

FAMILY HANDBOOK

Three-year-old Class



2023-2024

Immanuel Lutheran Wee Care Preschool

Established 1989

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Immanuel Lutheran *Wee Care* Preschool

Our program offers a developmentally appropriate education and spiritual nurturing which help to realize the God-given potential in each child.

Goals

- To help families teach their students about God the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit through words and actions.
- To provide a safe environment for students.
- To encourage students to have concern for others and to learn to cooperate and share.
- To provide learning experiences in problem-solving, language and social interaction which will enable students to fully benefit from future educational opportunities ("Building Blocks for Learning")

Board of Directors

The preschool is governed by a Board of Directors. Parents are invited to attend or submit information for the monthly Board meetings to share ideas, plan activities and express opinions regarding policies and goals. Two parents shall be asked to serve on the Board each school year.

Staff

Director: *Olivia Wolf* became the Center Director in May 2023 and also serves as the 3 and 4-year-old preschool associate teacher. She graduated from the Upper Iowa University in 2022 with a B.A. in Early Childhood Education along with a Reading endorsement. Olivia enjoys spending time with friends and family. She lives in Independence, Iowa, with her parents and siblings and is a member of the Immanuel Lutheran Church.

Teacher: *Nicole Schmitz* became the 3-year-old preschool teacher in July 2023 and also serves as the 4-year-old preschool teacher since August 2015. She graduated from the University of Northern Iowa in 2014 with a B.A. in Early Childhood along with a Family Studies minor and Special Education endorsement. Nicole enjoys spending time with friends and family, being outdoors, and cooking. She lives in Independence, Iowa, with her husband and children and is a member of the St. Athanasius parish.

Classroom Associate: *Olivia Wolf*

Admissions/Eligibility

The Immanuel Lutheran Wee Care Preschool makes no discrimination in admissions or determination of enrollment on the basis of race, sex, religion, color, national origin or parental marital status.

A child must be three (3) years of age by September 15th to enroll in the three-year-old program. If the child turns three years of age before January 1st of the current school

year, the child may be enrolled once they are three years of age and toilet trained. This child would be eligible for the three-year-old program the following school year.

Toilet Training

All students must be toilet trained to be eligible for our program. This requires that a child's "accidents" are infrequent and that the child does not require the use of "pull-ups" while at school. There are stringent guidelines for the changing and disposing of diapers in schools and our facilities do not provide for this. In addition, the time spent changing takes away from all students' time spent learning. We understand children will be in a new environment at the start of the school year and we will allow for a period of transition. If *frequent** incidents occur, a child may have to withdraw from school. Open and honest communication in this area can help resolve issues.

This is to clarify the term "frequent." Children will be given two weeks to transition into the classroom. After that period, if a child has **two or more accidents within a given week**, the following procedure will go into place each time this occurs. Children are encouraged to return after they have spent the required time out of the classroom to work on this skill.

- First Incident: Child will be removed from preschool for the remainder of the week and the following week.
- Second Incident: Child will be removed from preschool for the remainder of the week and three additional weeks.
- Third Incident: Child will be removed from preschool for the remainder of the week until the end of the trimester.
- Fourth Incident: Child will be removed from the preschool for the remainder of the school year.

Additionally, a complete change of clothes (underwear, shorts or pants, shirt, and socks) is required to be in your child's backpack daily. Please understand that we are doing this for the health and sanitation of the students and the classroom.

Registration

A child may be registered through February 1st of the current school year if there is an opening. Public registration day(s) will be held at the church. Watch the newspaper and Facebook for date(s) and time(s). Parents will receive a Registration Packet for each child which includes:

- 1) A Child Information Form
- 2) An ***Immunization Card***: This must be current, signed and dated. Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) regulations require a copy to be placed in our files prior to the first day of school.
- 3) A current physical form
- 4) Parental Emergency Medical Consent Form and
- 5) Other forms as required by DHS.

We request that you return completed forms **by the first day of preschool.**

A fee of \$25.00 per child will be paid at the time of registration to help cover the cost of supplies and to reserve a place for your child in the class. Class size is limited and those who register and promptly pay the registration fee will be given priority. Your child will not be considered registered until the registration fee has been paid. This fee is non-refundable. Checks should be written to Immanuel Lutheran Wee Care Preschool.

