

# **St. Paul's Lutheran Early Childhood Center**



## **Parent Handbook Policies and Procedures 2024**

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## Statement of Faith (adopted 05/16/2024)

- ❖ We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- ❖ We believe God created, sustains and rules all the things visible and invisible.
- ❖ We believe that God has revealed himself and his truth in Scripture. We believe the Bible alone to be the word of God.
- ❖ We believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father.
- ❖ We believe Jesus was born of the virgin Mary, lived a sinless life, performed miracles, suffered, died and was buried, resurrected from the dead, ascended to the right hand of the Father, and will come again to judge the living and the dead.
- ❖ We believe that all human beings are sinners, and that for the salvation of lost and sinful humans, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is necessary, this regeneration takes place through baptism, holy communion and hearing the Word of God.
- ❖ We believe that salvation is by grace through faith alone in Christ alone, and that faith without works is dead.
- ❖ We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit, by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.
- ❖ We believe in the spiritual unity of all believers in our Lord Jesus Christ, and that the local church is the place where believers should live out this unity.
- ❖ We believe that God created us male and female in His image; that gender identity may not be detached from the biological sex of the human body; that marriage or matrimony is a covenantal, procreative union of one man and one woman; and that God intends for children to be raised and nurtured in an environment that honors these distinctions. We believe that sexual union is to be exclusive to covenantal, heterosexual marriage.
- ❖ We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost: they that are saved to the resurrection of life, and they that are lost to the resurrection of damnation.

# Welcome

WELCOME TO ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER!

St. Paul's Lutheran Early Childhood Center (SPLECC) serves children from 6 weeks to 5 years of age; it is licensed by the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services. The center serves families Monday – Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. from the Council Bluffs and Omaha areas. The program's goal is to provide a Christ-centered, high quality preschool program meeting each child's needs, including children with disabilities and those from a diverse background.

## Administrative Information

Becca Heinicke Director <a href="mailto:becca.heinicke@splecc.org">becca.heinicke@splecc.org</a> 712-322-3294	Glennda Hedlund Administrative Assistant <a href="mailto:glennda.hedlund@splecc.org">glennda.hedlund@splecc.org</a> 712-322-3294	Nathan Sherrill Pastor <a href="mailto:nathansherrill1978@gmail.com">nathansherrill1978@gmail.com</a> 712-322-3294
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## Board Information

Board Chair: Penny Rollins

Board Members:

Karen Burns	Bill Kruse	Kelli Salin
Julia Burris	Penny Rollins	Pastor Jim Tews

## Mission

St. Paul's Lutheran Early Childhood Center is committed to *excellence* by providing a Christ-centered learning environment for children and families.

## Philosophy

We believe:

- children, their families and the community benefit from high-quality early childhood programs.
- serving the needs of young children by providing a high quality, culturally diverse early childhood program within a safe, nurturing Christian environment promotes learning.
- there is a critical link between a child's early experiences and later success in life.
- children learn best through their play, interactions and experiences.
- innovative learning activities and various teaching strategies enhance learning.
- effective learning produces life-long skills.
- leaders should never lose sight of best practices.
- teaching the importance of citizenship benefits the school and the community.
- productive discipline incorporates control, consistency, and care.
- memorable and enjoyable activities foster learning.
- school, home and community cooperation facilitates and reinforces learning.

## Goals for Children, Families, and Staff

Children will:

- grow in their faith, knowing that Jesus loves them.
- show competence in social/emotional, physical, cognitive, and language development skills.
- be enthusiastic and curious learners.
- be safe and healthy.

Families will:

- feel welcome in the classroom.
- work with the center in a **meaningful partnership** to help their children be better prepared to learn.
- advocate for their children.

By the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit, St. Paul's Lutheran Early Childhood Center staff will:

- provide a loving and developmentally appropriate environment to encourage each child to grow spiritually, socially, emotionally, physically, cognitively and creatively.
- nurture developmental readiness skills to ensure a successful kindergarten experience.
- provide experiences in Christian living both in formal settings such as the classroom or chapel time, and informal settings such as the playground and free time.
- offer opportunities to explore individual interests and differences through multi-sensory activities.
- provide experiences outside the school setting to further explore principles and concepts learned in class.
- encourage children and their families to receive God's unconditional love as it is experienced through His Word and the loving, caring staff at SPLECC.
- maintain ongoing communication between parents and teachers through newsletters, parent meetings/conferences and other parent participation opportunities.

## Equal Educational Opportunity

It is the policy of St. Paul's Lutheran Early Childhood Center not to discriminate in its education programs or educational activities on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, marital status or disability. Students are educated in programs, which foster knowledge of, and respect and appreciation for contributions of diverse cultural groups, as well as men and women, to society. The center will provide for all children, including those with disabilities and unique learning needs as much as possible. Modifications may be made in the environment and staffing patterns in order to include children with special needs. Staff is aware of the identified needs of individual children and will be trained to follow through on specific intervention plans. It is our belief that inclusion in our program will enrich the experiences for teachers, students, other children and their families.

## Open Door Policy

Parents and legal guardians are always welcome to visit the preschool classroom. A doorbell is located at the front to gain entrance to the facility. As a safety feature, visitors must sign in at the office, located at the main entrance.

# The School Day

## Daily Schedule

A consistent daily schedule is planned to offer a balance of learning activities. Learning is both formal and informal. Play is planned for every day. Listening is balanced with talking, group activities with solitary time, indoors with outdoors, quiet play with noisy play. Your child will have the opportunity for the following types of activities every day: Bible lesson or Chapel, music, snack, large and small group activities, outdoor activities (weather permitting), self-directed play, music, story time, learning center activities such as art, science, writing, games, puzzles, building toys, book center, and dramatic play.

