



Trinity Lutheran Childcare
Preschool & Kindergarten

**PARENT
INFORMATION
HANDBOOK**

Revised 8-1-2008

INTRODUCTION

Trinity Lutheran Preschool and Childcare Center is a non-profit organization operated by Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church through the authority of the church's Board of Christian School Education. The church office is located in the school building at 331 George Street, West Chicago, Illinois, 60185. The Center Director has the daily responsibility for conducting the center's program.

Trinity Lutheran Preschool and Childcare Center considers itself a Christian school. Religious education takes place in the form of daily meal prayers, and religious songs, stories, and lessons. While Lutheran in orientation, the religious education is based on a broad Christian understanding that is applicable to any Protestant or Catholic denomination.

HISTORY AND PURPOSE

Trinity Lutheran Preschool and Childcare Center (Center) was established through the support of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church (Trinity). In February 1982, the voters of Trinity approved a proposal to expand the program to include childcare and kindergarten. The purpose of this Center is to provide opportunities for children to grow and develop spiritually, emotionally, socially, cognitively, and physically. In an atmosphere of Christian love, the Center provides rich, varied educational experiences accompanied by the strong emotional support children need.

PHILOSOPHY

The early childhood years are an important time of development for children. Most of the potential for learning is established by the age of six. During this time, children need a stimulating environment in which they can build on their own knowledge, through many "hands on" experiences and through their own style and pace of learning. Many opportunities are provided for the children to explore and manipulate a variety of materials.

Play is a very important part of an early childhood classroom. Through play, children develop social skills, learning to handle their emotions, and learning much about the world. Because play is a child's work, considerable time will be spent work-playing.

The family is the most important and influential factor in a child's life. That is why a child's first experience in school should be in a warm, nurturing environment that is as much like a family as is possible. Each child is treated with love and respect and as a very special child of God. Each child's needs and interests are kept in mind in the planning of curriculum and in daily activities.

OBJECTIVES

At the Center, your children will participate in activities that form important foundations for later learning. They will have a variety of experiences that will help them develop wholesome social relationships, emotional stability and a healthy self-concept. You will be able to leave your child knowing they are well cared for in a secure, loving environment. You can work together with the staff toward the best interests of the children by developing a greater understanding of child development and nurturing, assisting both in and out of the classroom, and sharing the exciting opportunity of leading little children to the Christian faith.

ENROLLMENT AND NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICIES

The Center admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin. The Center is not licensed as a special needs program. Enrollment in such cases shall be based on an evaluation by the Center staff to determine whether the programs and staff can reasonably meet the needs of the child. Trinity Lutheran church members do get first preference for placement.

The Center reserves the right to discharge any child when:

1. The director and staff agree that a specific child is disrupting the total educational and nurturing environment.
2. The director and staff agree that a specific child's needs could best be met in some type of special education program. In such cases, the parents and director will meet to discuss the options available.
3. A child has toileting problems that interfere with the time the teacher has to spend with the other children.
4. A parent demonstrates unwillingness to comply with the tuition or health policies set by the Center.

Freedom of Information Act - The Center will not release any information on a child or family without express written consent of the parent/guardian, except by court order.

DAILY ADMISSION POLICIES

CHILDCARE - The Center opens at 7:00 a.m. and closes at 6:00 p.m. Parents may drop off and pick up their children any time between those hours. Please do not enter the building before 6:55 a.m., as this is time for the teachers to get the Center ready.

When children arrive at the Center, they must be accompanied by a parent/guardian or someone specified by the parent/guardian. Each child must be presented to a staff member and signed in on the class sign in/out sheet.

PRESCHOOL/HALF-DAY KINDERGARTEN - Morning preschool begins at 9:00 a.m. (8:30 a.m. for Preschool Plus) and ends at 11:30 a.m. Kindergarten begins at 8:30 a.m. and ends at 11:30 a.m.(3:00 p.m. for full-day kindergarten). Please do not drop your child off more than five minutes before the scheduled start time of the class. Children arriving more than five minutes before the start of the class are required to wait in the hallway with their parent/guardian until five minutes before the class begins.

ALL CLASSES - When children arrive at the Center, they must be accompanied by a parent, guardian, or someone specified by the parent or guardian in writing. Each child must be presented to a staff member and signed in on the sign in/out sheet.

