

Bethlehem Preschool Parent Handbook

2020-2021



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. Our preschool holds a yearly membership with the **Edmonton Preschool Association and Lutheran Teachers Association**, allowing excellent opportunities for professional development.

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 and gymnasium, and on neighborhood walks and field trips.

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.**



Learning Centers

Our classroom is **large** and **spacious**, and can accommodate **many different learning centers**. Activities in centers change with each new theme. Our most common centers are:

- 1) **Sensory Table:** a non-threatening choice when children arrive. Children play with accessories and plastic confetti, colored rice, wheat, modeling clay, etc.
- 2) **Water Table:** a relaxing place to interact with other children and explore the properties of water.
- 3) **Block Corner:** a place to construct items made from building toys, and play with activity sets (castle, space, farm, house, garage, train etc.)
- 4) **Puzzle and Game Center:** a place to assemble one of our many puzzles, and play games that include letters, numbers, shapes, colors, patterns, sorting, sequencing and problem solving.
- 5) **Music Center:** a place to listen to music and taped storybooks, and to experiment with musical instruments.
- 6) **Dramatic Center:** A chance to be a firefighter, train engineer/passenger, astronaut, doctor, chef, baker, grocer, etc. in our rotating dramatic centers.
- 7) **Library Corner:** an opportunity to view books from our own collection and the local libraries.
- 8) **Art Center:** a place to draw and paint using a variety of mediums, and to make collages, pictures and crafts with an assortment of materials.
- 9) **Science/Discovery Table:** a place to observe objects and perform scientific experiments.
- 10) **Light Table:** a place to experiment with color, manipulate colorful objects, build with transparent materials, and trace letters, numbers and shapes.
- 11) **Communication Center:** a place to draw pictures, practice writing letters and words, and send and receive mail.
- 12) **Flannel Board:** a place to make pictures with felt figures and shapes.

Gymnasium play is included in each day's activities. Children participate in group games and activities, and play with our gymnasium equipment. **This is the children's favorite time of the day!**

Animated Literacy Program

Our preschool uses the **Animated Literacy Program** by **Jim Stone** 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!**



Field Trips



Several **field trips** are planned during the year. They usually complement a theme or classroom activity. Suggestions for field trips are welcome, as we are always looking for new ideas.

Guests

Guests visit our classroom to tell us about their career, teach us a special skill, give a presentation, demonstrate an art technique, introduce a musical instrument, help us cook or bake, or simply entertain us! Visits from guests provide us with “**in house field trip**” experiences.



Birthdays



Children’s **birthdays** are recognized the **preschool day nearest their special day**. Where possible, the parent of the birthday child is assigned as helper for that day. Parents may bring a **birthday snack** if they wish.

Social Events

Preschool **parties and/or potluck events** are planned for families to attend during the year. **Grandparents, special friends, parents and siblings are welcome to join us at these events. Our social events are always well attended.**



A Typical Preschool Day

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

9:35: **Clean up time.**

9:40: **Group Time #1: A devotion is given.** This often includes a **Bible story** or lesson about a Christian principle, a song, memory verse and prayer. **Theme activities** and/or the **alphabet letter of the day** are introduced.

10:05: **Art/Fine Motor Time:** Children participate in **1 – 2 art and craft activities**, i.e. painting, gluing, coloring, cutting, tracing, lacing, etc.



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: **Gymnasium Time:** Children participate in **action songs and/or group games**, and then play in small groups or independently with balls, hoops and other equipment. **A favorite activity is riding a bicycle or driving a little car.**

11:10: **Group Time #2:** Children **pick a book** to look at on their mat. They sing songs, learn fingerplays, and listen to stories.

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



Preschool Items To Bring

- 1) A pair of **indoor shoes with non-marking soles**, to be kept at school if possible. Please label them – in case another preschool child has the same pair of shoes.
- 2) A **change of clothes** (to be kept at school in case of an accident).
- 3) A **backpack** (optional).



Dress Code

Please send your children to school in to wear aprons for messy art activities still get stains on their clothing. Play clothes are also most suitable for gymnasium play.

play clothes. Children are asked and water play, but sometimes

Communication



A periodic **newsletter** (at least once a month) highlights **themes, activities, field trips, birthdays, visitors and special events.**

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. 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 his/her positive behaviors, interests, and strengths. A **DVD containing pictures and text** about the year is also included.