The daily schedule for the children is a guide. It provides a framework for planning and organizing the daily routine and play activities for the children. The daily routines for children may be a little different based on the age of your child. Infants follow their own biological needs. They are fed, changed, and nap when they need it. Toddlers are changed/taken to the toilet before transitions in the day and as needed. Adjustments to the schedule are made as your child gets older and his/her needs change. You may also notice that as your child gets older, they may alter their own schedule to fit in with the group. Some common changes you may notice in your child's behavior after enrollment in any group care situation include altered sleep/wake patterns (staying awake for longer hours or napping more frequently for short periods of time) or changes in appetite.

The following daily schedule is an outline of a typical day. Keep in mind again that, if needed, the schedule will include children's individual needs based on their age. This is a *sample* that includes the different types of components to the daily schedule.

### Typical Daily Schedule Sample

6:30 - 8:30	Classroom Activities
8:30 - 9:00	Group Time
9:00 - 9:15	Chapel / Bible time
9:15 - 9:30	Snack
9:30 - 10:00	Music
10:00 - 11:15	Classroom Activities and Outdoor Time
11:15 - 11:30	Group Time
11:30 - 12:00	Lunch
12:00 - 2:00	Nap / Rest Time
2:30-2:45	Snack
3:00-3:30	Group Time/Outdoor Time
3:30-5:30	Classroom Activities

*Note: The infant room functions on an on-demand schedule which differs from other classrooms. Younger infants who are not yet on a consistent schedule are able to eat and sleep as needed.*

## Arrival / Departure

Upon arrival parents are to walk their children to their classrooms to place their belongings in children's cubbies. **To prevent illness, parents are asked to have their child use the toilet and help their children wash their hands before entering the classroom.**

All motor vehicle transportation provided by parents, legal guardians or others designated by parents or legal guardians will include the use of age-appropriate, and size appropriate seat restraints.

When bringing your child to school, we ask that you park your car in the parking lot and turn off the engine before entering the building. Parents or legal guardians must accompany children to the classroom at the beginning of the day and sign them in as well as sign them out when they leave for the day. No child will be permitted to leave the building without an adult.

Other than parents or legal guardians, only persons on the Drop-Off/Pick-Up permission form will be allowed to pick up a child from the school. Anyone who is unfamiliar to teaching staff, including authorized individuals, will be asked to present photo identification before a child is released to them.

In the interest of students' safety, parents/guardians and authorized individuals are required to sign children in and out daily.

## Attendance

Students are expected to be punctual for their arrival and departure. Classrooms are staffed according to the number of children in each classroom. Please call the center with the reason for an absence by 8:30. Irregular attendance interferes with the progress of your child and others.

## Pick Up Time

St. Paul's Lutheran ECC strives to serve each family and their individual schedules. SPLECC makes staffing choices based on the number of children enrolled for these time periods. Parents need to make arrangements to pick up their children on time. If a child is going to be picked up late, please contact the office. **Families late in picking up their child from preschool or childcare will be charged a late fee of \$5.00 for the first 10 minutes after the end of class time/childcare and \$1.00 for every minute thereafter.**

## Supply List

Each individual classroom has a specific supply list. Families are asked to provide supplies before the child's first day of attendance. Additional supplies will be requested as they become depleted. This list will be sent out at the beginning of August.

## Appropriate Attire

Children will be learning through creative, active play that can be messy. Children should wear comfortable clothing that can get dirty or stained. All children, except those in the infant room, should wear rubber-soled and closed-toe shoes to school. **Flip flops may not be worn as they are not appropriate or safe. Tennis shoes are the best for running and climbing.**

The use of paint smocks or shirts during art projects is encouraged but, we can't guarantee that spills or stains will not occur. Clothing should be free of words, graphics, or pictures that are profane, immoral, illegal, or

disruptive in nature. All families are asked to provide extra sets of clothing in case of an “accident” or messy play that will be kept in children’s cubbies. These items should include: a weather appropriate outfit, socks, shoes, and underwear (if applicable). Please clearly label the clothing with your child’s name to reduce the possibility of mistakes. Should items arrive which aren’t labeled, we may label them for you-our philosophy is “better to be labeled than lost”. **Please rotate clothing with the change of the seasons and the growth of your child.**

## Outside Play

Children have daily opportunities for outdoor play as the weather permits and provided the weather, air quality, and environmental safety conditions do not pose a threat. This allows children the opportunity to develop their large muscle skills and be active. The Child Care Weather Watch guidelines produced by Healthy Child Care Iowa are used to determine if the Wind Chill Factor or Heat Index is safe for outdoor play. In cases when we cannot go outside (due to weather conditions) children are given the opportunity to use indoor equipment and are supervised at the same level as with outdoor equipment.

In order to make sure that your child can play comfortably outside, it is important to dress him/her according to the weather. When it is cold outside he/she needs a warm coat, mittens or gloves and a hat (labeled with your child’s name). For the warmer days dressing your child lightly is just as important. For those in between days dressing your child in layers is a practical idea.

There are areas on the playground for children to be in the shade and still be active. We encourage you to send a hat or other clothing to wear as another protection from the sun. A face stick and sunscreen spray labeled with the child’s name needs to be provided for outdoor play. Staff will apply the provided sunscreen with written permission. We will also use an insect repellent (only with your written permission) to protect your child from insect bites when necessary.