DISMISSAL POLICY

When leaving the Center, no child will be released to any person other than the parent/guardian or a previously authorized individual. Identification may be required at the time of pick-up. Before leaving, children must be signed out on the class sign in/out sheet. The Center assumes no responsibility for children once the parent has signed the child out. This includes the hallways and parking lot areas.

LATE PICK-UP POLICY

CHILDCARE: The center closes at 6:00 p.m. Children that are picked up after 6:01 p.m. will be charged \$16.50 for every fifteen minutes the child remains at the center. In the event of a late pick-up, a parent/guardian will be contacted. If a parent/guardian can not be reached within the first fifteen minutes, the emergency contact person will be contacted. The Center staff will make no less than 3 attempts to reach an authorized pick-up person. If 45 minutes have past, the police or DCFS will be contacted for assistance. The staff member will remain with the child after closing. No discussion of the late occurrence will be held in the presence of the child and no responsibility will be placed on the child.

PRESCHOOL/KINDERGARTEN: Children who are not picked up by five minutes after the end of class will be charged at \$16.50 late fee for ever fifteen minutes that child remains at the center.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING

Emergency school closing information can be obtained from these local radio and television stations.

AM - WBBM 78
WGN 720
Television - CBS 2 WGN 9
NBC 5 FOX 32
ABC 7 CLTV

There is no refund for emergency closings.

HEALTH POLICIES

1. **Health Examinations and Immunizations** - In cooperation with the DuPage County Public Health Department and the State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, the school requires that all children entering the Center have a certificate of good health dated within six months prior to entrance and signed by a physician. Medical forms are required at the time the child is admitted to the Center and Immunizations must be up to date.

2. **Medication Administration-** Staff members may give medicine to children only if all of the following conditions are met:
 - a. The medication is a personal prescription from a physician. If it is a non-prescription medication (e.g. aspirin, cough medicines) it must be accompanied by physician's note and labeled accordingly.
 - b. The label lists the child's name.
 - c. The label lists directions for administering the medication.
 - d. The label lists the date, physician's name, prescription number, and pharmacy name.
 - e. Parent/guardian has filled out completely a Medication Administration log sheet and has given it to a staff member, as required by the IL Department of Children and Family Services.

Staff members have the responsibility of receiving, properly storing, and returning, all medications.

3. **Sick children** - A child will not be admitted to the center on a given day if the child is determined to be ill by the staff member who greets the child upon arrival. Any child showing signs of diarrhea, vomiting, pink eye, fever, or lice will not be admitted. The following conditions are also applicable.
 - a. If a child has been ill the night before a school day, do not send them to the Center in the morning. A child will be sent home if in the staff's opinion

the child is too ill to remain at the Center. The child's parent/guardian will be called and they must make arrangements to pick up the child.

- b. A child needs to be fever free for 24 hours before attending school. When we send a child home with a fever, they may re-enter their class after the 24-hour period.
- c. A child placed on antibiotic medicines can return after 24 hours has elapsed from the start of the antibiotic.
- d. A doctor's note of approval is required for the return of a child after an extended illness of 5 consecutive class days.
- e. Vomiting two more times in the previous 24 hours, unless the vomiting is determined to be due to a noncommunicable condition and the child is not in danger of dehydration.

4. **Communicable Disease Policy** - Students with communicable diseases will be dealt with in accordance with county, state, and federal regulations.

- a. **Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)** - There are two types of pink eye: bacterial and viral. It is difficult to distinguish between the two. Treatment with eye drops and/or antibiotics are only effective against bacterial pink eye. Therefore, when a child is diagnosed as having pink eye and has begun treatment, the child may return to school **ONLY** when their eyes are clear and matter free, as determined by staff or with a written note from a physician. This will help prevent a contagious child returning to school too soon and reduce the risk of infection to other children.

- b. **Head lice** - We encourage you to check your children for head lice. Head lice do not carry disease, nor does their presence indicate that your child is dirty. However, to prevent further spread in the school, this condition should be treated at once. You are encouraged to consult your physician for his recommendations. Upon return to school, your child must present proof of treatment (e.g., note from you or your doctor). Your child will be rechecked--and if treatment was not satisfactory, they will not be readmitted to school. Please remind your children to avoid sharing hats, combs, or brushes.

- c. **Reporting communicable disease** - Please notify the Center office if your child will be absent or has a communicable disease (e.g. Strep, pinkeye, or head lice). We are required to report all communicable diseases to the Public Health Department. Parents will be notified if the children have been exposed to a communicable disease at school.