Orientation

Registered students and their families will be contacted regarding a home or school visit, followed by a preschool visitation time for your child to become familiar with the preschool. New students and family members are encouraged to attend the visitation session. We would like your child's preschool experience to be a "family affair." The purpose of these sessions is to ease the transition from home to preschool by allowing the children to explore the facility and meet the staff in the comfortable presence of Mom, Dad and/or other family members.

Student/Teacher Ratio/Class Sizes

The preschool must follow the Iowa Department of Human Services' guidelines for maximum student/teacher ratios. Currently, the State of Iowa's guidelines are one adult for every ten (10) three-year-olds. The Preschool Board has determined maximum class sizes for the three-year-old classes to be **fourteen** (14) students. When the classes fill, waiting lists will be established.

Tuition

Tuition for the 2022-2023 school year is one hundred fifty dollars (\$150) per month for nine (9) months (September through May) a total of one thousand three hundred fifty dollars (\$1,350) for the school year. You may pay monthly or more than one month at a time. The regular fee will be charged regardless of absences. This is necessary because operating costs continue and space is reserved for your child. Make checks payable to Immanuel Lutheran Wee Care Preschool. An automatic electronic withdrawal option is available with five dollars (\$5) will be taken off each month for those signed up. Some scholarships are available (contact preschool or church office staff).

Payments are due by the 1st of each month. A late notice will be sent home if payment is not received. A late fee of \$5.00 will be assessed if tuition is not received by the 1st of the month. In the event that tuition has not been paid by the 15th of the month, your child will be discharged until payment is made in full.

Attendance/Withdrawal

In the event of an extended illness or family vacation, full tuition will be expected so that a position in the class can be held for each child. ***Please notify the preschool if your child will not be there.*** Parents are requested to give a courtesy notice to the preschool if it becomes necessary to withdraw the child for any reason.

Your child may experience a period of adjustment when assimilating a new activity, such as preschool, into his/her routine. If a child is having a difficult adjustment, the staff and parent(s) can meet to discuss any special considerations related to special needs, goal setting, health-related issues, or other concerns that may influence success for the child in the program. If, at any time, your child is experiencing difficulty, please notify the teacher via note or phone conversation rather than in front of the child or his/her peers.

Confidentiality

It is essential to protect the confidentiality of all information relating to our students and families. A professional attitude will be displayed by staff and they will demonstrate respect and ethical conduct towards your child and family.

Class Schedules

One session will be offered for three hours on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. There is no class on Friday. The morning class will be held from 8:15-11:15 a.m.

Arrival/Dismissal

Children are to arrive ***no sooner than 10 minutes before class*** (8:05 a.m.) and are to be picked up ***no later than 10 minutes after class*** (11:25 a.m.). Please use the gate at the southeast corner of the church (through the playground). Children ***MUST*** be picked up by a parent or adult authorized on the Child Information Form and ***WILL NOT*** be released to any other person unless you advise us otherwise. If the person picking the child up is unfamiliar to preschool staff, the individual will be asked to present a photo ID. The preschool ***cannot*** provide transportation. Parents are responsible for bringing the child to school ***on time*** to avoid classroom disruption, and for picking the child up promptly when classes are dismissed.

School Calendar

The preschool will generally follow the Independence Community School District's calendar. Parents of registered children will be informed as to the date of the first day of preschool for their child's age group. Each family will receive a Preschool Calendar at orientation or on the first day of class.

Cancellation of Classes

If the Independence Community Schools cancel school due to bad weather (snow, ice, fog), the preschool will not hold classes. If public school is delayed 2 hours, morning preschool classes will be canceled. Please watch KWWL for announcements of cancellations. In the case of delayed starts, the afternoon sessions will be held as usual. If the public school dismisses classes early due to bad weather, the preschool will do the same. Based on the number of snow days (delays or early dismissals), the Board may decide to add days on to the end of the school year to make up for missed days.

Health/Illness/Medication

You are requested to keep your child home when he or she has a bad cold, rash, sore throat, upset stomach, pink eye, earache, vomiting, diarrhea or fever. Your child should be free of fever ***without the use of medication*** for 24 hours before returning to school. Our staff is not trained in the administration of medication. Fortunately, most medications can be administered at home prior to class or following dismissal.