## Napping

Infants nap according to their own schedules. If an infant should fall asleep while being rocked, lightly bounced, or taken for a walk, they will be put in their cribs, on their backs, to continue their sleep. When children are beginning to walk, sleeping on a cot will be encouraged. All bedding is provided by the center. Children who are on cots/mats may bring a soft stuffed animal or other soft attachment item (no cups or bottles). Children only sleep in cribs or on cots/mats. Children are not left to sleep in car seats at drop off. Children are not placed in cribs to play; only to sleep.

Sleeping practices may be different at home and some children have unique situations (e.g.-twins that may sleep together in the same crib). However, SPLECC must follow licensing guidelines and adhere to the above stated policies. It may or may not be difficult for some children to adjust if they are used to sleeping in a different position or with a parent/sibling. The staff at SPLECC understand the unique needs of children and will do their best to work with each child at nap times.

## Meals

SPLECC provides a morning snack and afternoon snack. Parents are required to provide a cold lunch in a disposable sack. Please note we are unable to heat any items that are provided for children's lunches. Parents are required to provide all food and drink for children in the infant classroom. Young infants will be fed according to their own schedule. As they grow and start eating solid foods, their eating needs will change and the eating times will be adjusted toward the group schedule. Children older than 12 months will drink milk from a parent provided cup.

Two food groups will be represented at each snack time, as outlined in USDA guidelines. A written snack menu is posted at the parent information board and available for families. The preschool serves a variety of nutritional snacks and encourages children to expand their tastes by at least trying the food offered.

All snack portions are served in accordance with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines. Clean, sanitary drinking water is made available to children throughout the day. Staff discards any foods with expired dates. Foods that are hotter than 110 degrees Fahrenheit are kept out of children's reach. Foods requiring refrigeration will be kept cold until served.

For each child with special health care needs, food allergies, or special nutrition needs, the child's health care provider should provide the program with an individualized care plan prepared in consultation with family members and a specialist involved in the child's care. Children with food allergies shall be protected from contact with the problem food. With family consent, the program posts information about the child's allergies in the food preparation area and in areas of the facility the child uses to serve as a visual reminder to all adults who interact with the child during the day. Program staff will keep a daily record documenting the type and quantity of food a child consumes when any child with a disability has special feeding needs and provide parents with that information.

High risk foods, such as peanuts or can cause choking, will not be served. For children younger than four years, these include hotdogs, whole or sliced into rounds; whole grapes; nuts; popcorn; raw peas; or chunks of raw carrots or meat larger than can be swallowed whole.

Attitudes about food develop early in life. The food children eat affects their well-being, their physical growth, their ability to learn, and their overall behavior. We have an opportunity to help children learn about foods, enjoy a variety of foods, and help them begin to appreciate that their bodies need to be strong, flexible, and healthy. Eating moderately, eating a variety of foods, and eating in a relaxed atmosphere are healthy habits for young children to form.

Treats for birthdays or other special occasions need to be discussed with the classroom teacher prior to bringing. Consistent with the Council Bluffs Community Schools and the Department of Health, **no homemade treats are allowed in our facility.** Please check to see if your child's class has anyone with a food allergy, such as nuts.

# The School Year

## Holiday Closings

New Year's Eve Day  
New Year's Day  
Good Friday  
Memorial Day

Independence Day  
Labor Day  
Thanksgiving Day

Friday after Thanksgiving Day  
Christmas Eve Day  
Christmas Day

SPLECC will be closed for a break at Christmas, please refer to the school calendar.

## Tuition – based on ratios and ages staff accordingly

SPLECC is a private Christian preschool that depends upon tuition for its operation. Monthly tuition is due by the 1<sup>st</sup> Friday of the month. Weekly tuition is due the Friday before the week of attendance. Brightwheel is the method of collecting and processing tuition and fee payments. **A \$35.00 fee will be assessed for insufficient funds.** Because our costs remain constant, there is **no rebate for absence** due to illness, holidays, vacations or other causes. **Families late in picking up their child from preschool or childcare will be charged a late fee of \$5.00 for the first 10 minutes after the end of class time/childcare and \$1.00 for every minute thereafter.**

## Child Care Assistance Policy **Adopted 12-31-22**

Families of St. Paul's Lutheran Early Childhood Center receiving Childcare Assistance through the Department of Human Services agree to pay full weekly tuition as scheduled on the Friday before the week of attendance.

Bi-weekly timecards will be submitted through the CCA Portal and credit to the respective family's account will be given once payment is received from the State of Iowa. The family remains responsible for any balance remaining after payment is obtained from the State of Iowa.

## Curriculum

Curriculum is a framework for learning opportunities and experiences. It is a process by which learners obtain knowledge and understanding, while developing life skills. It is continually revised and evaluated to make learning fun and exciting.

The preschool program uses Creative Curriculum, a research and evidence based comprehensive curriculum designed for infants to 6 year olds. It addresses all areas of early learning: language and literacy, math, science, physical skills and social skills.

The Creative Curriculum approach allows the staff to meet the individual developmental needs of all children. The program uses developmentally appropriate practices to help children grow and learn in an environment that encourages exploration, creativity and problem solving. The program provides a balance of activities that are busy and quiet; individual and group; indoor and outdoor and staff-initiated and child-initiated. The children are encouraged to strengthen gross motor skills in daily physical activities. Reasonable accommodations are made for children with special needs.