5. **Emergency Medical Aid** - According to the Emergency Information Form signed by the parent/guardian upon enrollment of their children, the Center will seek treatment for children from a qualified, licensed medical doctor in the event of a medical emergency which, in the opinion of the licensed, medical doctor, may endanger their life, cause disfigurement, physical impairment or undue discomfort, if delayed. This action will be taken only after a reasonable effort has been made to reach the parent/guardian. Parents shall update the Emergency Information Form annually. Staff will be recertified in CPR annually.

6. **Handwashing** – Washing hands is the first line of defense in preventing transmission of germs that can cause illness. We know you and your child practice this at home. DCFS requires that children wash their hands routinely and frequently with soap and water at least at the following times:
 - a. Upon arrival at the center.
 - b. Before and after each meal or snack.
 - c. After using the toilet, wiping or blowing his/her nose, or touching items soiled with body fluids or wastes.
 - d. Before and after cooking or other food experiences.
 - e. After outdoor playtime.
 - f. Before and after using the water table.

Parents need to accompany their child as they wash their hands upon arrival at the center. This is very much appreciated and we thank you in advance.

TUITION POLICY

WEEKLY TUITION

TUITION: Tuition is due the first day the child is scheduled to attend. A \$30.00 late fee will be charged if tuition is not paid by the third day of the week the child is scheduled to attend. Tuition is not reduced at any time due to personal illness, absence, or scheduled holidays. Payments should be placed in the black tuition payment box located outside of the center director's office. If tuition is two weeks in arrears and arrangements have not been made with the director in advance, then termination of services will result.

WITHDRAWALS - If you find it necessary to withdraw your child, **one week's** notice should be given in writing to the director so that your child's position in the class can be filled. If this advance notice is not given, one week's additional tuition is required. Records will not be released or transferred until all fees have been paid.

MONTHLY TUITION

TUITION: Tuition is due on the first day of the month that your child is scheduled to attend. Tuition is not reduced at any time due to personal illness, absence, or scheduled holidays. Payments should be placed in the black tuition payment box located outside of the center director's office. If tuition is two weeks in arrears and arrangements have not been made with the director in advance, then termination of services will result.

WITHDRAWALS - If you find it necessary to withdraw your child, one week's notice is required. If one week's advance notice is not given, one month's additional tuition will be required. No refund of tuition will be made. Records will not be released or transferred until all fees have been paid.

RETURNED CHECK FEE

A fee of **\$25.00** will be levied for each check returned to the Center by the bank.

VACATION POLICY

CHILDCARE - KINDERGARTEN CHILDCARE - Each academic year, from September to August, CHILDCARE and KINDERGARTEN CHILDCARE children may take ten days vacation in five-day blocks of time, for which full tuition will not be required. These discounted vacation blocks must be five days in succession, Monday through Friday and the charge for these times will be **\$100.00** per week. This reduced tuition rate retains your child's enrollment in the class. This policy is allowed for vacation, unplanned illness (cannot pay unplanned illness fee in advance), etc. This fee must be paid prior to the vacation. Please let your child's teacher or the director know one week in advance when your child will not be in attendance.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Although every attempt is made to safeguard your child's belongings, the Center does not accept any responsibility for loss, theft, or damage to items brought from the home. Marking extra clothing, etc., with laundry pen will help insure safe return in the event of a loss and a "Lost and Found" box can be found in the hall near director's office.

SOLICITATION POLICY

It is the policy of Trinity Lutheran Preschool and Childcare Center to not endorse/represent or act as salespersons for outside organizations. This does not preclude the use of specific organizations and products for the Center's own fundraising projects.

MAILING LISTS

It is the policy of Trinity Lutheran Preschool and Childcare Center not to sell, provide, or make available to outside individuals or organizations the Center's student, parent, or staff mailing lists or information.

BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays are special occasions; the Center would like to help your child celebrate. Though it is not necessary, you may want to send a special treat that your can share with the other children. Please let your child's teacher know beforehand if you are planning to send a treat on your child's birthday. Due to Health Department regulations, only store bought treats will be allowed to be given to the children.

CAMPBELL'S LABELS, BOX TOPS FOR EDUCATION and TYSON PROJECT A+

The Center takes part in the Campbell's Labels for Education Program, Box Tops for Education, and Tyson Project A+. Please save your labels, box tops, and Tyson (Support Your School) labels for us. Campbell's only requires the UPC label from the product to receive credit.