Parents should notify the Director if a child contracts a contagious condition such as chicken pox, head lice, etc. The preschool will follow the recommendations for chicken pox as stated on the Communicable Disease Chart provided by the Iowa Department of Public Health which requires the minimum exclusion from school to be seven days from onset of pox. ***Please call the school if your child is sick and unable to attend.***

Emergency

In the case of serious injury, appropriate medical attention will be sought/given immediately, according to the information given on the Emergency Medical Consent form. Parents will be notified as quickly as possible. Minor injuries such as bumps or bruises will be reported to the parent when the child is picked up. Instructors are required by the Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) to follow Universal Precautions, which include wearing disposable gloves, when treating all injuries.

Parent Involvement

Parents wishing to speak to the teacher(s) by phone should call the church office at **334-2511**. The teacher will return the call after class time. Verbal messages delivered by children cannot be accepted by teachers. Please provide a written message or leave a message in the church office for the teacher to return your call.

The teacher(s) will keep parents informed of student activities through newsletters, notes, phone calls, conferences and in conversation when students are delivered to or picked up from the classroom. ***Parent/teacher conferences*** will be held for all students in the fall and spring. Additional conferences may be scheduled throughout the year based on student need or upon parent request.

Each parent is encouraged to visit or assist in the preschool program as time allows. If you would like to share a special occupation, interest or skill, please let us know. Teachers also occasionally need a helping hand for a project, a field trip or other special activity. Please volunteer in any way you are able; it is a great way to share in your child's preschool experience.

Parents shall be afforded unlimited access to their children and to the provider caring for their children during the center's hours of operation or whenever their children are in the care of a provider, unless parental contact is prohibited by court order.

Discipline

Kind, consistent discipline with positive redirection will be used. There will be no physical punishment. If necessary, time away from the activity to regain self-control will be used. If the child has persistent behavior problems, a parent/teacher conference will be arranged to discuss the Student Behavior Policy and establish goals.

Discharge

There may be situations in which we may have to dismiss a student: failure to meet center policies, failure to pay tuition, inability of child to adjust to group experience or threat to other children, staff or self. Parents will be notified by telephone or written letter to schedule a conference with staff to discuss possible solutions and develop a plan including a specific timeline. As needed, and with parental permission, consultation may be provided by the Preschool Board, the Department of Human Services (DHS) or Area Education Agency.

Clothing/Personal Belongings

Please dress children in play clothes that are comfortable, sturdy and washable. Clothing should be appropriate for the weather. We will schedule outdoor play every day (weather permitting). All removable clothing (mittens, boots, coat, hat, etc.) should be marked with the child's name. Footwear should have closed toes (i.e., no flip-flops, etc.). We ask that the children bring toys and other items from home for "Show and Tell" days only. We make this request due to past experience with toys that have been accidentally broken. We are not responsible for lost or damaged toys. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

Snacks

Snacks will be provided by Wee Care Preschool. The federal government has established specific guidelines for preschool snacks that we must follow. Snack calendars will be posted. Please note any dietary restrictions on your child's information sheet. Allergies should be documented by your healthcare provider.

Field Trips

We plan to take the children on occasional field trips. These trips are intended to enhance the regular preschool curriculum. School bus services may be utilized on occasion for some trips. Parents will be notified prior to each activity.

Video Surveillance

You may have noticed surveillance cameras in both of the Wee Care Preschool classrooms. The safety of your children is of the utmost importance to this preschool and our staff. We want to ensure each child has a safe and caring learning environment while at preschool. The cameras will be only used for the children's safety and will be kept private; the monitor is in the preschool office. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns regarding this matter.

Disaster Plan

Detailed disaster plans will be followed as stated in the Preschool Policy Manual for the following: Tornado, flood, fire, thunderstorm, bomb threat and earthquake. These policies are required by the Department of Human Services (DHS) and are reviewed and updated annually. Disaster drills are conducted by staff members throughout the school year.

Grievance Policy

Communication between families and the preschool program is important in providing a quality experience for all. If you have a concern regarding your child, please contact your child's teacher. If further help is needed, either party may ask for assistance from the Director. The Board Chairperson or Pastor may be contacted if concerns persist.

**Immanuel Lutheran Preschool Family Handbook
Signature Page
(2023-2024)**

I have read and understand this handbook containing the Immanuel Lutheran Preschools' Policies and Procedures.

If you are a parent of a 3-year-old student, please sign here:

Parent Signature Date

Parent of _____
Print Child's Name