The One in Christ Religion Curriculum also uses a variety of multi-sensory approaches to teach the Gospel and encourages children to grow in their faith.

Handwriting Without Tears is also a multi-sensory curriculum used to teach handwriting skills.

## Discipline

The teaching staff at SPLECC is trained to be responsive, respectful, and purposeful. The teachers anticipate and take steps to prevent potential challenging behaviors. They evaluate and change their responses based on individual needs. When children have challenging behaviors teachers promote prosocial behavior by:

- interacting in a respectful manner with all children.
- modeling turn taking and sharing as well as caring behaviors.
- helping children negotiate their interactions with one another and with shared materials.
- engaging children in the care of their classroom and ensuring that each child has an opportunity to contribute to the group.
- encouraging children to listen to one another and helping them to provide comfort when others are sad or distressed.

Teaching staff will guide children to develop self-control and orderly conduct in relationship to peers and adults. Children will be taught social, communication, and emotional regulation skills. If a child displays persistent, serious, and challenging behavior, the teaching staff and parents will work as a team to develop and implement an individualized plan that supports the child's inclusion and success.

Aggressive physical behavior toward staff or children is unacceptable. Teaching staff will intervene immediately when a child becomes physically aggressive to protect all of the children and encourage more acceptable behavior.

Permissible Methods of Discipline:

*For acts of aggression and fighting* (biting, scratching, hitting) staff will set appropriate expectations for children and guide them in solving problems. This positive guidance will be the usual technique for managing children with challenging behaviors rather than punishing them for having problems they have not yet learned to solve. In addition, staff may: (1) Separate the children involved; (2) Immediately comfort the individual who was injured; (3) Care for any injury suffered by the victim involved in the incident; (4) Notify parents or legal guardians of children involved in the incident; (5) Review the adequacy of the teaching staff supervision, appropriateness of program activities, and administrative corrective action if there is a recurrence.

Prohibited Practices

The program does not, and will not, employ any of the following disciplinary procedures:

1. Harsh or abusive tone of voice with the children nor make threats or derogatory remarks.
2. Physical punishment, including spanking, hitting, shaking, or grabbing.
3. Any punishment that would humiliate, frighten or subject a child to neglect.
4. Neither withholds nor threatens to withhold food as a form of discipline.

We believe in using positive guidance, redirection, and planning ahead to prevent problems. Teachers will encourage appropriate behavior through the use of consistent clear rules, and involving children in problem solving to foster the child's own ability to become self-disciplined. Teaching staff will encourage children to respect other people, to be fair, respect property and learn to be responsible for their actions. Teaching staff will use discipline that is consistent, clear, and understandable to the child. They will help children learn to persist when frustrated, play cooperatively with other children, use language to communicate needs, and learn turn taking.

If a child exhibits a behavior that is unacceptable they will first be reminded of the rule they are breaking. If the behavior continues, the staff member will redirect them to a different activity. Should there still be a problem; the child will be removed from activities for a few minutes to give them time to process their actions and the consequences of those actions.

## Biting

One of our primary goals is to provide a safe and loving, learning environment for all children. The program provides an environment that encourages and promotes cooperative interaction, respect for others, and non-aggressive problem solving between the children. Biting is a normal stage of development for young children who are teething and who are still developing their language skills. Biting normally occurs between thirteen and twenty-four months of age, however by preschool age we expect this issue to have been resolved.

**For safety and health concerns, we take biting seriously. When it happens, it's very scary, frustrating, and stressful for children, parents, and teachers. It is also not something to blame on children, parents, or teachers, and there are no quick and easy solutions to it. Children bite for a variety of reasons: simple sensory exploration, panic, crowding, seeking to be noticed, or intense desire for a toy. Repeated biting becomes a pattern of learned behavior that is often hard to extinguish because it does achieve results: the desired toy, excitement, attention.**

Our policy for handling a biting incident is the following:

- The biter is immediately removed from the group. The bitten child is consoled and comforted to restore a sense of security and safety and the bitten area washed with soap and water. If necessary, ice is applied to reduce any swelling or bruising. The biter is not allowed to return to play and is talked to on a level that he/she can understand, and then redirected.
- A written incident report is given to the parents of all children involved when they are picked up that day. The name of a biting child is not released because it serves no useful purpose and can make an already difficult situation more difficult.
- Each biting incident is looked at intensively for a pattern in an effort to prevent further biting behavior.
- Staff work with each biting child on resolving conflict or frustration in an appropriate manner.
- Center staff try to adapt to the environment and work with parents to reduce any child stress.
- Teachers make special efforts to protect potential victims.

## Family Withdrawal Process

Should a child need to be withdrawn from any SPLECC program, we ask to be notified as soon as possible so that a child on the waiting list may be offered enrollment. At minimum we require a 2-week written notice and fees are assessed to that date. Should a child need to be withdrawn for a period of time and possibly re-admitted, his/her spot cannot be held or guaranteed.

# Communication

## Ethics and Communication

Staff follow an important code of ethics to guide their involvement with children and families. It is essential to protect the confidentiality of all information concerning children and their families. Maintaining a professional attitude includes being responsive to the needs of children and their families while balancing the need for confidentiality. No information about any particular child shall be shared with another child's parent. We continually strive to model such qualities as patience, tolerance, cooperation, acceptance, understanding of others, and enthusiasm for children as well as for adults.

## Family Involvement

SPLECC encourages families to be very involved in their child's education. Family members are welcome to visit at any time during class sessions.

