provided by the parents and are served every day. A snack calendar will be sent home for the year or by semester. We request that the snacks brought to school be nutritious, except for birthday or half-birthday celebrations when a sweet treat may be brought. Please send store-bought snacks divided into individual servings. An example would be buying a giant container of goldfish :) and then dividing them into individual servings before sending them to school.

We have a refrigerator in each early childhood classroom to store perishable items until snack time. The teacher will also make parents aware of any food allergies in the classroom.

Snack Time milk may be purchased from the hot lunch program. For those students who stay all day, there is a choice of hot lunch or carrying their lunch from home. Milk is available with the hot lunch or can be purchased separately for a cold lunch.

The school provides an afternoon snack for all-day programs.

Health Policies

The following health policies are in place. A child who has been ill will not be re-admitted until his temperature has been normal for at least 24 hours without the aid of fever-reducing medications. Please also keep your child home for 24 hours after vomiting. This is to prevent passing the contagious illness to others. Please report all illnesses to the school office (829-7513). If your child should become ill while at school, we will do our best to contact you. If neither parent can be reached, we will call the person you have listed on the Emergency Form. We request that if you are called to pick up a sick child, you do so within 30 minutes of the phone call.



Clothing

We ask for your help seeing that your child is dressed appropriately for the activities planned for the day. Dress your child in comfortable, washable clothes that allow freedom of movement and some messy activities. Please also dress your child in clothing that can be undone and changed easily. Belts and buttons can be tough for children to use. We don't want you or your child to worry about ruining dressy clothes. Also, dress your child appropriately for the weather. Please look at the temperature for the morning hours (when we have our first recess) when deciding on the weight of coat to send for the day. Tennis shoes (with Velcro closure) and socks are highly recommended for all children. **Backless sandals and flip-flops are prohibited.**

Dress Code

The school council and the faculty of Trinity Lutheran School request all pupils dress in a manner that befits a Christian who lives to show honor to Christ.

The following guidelines are for Preschool through kindergarten:

Students may not wear the following:

1. Shirts with wording or pictures of poor taste.
2. Hats of any kind in the building.(Unless it is a special event.)
3. Flip-flops or sandals without backs.

Please do wear:

1. Shorts, tights, or bloomers under dresses.
2. Socks or tights with any type of shoes.
3. Soft-soled, non-marking shoes.
4. Comfortable play clothes.
5. Clothes that are easily undone and changed.
(Stay away from buttons & belts if possible.)



Potty Training

All preschool students should be potty-trained by the start of school. Being in "pull-ups" does not constitute being fully potty-trained.

Why do children have to be potty-trained before they begin preschool?

There are strict standards for changing and disposing of wet or soiled diapers.

The classrooms are not equipped for diaper changing.

When an adult is busy changing a child's wet/soiled clothing, it takes away from learning time for all students and removes the adult from direct supervision of and interaction with the rest of the class - this becomes a safety issue.

We do understand that even potty-trained children will occasionally have toileting accidents. By definition, "accidents" are unusual incidents and should happen infrequently. In these instances, the teachers will help children to change their clothes, encouraging independence as much as possible.

A potty-trained child is a child who can do the following:

1. Communicate to the teacher(s) that he/she needs to go to the restroom before they need to go.
2. Alert him/herself to stop what he/she is doing to use the bathroom.
3. Pull down his/her clothes and get them back up without help.
4. Wipe him/herself after using the toilet. (With minimal help for 3-year-olds.)
5. Get on/off the toilet by him/herself.
6. Wash and dry hands.
7. Postpone going if they must wait for someone in the bathroom or if we are away from the classroom.

We certainly will ask your child many times throughout the day and always before nap time (for full-day students) if they need to use the bathroom. A teacher will assist children as needed, but **CHILDREN SHOULD BE ABLE TO COMPLETE TOILETING ACTIVITIES INDEPENDENTLY**. This is an issue that protects all concerned.

It is not uncommon for a fully potty-trained child to have a setback when he/she is in a new environment. We understand each child arrives at this milestone differently; therefore, **we will allow 4 weeks from the first day of school for your child to demonstrate accomplishment of this goal**. Pull-ups are not allowed during the 4-week grace period, except for three-year-old students, and then only at rest time. However, if the situation is not manageable within the classroom environment, we will discuss the issue with the parents and reserve the right to suspend the child's attendance at such a time.

At any time during the school year, if a child has a bowel movement and does not make it to the bathroom, the parents will be called to come and clean them up.

After the first 4 weeks of school, the following policies will be in place for children who have accidents (urine or a bowel movement) outside of nap time(full-day students).

- A. The teacher will meet with the child's parent to determine a cause and/or if a plan of action can be developed to help the child be successful.
- B. If the student continues to have repeated accidents, the parent/caregiver will be called and expected to come to school to change the child or take the child home.
- C. The parent will be called for every accident after the child has had two accidents in the same week. A parent/caregiver must be at school within 30-45 minutes. If this situation doesn't improve, we will need to consider changing the students' school hours or withdrawing.
- D. For any child who has two accidents in one day, on the second accident, the parent will be called and expected to come to school to either change the child or take the child home.

Why Do We Play at School?

Play is a very important part of our early childhood program. Whether your child is in our Preschool, Pre K, or Young 5's program, they will spend part of every day in play.

Play for children is:

1. Symbolic and meaningful. It helps children to act out their problems, worries, and fears.
2. Social. It helps children to regulate their emotions.
3. Using and developing imagination.
4. Governed by rules and roles
5. Filled with language.
6. Facilitated by adults.
7. THE WAY THAT CHILDREN LEARN!
8. Often misunderstood.

Importance of Play in Early Childhood Years:

1. Socialization (getting along with others).
2. Discovery Learning (helps children to problem solve).
3. Helps children to develop empathy and care for others.
4. Helps to develop emerging academic skills.

Purpose of play in Early Childhood Years:

1. Language development.
2. Social learning
3. Learning to be part of a group
4. Cognitive development

How does play create learning?

1. Self-directed play in a safe environment teaches decision-making.
2. Negotiating with peers teaches language skills, problem-solving, and recognition of others' feelings.
3. Discovery learning indulges a child's sense of wonder and independence.
4. Questions about their play help children set a plan, make decisions, and think at a higher level.

What is the teacher's role in play?

1. A teacher should provide lots of time for play.
2. Create an independence-promoting environment (this means the child can walk in the door and find everything they need for play or ask the teacher to find it).
3. A teacher should provide multi-purpose props.
4. Helping plan the play (ask the children when they arrive what they will play today).
5. Providing a safe environment
6. Helping to act out stories.
7. Settle disputes
8. Replace violent play.

Creating self-confidence through a love of learning.

1. Through play, children foster their love of trying new things.
2. Fostering this love instills the desire to continue learning.
3. This love - developed early-creates children who desire to learn. By fostering this desire, children continue to grow confident in their abilities to face new ideas, environments, and people, resulting in learning!