PROGRAM

FREE CHOICE OF INTEREST CENTERS - Each child can choose from a variety of planned activities. The emphases are on problem solving, decision-making and fine motor development. Many activities will center around the weekly classroom theme.

GROUP TIME - This involves all of the children in a planned lesson. It may include Jesus Time, and concept development based on a theme, movement activities, music, stories, songs and finger plays. Teachers use a variety of methods to make the lessons more interesting and understandable for the children. Listening and speaking skills are emphasized at this time.

SNACK TIME - This is a time when the children can eat, drink, and share conversation together. Self-help skills are strengthened as children help prepare snacks and pour their own juice. Children are encouraged to clean up after themselves when they are finished. Snacks will be a variety of nutritious foods served with fruit juice or milk.

LUNCH TIME - The childcare and kindergarten childcare children are served family-style, balanced, hot lunches. The teachers and aides sit with the children at the tables. The tables are

set by the children in advance as part of their learning experience. The food is served in serving dishes so that each child has the opportunity to choose each food and the portion size. Children are never forced to eat, but they are encouraged to taste each food. Milk is served with lunch.

PLAY TIME - Children have daily opportunities to play both in and out of doors. Social interaction and large muscle development are stressed at this time.

OUTDOOR PLAY - Weather permitting we go outside every day. In the event of rain or cold weather (ten degrees or below) we use the circle time areas within the classroom for large motor activities. Mittens, hats, boots and scarves are a must for cold weather. Boots large enough for a child to manage will provide a sense of independence. Please mark all clothing with your child's name.

We realize after a severe cold or illness it is advisable to keep children inside for a few days. However, we do not have enough staff to stay indoors with your child and adequately staff the playground. Therefore, no child may stay indoors during outdoor play.

NAP/REST TIME - Childcare classes also include a quiet afternoon nap/rest time on cots.

ANIMALS IN THE BUILDING

ALL ANIMALS MUST BE PREAPPROVED BY THE DIRECTOR OR ACTING DIRECTOR IN ADVANCE OF THE VISIT. CLASSROOM TEACHERS DO NOT HAVE THIS AUTHORITY.

Healthy household pets that present no danger to children are permitted on the premises unless prohibited by local health regulations. The presence of monkeys, ferrets, turtles, iguanas, psittacine birds, (birds of the parrot family) or any wild or dangerous animal is prohibited in the childcare center.

All animals shall be physically separated from children both indoors and outdoors except as a portion of a specifically planned activity under the direct supervision of a staff member.

Please do not bring pets into the school building or onto the school playground at any time upon arrival or pick up of your child. Thank you.

DISCIPLINE

"Guidance/discipline" means the ongoing process of helping children to develop inner controls so that they can manage their own behavior in socially acceptable ways.

We encourage children to work through their problems with guidance from the Trinity staff. We also try to help children use their own thinking and language communication skills. At times children need **redirection** to other activities. If a child appears bewildered or uncertain, teachers/aides will try to help them get interested in an activity. Providing many good choices and keeping children active and busy is the key to happy children. One of our primary goals in our work with young children is to foster positive self-esteem which will help the child feel good about him/herself.

In order to encourage socialization, provide a safe environment for learning and growing, and maintain order in the classrooms we have developed a list of:

Classroom Limits and Rules

1. Children will take care of themselves, others, toys and materials.
2. We use our words to work out problems, not our fists or feet.
3. We walk indoors--running may be done outside.
4. Children need to lower their voices when inside.
5. Children and teacher will respect others' rights and materials.
6. Children will check with teacher/aide before leaving the classroom.
7. Children are expected to join the class at grouptime. They are encouraged but never forced to participate in activities. All children need to sit quietly while the teacher/other children are talking, reading, etc., at grouptime. They need to respect the right of others to be heard.
8. DCFS requires that children will wash their hands routinely and frequently with soap and water. See HEALTH SECTION on HANDWASHING.
9. When walking in the hallway or outside, children will walk safely and quietly with their class .
10. Toys are to remain in specified areas of play: block area, housekeeping, dramatic play, art, science, reading readiness, etc.
11. Teacher/aide will monitor the number of children in each learning area at any one time.
12. Children will clean up after themselves after they have finished with materials or toys.
13. Every child is encouraged to help other children during cleanup time.
14. Art table may be used for coloring/cutting/playdough, etc., during structured free-play time, as well as at scheduled art time; children are encouraged to clean up after themselves.