Program staff communicate with families regarding children's activities and developmental milestones, shared care-giving issues, and other information that affects the well-being of children. Family teacher conferences are held in both the fall and spring semesters, as well as when either party requests.

SPLECC values the time spent talking and interacting with families and developing strong, reciprocal relationships. Families are encouraged to share any concerns, preferences or questions with the preschool teacher or administration at any time.

Although in-person daily contact cannot be replaced, preschool staff also rely on notes home, e-mails, phone calls, newsletters, and bulletin boards as alternative means to establish and maintain open, two-way communication.

SPLECC invites you to become involved in one or all of the following ways, and welcomes other ideas as well.

1. Support your child's daily transition to school by sharing information about your child's interests and abilities. Keep the teacher informed of changes and events that might affect your child.
2. Return all forms and questionnaires promptly.
3. Attend Parent-Teacher Conferences in the fall and spring.
4. Check your child's cubby daily.
5. Share some of your talents in your child's class through activities such as: reading or storytelling, cooking, art, music, sewing, crafts, hobbies, your profession, or artifacts from trips you have taken.
6. Share your family's cultural traditions, celebrations, or customs.
7. Read all the material sent home with your child.
8. Participate in events such as: Annual Church Picnic, Fall Party, Sunday brunches, Christmas and Easter programs, Donuts with Dad, Muffins with Mom, Graduation, etc.

## Classroom Email and Phone

Should you need to reach your child's teacher immediately, please call the main office. 712-322-3294. For non pressing matters, the use of email is the most efficient means of communicating with your child's teacher.

Director: becca.heinicke@splecc.org

Administrative Assistant: glennda.hedlund@splecc.org

Infant classroom: liz.bloom@splecc.org

Toddler classroom: helay.ault@splecc.org

PS2 classroom: sabrina.moreno@splecc.org

PS3 classroom: tesa.sauvain@splecc.org

PS4 classroom: jenn.ford@splecc.org

## Communication with Families

SPLECC will promote communication between families and staff by using written notes as well as informal conversations or e-mail. Families are encouraged to send written notes with important information so all the staff who work with the child can share the parent's communication. Parents are encouraged to maintain regular, on-going, two-way communication with the teaching staff in a manner that best meets their needs--e-mail, in person, notes, or phone calls.

Our monthly newsletter will keep you informed about scheduled events and activities. Check the parent information board for information regarding our curriculum, schedule, events, etc. Lesson plans will be posted outside the classrooms. As you pick up your child each day, check his/her cubby for special notes or information. If you have any questions or concerns at any time, please contact your child's teacher or the director.

## Parent Teacher Conferences

All Lead Teachers conduct formal conferences in the fall and spring. During the conference the teacher will share results of classroom assessments and samples of the child's work. Parents and teachers will collaborate to make a plan to continue to encourage child's growth and development.

## Incident Reports

Whenever a child is involved in an injury, an incident report will be completed for the parent to sign and the parent will receive the white copy. A duplicate of the written notice will be placed in the child's file (yellow copy). Any incident or injuries will be documented on a "Child Injury/Incident Report" form and a copy will be given to the parent within 24 hours of the incident.

Parents or legal guardians will be notified immediately of any serious injury. Prompt arrangements will be made for medical treatment. In the event, the parent cannot be contacted; prior authorization for emergency treatment will allow the child to be treated.

## Access of Information

SPLECC has ensured that all parents can access information and clearly understand the content of this handbook and information regarding center policies and procedures. All efforts will be made to provide services of an interpreter, translator, or any other special needs required by our families enrolled. Agencies that will be contacted may include Green Hills AEA and/or Iowa School for the Deaf.

## Grievance Policy

Open and honest communication between families and the early childhood program is **essential**. Parents and guardians need to be confident that children are being well cared for and obtaining quality experiences. If there is ever a time you have a concern regarding your child, we want to encourage you to address your concern to your child's teacher.

If you have a concern regarding some aspect of the program or policy, please contact the Director or Pastor Sherrill.

As part of our program assessment, in the spring of each year, we also provide parents/guardians with a family questionnaire to evaluate the program. This information helps us to assess how the program is meeting the needs of families and children, as well as to identify strengths and weaknesses.

# Health and Safety

## Physicals and Immunizations

All students will provide an updated physical and immunization record, signed by a licensed medical doctor, within 30 days of enrollment. The physical and immunization record will be updated annually by the student's guardian.

## Allergies

1. Parents would need to indicate their child's allergy on the child's Emergency Information and Medical Consent form. An Allergy Action Plan should be signed by the child's doctor.
2. Parents would need to keep the child's teacher and the director informed of any changes or concerns regarding the child's allergy.
3. Parents who have a child in class, where a child with a life-threatening allergy is present, would need to send in snacks that do not contain the allergic ingredients. Parents would also need to refrain from bringing in things containing the allergic material (e.g., dogs, cats, hamsters, etc.).
4. Parents would need to work closely with the staff to achieve the overall goal of helping their child become independent in identifying allergic situations that they need to avoid.
5. A child needs to have a doctor's note specifying an allergy or intolerance to a food in order for a certain snack food to be avoided. Other food choices that parents may choose for their child at home but cannot implement at the center: serving foods with no sugar; foods not containing certain oils; or foods that are not whole grain. Unless there is a specific food allergy documented by a doctor, we cannot abide by parental preferences after 12 months. It is a goal of SPLECC to provide nutritious menu items that are healthy food choices for children.