The teacher works hard at providing a stimulating, developmentally appropriate program.

Parent input is valued. Please feel free to contact the teacher at anytime 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.

Parent Volunteers

Bethlehem Preschool offers choices for parent involvement:

Partial co-op option: Parents volunteer in the classroom once **every 4 – 5 weeks**, as indicated on periodic parent helper rosters. A caregiver, grandparent, aunt/uncle or other significant person may take the place of a parent volunteer. Parents participate in two small fundraisers. Committee meetings and janitorial work are not required.

Please make child care arrangements for younger siblings on helper days. Younger children often have difficulty **sharing mom** with the whole class.



If you are unable to come on a helper day assigned to you, you are asked to **arrange for someone else to fill your spot**. A **\$40.00** fee will be charged to a parent who does not come in and does not arrange for a substitute on his/her helping day.

Non co-op option: No parent helper days, fundraising, committee meetings or janitorial work required. A program fee is due in September. Monthly fees are higher.

For more information see **Fundraiser Policy – page 8**, and **Enrolment Policy – page 13**.

Toy Cleaning



Toy cleaning sessions are held periodically. Preschool families are asked to pick a time slot to do **one hour** of toy cleaning during the year. This is a great opportunity for parents to meet and socialize with each other, and **ensures that our toys stay clean**. A fee of **\$20.00 (cash or cheque)** may be submitted in lieu of toy cleaning.

Additional Volunteer Opportunities



Bethlehem Preschool offers a **full program with many different activities**. When parents share their skills and help make special activities and events possible, it enriches the children's preschool experience. Preschool parents may select **one or more jobs** from a list that is handed out each year. Most jobs involve a **minimal time commitment**, and many can be shared.

Fundraising

In order for Bethlehem Preschool to offer **similar or lower monthly fees** to other preschools in the area, parents are asked to participate in **two fundraisers** per preschool year (**partial co-op option only**). **Fundraiser goals are reasonable** and not meant to be a burden on anyone. Funds raised help pay for preschool toys and supplies and a portion of field trip fees. They also help us operate on a "break even" budget. **There are NO casinos or bingos.**

Current fundraisers are:

Fall: Selling **one or two cases of chocolate almonds**.
(each case contains **30 boxes** of product that sell for **\$3.00 each**.
Parents may opt to pay **\$35.00** instead of participating in this fundraiser.

Spring: Selling **Widynowski Sausage House** and **Vesey's Flower Bulb** products.
Parents may opt to pay **\$35.00** instead of participating in this fundraiser.



In the **non co-op option**, no fundraisers are required. Instead, a **\$70.00 program fee** is due in early September.

Parent Helper Guide (For Classroom Duty Days)

Parents are asked to come **ten minutes** before class starts.

8:50: Review the **Parent Helper Guide, Discipline Policy, and Emergency Evacuation And Fire Drill Procedure** (posted in the kitchen above the sink). Make sure your **snack** is ready to go. Help get children involved in **activities** in the classroom. **Enjoy spending time with your preschool child!**

9:35: Help children **clean up toys** and sit on their mats for our first **Group Time**. Encourage children to sit quietly for listening activities and participate constructively in songs/fingerplays etc. Sit next to the children.

10:05:



Help children get settled at one of the **art tables** or **activity centers**. Supervise the activity assigned by the teacher. Encourage children to **write their name** on the top left hand corner of their art projects, or write children's names. **Disinfect the snack tables at 10:30 a.m.**

10:25: Help children line up. Take one group of children to the **bathroom**. Help them get seated at one of the snack tables. After a prayer is said, **pass out the snack**. Encourage children to use good **table manners** when asking for more snack. Remind children to throw their napkin in the garbage and put their cup on the tray (**clean up their spot**) when they are called to line up.

10:50: Accompany the teacher and children to our **gymnasium**. Participate in games with them. After children are given permission to play with the equipment, go downstairs and complete all relevant duties on the Parent Helper Clean Up Checklist. **Rejoin the class in gym by 11:10 a.m.**



11:10: **Help children put away toys in the gymnasium**. Assist children in sitting quietly, lining up, and going back downstairs. Help them **pick out a book** from the library shelf and take it to their mat. Encourage children to quietly read the book they have chosen and listen to stories.