If a child is having difficulty following the rules of the classroom, cooperating with other children, the teacher/aide, or controlling their emotions or body, there are several options we have to help the child:

1. Children may be **redirected** to other activities.

2. The child may be helped to use their language and communication skills to mediate a solution to the problem.
3. The child may lose her/his turn with a toy or in a learning center.
4. The child may be led away from the group to gain control. Removal from the group shall not exceed one minute per year of age. The child will then be restored to the company of the group.

The Center reserves the right to discharge any child when the director and staff agree that a specific child is disrupting the total educational and nurturing environment. A written plan shall be implemented should the situation occur, giving the parents adequate time to make other child care arrangements.

CURRICULUM

The basic curriculum involves learning through discovery and play. Interesting and creative activities are provided for the children each day. The following areas are woven into weekly plans.

JESUS TIME - Lessons and activities are coordinated with our Wednesday morning worship and include religious experiences, Bible stories, songs, and prayers, all of which help children learn of the world God created and of Jesus as a friend of children.

LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE - Includes reading readiness, group discussion, listening, telling of personal experiences, puppets, creative dramatics and pretending, poetry and finger plays, songs, alphabet games, letter recognition, and printing one's own name, etc.

MATH READINESS ACTIVITIES - Includes shapes, position in space, size and weight, comparing one-to-one correspondence, counting, classification and grouping, and measuring, etc.

MUSIC - Includes songs, records, games, rhythm instruments, etc.

ART - Provides a variety of open-ended, creative art activities to help children appreciate color and form. Experimentation with many forms of media, such as paint, chalk, markers, clay and glue, is promoted. Parents are encouraged to view art as a process rather than a product.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION - Provides opportunities for running, climbing, jumping, dancing, walking, balancing, hopping, bending, twisting, and crawling, etc. Physical education also involves health and safety, self-care, and group games involving coordination.

SCIENCE AND SOCIAL STUDIES - Involves observing and experimenting during discussions of the weather, five senses, plants and animals, cooking, home, family, transportation, and community helpers, etc.

STRUCTURED FREE PLAY - Provides opportunities for children to choose to explore unit-related materials, permanent interest centers, and teacher-selected classroom materials in the classroom at the child's own pace.

PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION

The Center staff believes that successful school programs encourage mutual communication between the school and the home. The staff will try to keep you informed of school activities through newsletters and informal conversation. Please feel free to set up times to come and observe or help out in the classroom. Arrangements can be made through the director.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES - These will be scheduled at regular times during the year. If you wish to have a conference with your child's teacher at any other time, please feel free to set up a time. If your family is experiencing stress for any reason, please let your child's teacher know. A child will often exhibit unusual behavior as a reaction to stress. By informing staff of possible problems, the staff can be alert for ways to help your child have the most positive, loving experience at the Center.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PREPARE YOUR CHILD FOR SCHOOL?

Starting school is a big accomplishment in a little child's life. The best preparation on your part is a positive and confident attitude that school is a place for fun and learning and that teachers are friends. Here are some suggestions to help your child make a smooth and successful transition from home to school:

1. Encourage your children to dress themselves and be independent in taking care of toileting needs. Each child needs a weather appropriate change of clothing in a plastic bag to remain here at the Center.
2. Praise attempts at new experiences and self-expression to help build confidence and self-esteem.
3. Set behavior limits that are firm and fair so that your child will feel secure and gain self-control.
4. Provide opportunities for social experiences with other children of the same age. This will help your child feel more comfortable in a group setting.

5. If you are confident about your child's school experience, the separation anxiety that is often felt will be lessened, and the transition will be made easier.

ATTENDANCE CALENDAR

The center will be closed on the following days:

Labor Day	Good Friday
Thanksgiving	Memorial Day
Friday after Thanksgiving	Second Week in August 2 to 3 "clean-up" days
Independence Day	
Christmas Eve	
Christmas	
New Year's Day	

Preschool and Kindergarten will not be held on the following days:

Labor Day	Martin L. King B-day
Columbus Day	President's Day
Spring Break	Good Friday
Thanksgiving	Memorial day
Friday after Thanksgiving	Kindergarten Institute *Days will be announced.
Christmas Break	

*** Spring and Christmas breaks will follow West Chicago School Dist #33's schedule.**

*** Holidays will follow West Chicago School Dist #33's schedule.**

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