## Birthdays

Birthdays are very special for young children and we want to recognize that day. However, we ask that the celebrations remain low-key (no balloons, please). For example, a special snack (not lunch) or a book donated to the class with your child's name in it. **Food that comes from home for sharing among the children must be either whole fruits or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory-sealed containers. For special events such as family nights or parent breakfasts, homemade foods may be brought in at the director's discretion.**

We prefer no cake or cupcakes due to the messiness. If you would like to provide a special treat for your child's birthday, please schedule the date and time with the teachers in your child's classroom. Parents are asked to check with the teachers beforehand to ensure that allergies will not be an issue. Invitations to parties outside of school that do not include the entire class will not be distributed at school.

## Hand Washing

Frequent hand washing is the key to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Teachers teach children how to wash their hands effectively. Posters of children using proper hand washing procedures are placed by each sink. The program follows these practices regarding hand washing:

Staff members and children are taught hand-washing procedures. Hand washing is required by all staff, volunteers, and children and reduces the risk of transmission of infectious diseases to themselves and to others. Staff assists children with hand washing as needed to successfully complete the task.

Children and adults **MUST** wash their hands upon arrival for the day, after using the toilet, after handling body fluids (e.g., blowing or wiping a nose, coughing on a hand, or any touching of mucus, blood or vomit), before meals and snacks, preparing or serving food, or handling any raw food that requires cooking (e.g., meat, eggs, poultry), after playing in water that is shared by two or more people, after handling pets and other animals or any materials such as sand, dirt, or surfaces that might be contaminated by contact with animals.

Adults also must wash their hands before and after administering medication, before serving snacks, after blowing/wiping noses, after assisting a child with toileting, and after handling garbage or cleaning.

Proper hand-washing procedures are followed by adults and children and include using liquid soap and running water, rubbing hands vigorously for at least 20 seconds, including back of hands, wrists, between fingers, under and around any jewelry, and under fingernails; rinsing well; drying hands with a paper towel, or a dryer; and avoid touching the faucet with just-washed hands (e.g., by using a paper towel to turn off water), wet, soap, scrub, rinse, dry, and turn off water with paper towel.

## Universal Precautions

Our staff will use universal precautions when dealing with infectious material, blood or body fluids. All staff will use non-latex gloves when performing any duties that involve body fluids. Any clean-up materials will be disposed of properly to ensure safety for all.

## Diapering and Toilet Training

Parents provide diapers, wipes and diaper rash cream as needed for children. Children will be changed at regular intervals throughout the day as needed. Baby powder will not be used. The use of powder has been linked to childhood asthma and other respiratory difficulties. Due to sanitation purposes, cloth diapers are not allowed.

Toilet learning is an important time in a child's development. SPLECC requires all children three years and older to be potty trained prior to enrollment in the three year old class. However, for children who may have an occasional accident, the following procedures are in place:

- Clothing that is soiled by urine or feces are immediately placed in a plastic bag (without rinsing or avoidable handling) and sent home that day for laundering.
- Potty chairs will not be used due to the risk of spreading infectious diarrhea.
- All families are asked to provide an extra set of clothing for their child in case of an "accident" or messy play. Please clearly label all the clothing sent to school with your child's name to reduce the possibility of misplaced or lost items.

## Shoe Free Infant Room

In order to provide a clean, safe, and healthy environment in the Infant Room, a "shoe-free" policy is enforced. Adults entering the carpeted area of the infant room will slip off shoes. This action is taken to prevent outside contaminants from being brought into the room and spread onto the carpet, particularly during the cold weather with the snow and salt. The infants spend much of their time exploring on the floor, so it is best that these areas be kept as clean as possible.

## Communicable Diseases **Updated 8/9/23**

SPLECC is following **requirements** set forth by local, state health agencies, and directs our community toward these entities for more information, including measures you can take to protect yourself and others in our community from communicable diseases:

Pottawattamie Public Health: <https://publichealth.pottcounty-ia.gov/>

Iowa Department of Public Health: <https://idph.iowa.gov/>

For the health and safety of all children and staff, it is mandatory that sick children not be brought to school. Children will not be admitted with one or more of the following symptoms: fever of 100.4 or more, shortness of breath, headache, diarrhea, vomiting, sore throat, cough, swollen lymph nodes, rash, inability to participate, nasal discharge, fatigue and lack of appetite. Students need to be **symptom free and without fever reducing medicine for 24 hours** for readmittance to the center after an illness.

All students testing positive for COVID-19 will need to quarantine for 5 days from the date of the positive COVID-19 test results (if no symptoms) or symptom onset. They may return for care on day 6 if their symptoms have resolved and they have been fever free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication.

## First Aid

A first aid kit is located in all classrooms. It is readily available for adult use. It is fully equipped according to guidance from Healthy Child Care Iowa.

The first aid kit is taken to the outdoor play areas as well as on field trips and outings away from the site.

Staff are trained in basic first aid and will administer minor treatment as needed. In the event that a child receives a minor, non-life threatening injury during time at the center, teachers will assess the situation and apply first aid as needed. Minor cuts and scrapes are treated with soap and water and bumps are treated by applying ice to the injured area. Any incident or injuries are documented on a "Child Injury/Incident Report" form and a copy is given to the parent within 24 hours of the incident.

## Medical and Dental Emergencies

In the event of an emergency, SPLECC personnel will use the Emergency Information and Medical Consent form completed by all parents for authorizations to obtain EMERGENCY/DENTAL CARE even if the childcare center is unable to immediately make contact with the parents/guardians. During an emergency the childcare provider is authorized to contact the emergency contacts on the form when the parent or guardian cannot be reached. The entire cost and fees for emergency/medical/ dental treatment for the child will be covered by the parents/guardians with the authorization given on the consent form.