11:25: **Help children get dressed to go home**. When the room is straightened and most parents have picked up their children you are free to go home.

Snacks

The assigned parent of the day brings a nutritious snack for the children. The drink should consist of a milk product or unsweetened fruit juice, and the snack should contain foods from two of the following food groups:

- 1) **Bread and Cereal** (i.e. sandwiches, muffins, crackers, rice krispie squares)
- 2) **Fruit and Vegetables** (i.e. apples, oranges, melons, grapes, carrots, celery, cucumbers)
- 3) **Meat and Protein** (i.e. sausage, ham, cheese)
- 4) **Milk Products** (i.e. milk, chocolate milk, cheese, yoghurt)



All foods served must be store bought or prepared in a professional kitchen.

Food (i.e. sandwiches and baking) prepared at home are not allowed (except for potluck events). Please have everything cut up and ready to go when you arrive at school.

Serve snack in small portions, i.e. half a granola bar, muffin or sandwich. This helps eliminate food waste.

There may be children with food allergies in the classroom. **These allergies will be posted in the kitchen and listed on each roster** . All parents are asked to refrain from bringing products with **nuts/peanut butter** to school.

Field Trip Policy

Advance notice will be given before all trips. Parents receive a permission slip to be signed and returned to school if they wish to have their children attend. (Parents must consent in writing to have their child attend a field trip).

Our method of transportation for most trips is vehicles driven by parents. Parents are asked to drive their children to the field trip site. They may stay and help supervise or pick their children up from the field trip site at a specified time. The location of most field trips will be close to our school.

A minimum of one parent supervisor to three preschool children is required for each field trip. Parent participation is encouraged!



Parents may arrange to have another preschool parent (or the teacher) transport their child to/from a field trip. **Drivers need \$2,000,000 liability insurance in order to transport parents/children other than their own in their vehicle.**

Classes may be combined for a field trip. This will involve a **time change** for one or both classes. Then the scheduled field trip will replace the regular class time.

The teacher takes the **portable emergency file** and a **first aid kit** on each field trip.

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.

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, volunteers, 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.



Discipline 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.

Disciplinary action taken is reasonable in the circumstances. The following 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 in discipline:

- 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.

Children are given **positive feedback** after each disciplinary incident to reassure them that they are loved and cared for.

Parents will be contacted to discuss any serious incidents of misbehavior. If a solution to a behavior cannot be reached, (taking in consideration the resources the preschool has available), parents will be asked to withdraw their child from the preschool.

The **Discipline Policy** is included in the **Parent Handbook**, and is **posted in the kitchen and on the bulletin board** inside our classroom. Teacher assistants, volunteers and preschool parents are asked to review it at the start of each preschool year and at the beginning of each helper day. Teachers need to review it a minimum of four times a year.



Enrolment Policy

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

Tuition Fees

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

Bethlehem Preschool provides **alternatives for parent involvement and fee schedules.** The following choices are available:

Partial Co-op Option:

One parent helper day every four to five weeks, participation in two small fundraisers. Committee meetings and janitorial work are not required. There are no casinos or bingos.

Days Attending:	Annual Fee	Two Payments (Sept.10, Feb.1)	Monthly (First day of month)	Program Fee
2 days a week	\$1000.00	\$500.00	\$100.00	0
3 days a week	\$1250.00	\$625.00	\$125.00	0

Non Co-op Option:

NO parent helper days, fundraisers, committee meetings or janitorial work required.

Days attending:	Annual Fee	Two payments (Sept. 10, Feb. 1)	Monthly (First day of month)	Program Fee (Sept. 10)
2 days a week	\$1300.00	\$650.00	\$130.00	\$70.00
3 days a week	\$1550.00	\$775.00	\$155.00	\$70.00

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

Tuition receipts will be issued for payments made.

There are no refunds for family vacations, or Christmas and Spring Break. Please give **two weeks notice** if you plan to withdraw your child.



Registration Forms

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

- 1) Registration Form
- 2) Health Record
- 3) Neighborhood Walk Permission Slip
- 4) Emergency Medical Attention Permission Slip
- 5) Permission To Display Pictures Form
- 6) Permission To Administer Medication Form (if applicable)

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!