## Emergencies

SPLECC has in place Emergency Procedures binders that describe the following situations and procedures to follow:

- Emergency phone numbers
- Fire procedures
- Pandemics
- Utility Failures
- Severe weather
- Bomb threats
- Physical Threats/Armed Intruder
- Evacuations
- Media Procedures

This binder is in each classroom. Procedures are reviewed by each staff member at the beginning of each school year.

All staff have immediate access to a device that allows them to summon help in an emergency. The telephone numbers of the Fire Department, Police Department, and Poison Control are posted by each phone with an outside line. Emergency contact information for each child and staff member is kept readily available. A list of emergency telephone numbers and copies of emergency contact information and authorization for emergency transport will be taken along anytime children leave the facility in the care of facility staff.

## Staff Supervision

No child will be left unsupervised while attending SPLECC. Staff will supervise primarily by sight. Supervision for short intervals by sound is permissible as long as teachers check every two to three minutes on children who are out-of-sight (e.g. those who can use the toilet independently etc.). Indoor and outdoor spaces will be zoned by the teaching staff with special attention given to areas where injuries are more likely to occur.

Unauthorized visitors shall not have access to the children while at the facility. Children are under constant supervision and are in ratio with authorized staff. The entrance doors will remain locked during the day. Persons who are in the building and have not been cleared with a background check will be monitored and supervised by a staff person at all times. The staff will be responsible for monitoring and supervising these visitors. Center staff are trained to approach any stranger on the property of the center.

## Video Monitoring

St. Paul's Lutheran Early Childhood Center utilizes video surveillance systems on its campus to enhance the safety and security of students, staff and visitors. Video surveillance systems are used to monitor activities inside the building. All video surveillance cameras are capable of being recorded continuously by a digital video recording system. Recorded video is used exclusively by the early childhood center's administration for internal investigation of security and safety incidents. The capability to view recorded video is limited to members of the early childhood center's administration. Recorded video is not made directly available to students, staff, parents, visitors or the general public. Requests to provide video recordings will not be accommodated. St. Paul's Lutheran Early Childhood center will comply with subpoenas from the court system for video recordings.

## Weapons

No student shall carry, have in his or her possession, store, keep, leave, place or put into the possession of another student any real weapon or look-alike weapon on any school premises, in any school vehicle or any vehicle used by the school or for school purposes, in any other buildings or premises used for school functions, whether or not any person is endangered by such actions. "Look-alike weapon" means any item that resembles or appears to be a weapon. *A zero tolerance policy on dangerous weapons (real or toy) is in effect; i.e., guns, squirt guns, water rifles or pistols, toy guns, toy grenades and other similar items.*

# Policies

## Harassment

SPLECC is committed to providing a learning environment that is free from harassment in any form. Harassment of any student by any other student or staff is prohibited. SPLECC will treat allegations of harassment seriously and will review and investigate such allegations in a prompt, confidential and thorough manner.

## Ill Children

For the health and safety of all the children, it is mandatory that sick children not be brought to school. If your child has one or more of the following symptoms during the night, he or she will not be admitted the following morning for the safety of the other children.

- Fever greater than 100.4 degree F
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea - loose stool frequency that exceeds two or more stools per day
- Pink eye with drainage
- Cough with congestion and excessive nasal discharge
- Cold sores or lesions
- Rash, if contagious

Students need to be **symptom free and without fever reducing medicine for 24 hours** for readmittance to the center after an illness. Should a child present with a fever of 100.4 **while at the center a doctor's note of readmittance is required** along with being symptom free without medication for 24 hours.

Upon arrival at school, each child is observed by teaching staff for signs of illness or injury that could affect the child's ability to participate comfortably in the daily activities. Children will be excluded when a child is not able to participate comfortably; if the illness requires more care than staff is able to provide without compromising the needs of the other children in the group; or if keeping the child at school poses an increased risk to the child or to other children or adults with whom the child will come in contact.

When a child develops signs of an illness during the day at preschool, parents, legal guardians, or other persons authorized by the parent will be notified immediately to pick up the child. For this reason, please be sure that we have current, accurate phone numbers for you, your authorized emergency contact person and your child's pediatrician. In the meantime, we will provide the child a place to rest until the parent, legal guardian or designated person arrives under the supervision of someone familiar with the child.

## Impaired Adults

Persons under the influence of drugs or alcohol will not be permitted on the premises of SPLECC. Although we cannot physically stop the parent from taking his/her child, we will take certain measures to ensure the safety of the child. Staff members are Mandatory Child Abuse Reporters and are required to report abusive situations that would endanger the safety of children.

# Inclement Weather

In the event that SPLECC must be closed due to bad weather, the Council Bluffs Community School District will be followed for closing. The exception to this will be when Council Bluffs Community Schools close for cold days and the roads are clear, SPLECC will remain open. This will be announced via email and or text message.

## Blizzard/Ice Storms:

SPLECC will close if Council Bluffs Community Schools are dismissed early or cancel school for the day due to weather conditions or any other building emergency. The preschool will also close for safety concerns if the following conditions exist:

- Public transportation shuts down;
- If the highway patrol and Sheriff's department ask people to stay off the roads;
- If we have already received 4 or more inches and they are predicting several more inches of snow during the day.

To find out if SPLECC has closed:

- Check to see if an email or text message has been sent out to the families

If it begins to sleet or snow during the work day, and they are forecasting conditions to worsen throughout the day, the program would greatly appreciate any children being picked up early. Sometimes an ice storm or blizzard develops during the time the children are in attendance, which makes it difficult for parents to pick up their children. The children will remain at the program until such a time that the parents can safely pick up their child. No teacher or parent that has not been previously given written permission to pick up a child may attempt to deliver the child to his or her home, either by vehicle or by foot.

If parents do not arrive to pick their child up from the program, the center will notify families of an early closing. If parents are unable to be reached, the approved pickup individuals will be contacted to pick up the child.

# Medication Administration

**Policy:** The school will administer medication to children with written approval of the parent and an order from a health provider for a specific child. Because administration of medication in the school is a safety hazard, medication administration will be limited to situations where an agreement to give medicine outside school hours cannot be made. Whenever possible, the first dose of medication will be given at home to see if the child has any type of reaction. **Fever reducing products will not be given.**

**Procedure:** The director or school secretary administers medication during school hours only if the parent has provided written consent and the medication is available in an original labeled prescription or manufacturer's container that is child-resistant.

For prescription medications, parents or legal guardians will provide the school with the medication in the original, child-resistant container that is labeled by a pharmacist with the child's name, the name and strength of the medication; the date the prescription was filled; the name of the health care provider who wrote the prescription; the medication's expiration date; and administration, storage, and disposal instructions.

For over-the-counter medications, parents or legal guardians will provide the medication in a child-resistant container. The medication will be labeled with the child's first and last names; specific, legible instructions for

administration and storage supplied by the manufacturer; and the name of the health care provider who recommended the medication for the child.

Instructions for the dose, time, method to be used, and duration of administration will be provided to the teaching staff in writing (by a signed note or a prescription label) or dictated over the telephone by a physician or other person legally authorized to prescribe medication. This requirement applies both to prescription and over-the-counter medications.

Medications will be kept at the temperature recommended for that type of medication, in a sturdy, child-resistant container that is out of reach of children and prevents spillage. This container will be located in the office or kitchen refrigerator.

Medication will not be used beyond the date of expiration on the container or beyond any expiration of the instructions provided by the physician or other person legally permitted to prescribe medication. Instructions which state that the medication may be used whenever needed will be renewed by the physician at least annually.

A medication log will be maintained by the school staff to record the instructions for giving the medication, consent obtained from the parent or legal guardian, amount, the time of administration, and the person who administered each dose of medication. Spills, reactions, and refusal to take medication will be noted on this log.

Staff will be trained in cleaning techniques, proper use of protective barriers such as gloves, proper handling and disposal of contaminated materials. Staff receive Universal Precautions training yearly.

## Objects from Home

The early childhood program provides ample toys and learning materials for your child, we ask that you DO NOT bring toys from home. If your child brings an "attachment" item from home, we ask that it is small enough to fit inside his/her backpack or cubby. Please do not allow children to bring gum, candy, money, or toy guns to school. The program cannot be responsible for lost or broken toys brought from home.

## Student Transportation

Children will be transported by school bus for all off-site activities and field trips, excluding those within short walking distances. Children shall remain in ratio at all times while being transported.

## Volunteers

Parents, friends, grandparents, and other adults are encouraged to take an active part in the educational process of the children. Please contact the teacher, the center director, or our office secretary if you would like to be a school volunteer. For safety's sake, if a volunteer will be working with children they are to have a background check and fingerprinting done at the volunteer's expense. In addition, no person with a substantiated report of child abuse or neglect will come in contact with children in the program or have responsibility for children. If a volunteer works more than 40 hours per month with children, he/she will also need to provide a current health assessment, not more than one-year-old.

## Waiting List

The classrooms at SPLECC are filled to capacity with the director's discretion. Once classrooms are at capacity families can place their child on the waiting list. The waiting list will be filled on a first come first serve basis. Families that **currently** have had students at the center for **at least one school year**, will be given priority.

When a spot becomes available, the family at the top of the waiting list will be notified of the opening, pay the \$150 registration fee, and begin weekly tuition payments. Lack of payment will go to the bottom of the waiting list. Families with students currently attending SPLECC for at least one year, have the option to hold their spot for up to 1 month without paying tuition for the Infant room only.

## Water Activities

We have water tables for children to stand and play with their hands in the water. During water play children are involved in active experiences with science and math concepts. Children with sores on their hands are not allowed to participate with others in the water table to ensure that no infectious diseases are spread. Children are not allowed to drink the water during water play activities. When the activity period is complete, the water table is drained and refilled with fresh water before a new group of children comes to participate. Outdoor water play is limited to tubs and buckets or containers as well as the water table. We do not participate in swimming pool activities. Staff supervises all children by sight and sound in all areas with access to water in tubs, buckets, and water tables.

# Parent Acknowledgement and Receipt of the SPLECC Parent Handbook

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the SPLECC Parent Handbook. I understand that it contains important information on policies and procedures. I realize this handbook is not intended to cover every situation which may arise but is simply a general guide to refer to.

I understand that it is my responsibility to familiarize myself with the information and that I agree with the policies and rules of the school.

I further understand and acknowledge that SPLECC may change, add or delete any policies or provisions in this handbook as it sees fit in its sole judgment and discretion.

I acknowledge and understand that this Parent Handbook supersedes and replaces any and all prior handbooks or materials previously distributed.

Student Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Signature \_\_\_\_\_