



Policy and Procedures

St. Paul's Early Learning Center

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Welcome

Welcome to St. Paul's Early Learning Center. The purpose of this handbook is to acquaint you with the policies and procedures of our program. Please review it and keep it for future reference.

Our office hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday. Friday by appointment only. If at any time you have questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to the program director at 319-363-6349 or via email at jhanlin@stpaulsumc.org

OUR HISTORY AND ORGANIZATION

St. Paul's Early Learning Center was organized in 1981 as an outreach of the Education Work Area of St. Paul's United Methodist Church. The program began as the Parents' Day Out program and was rebranded as the St. Paul's Early Learning Center in 2018 to better reflect the quality educational programming provided. It continues to be sponsored by the church and receives many in-kind services.

St. Paul's Early Learning Center provides quality age-appropriate developmental programs to children from the age of two months to five years. Older classrooms (2s, 3s, and 4s) are offered preschool experiences. St. Paul's Early Learning Center is non-profit and is supported by tuition fees and donations. ELC is non-sectarian. We are open to all, regardless of race, color, religion, or national origin.

St. Paul's Children's Ministry Team develops procedures and sets general policies and guidelines for St. Paul's Early Learning Center.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

St. Paul's Early Learning Center is dedicated to quality care of children. We teach faith-based values that we all hold in common. We honor the culture of all children and welcome and respect children of all faiths. We do not insist on adherence to any one set of religious beliefs.

GOAL

We strive to care for children in a safe and nurturing environment. We meet or exceed all licensing requirements of the Iowa Department of Human Services. We provide experiences that meet children's needs and view each child as a unique person. We design interactions and activities that will develop children's self-esteem and positive feelings toward each other.

LICENSING

St. Paul's Early Learning Center is licensed by the Iowa Department of Human Services with a maximum capacity of 108 children.

Classroom size and ratio is as follows:

Infants

6 children daily - ages 2 months-18 months: Staff ratio is 1:3

Toddlers

8 children daily - ages 18 months-30 months: Staff ratio is 1:4

Twos

16 children daily - ages 24 months-36 months: Staff ratio is 1:8

Threes

16 children daily - ages 36 months-48 months: Staff ratio is 1:8

Fours

24 children daily - ages 48 months-60 months: Staff ratio is 1:12

Please note that these are guidelines set by the Iowa Department of Human Services. Actual class sizes will vary year to year based upon enrollment.

HOURS

St. Paul's Early Learning Center hours are from 9:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday, from September to May. With an extended day option from 2-4pm for ages 2 years and older. We offer summer programming in June, July and August for ages birth-three years old. Summer camps in June, July and August are for ages 4-12 years old. Hours are 9:30-3pm. Separate registration required.

LATE PICK UP FEE

If your child is picked up more than 15 minutes past the dismissal time, you will be assessed a \$25.00 fee for each occurrence.

LOCATION

The St. Paul's Early Learning Center is located at 1340 Third Ave. S.E., Cedar Rapids, Iowa. In the St. Paul's United Methodist Church.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

St. Paul's Early Learning Center promotes an open environment welcoming and encouraging parents to visit at any time. Caregivers and the program director are available during drop off and pick up times daily for immediate communication. Parents are also welcome to call the program director or to arrange an appointment to discuss any needs or concerns.

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

All staff members are carefully selected to provide quality care for children. References are required and validated on all personnel, and appropriate background checks are made in compliance with state licensing requirements. Staff have criminal record checks, fingerprinting, physicals, first aid, CPR, blood-borne pathogens, mandatory abuse reporting, and annual early childhood training.

ABSENCE

Please call or message us to let us know if your child will be absent.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

St. Paul's Early Learning Center will be closed when local schools close due to weather. If our local schools have a delayed start, St. Paul's Early Learning Center will also have a delayed start. In addition, if our local schools dismiss early due to inclement weather, parents should pick up your St. Paul's Early Learning Center children first. This gives your child a chance to get home safely and our staff the chance to be home for their children. Please refer to local radio or TV for announcements for the public school closings or delays.

ADMISSION REGULATIONS

St. Paul's Early Learning Center shall be open to all children within the prescribed age limits. Applicants will be accepted on a first come, first served basis, determined by the order in which paid registration fees are received.

APPLICATION FOR ENROLLMENT

Children will be placed in classrooms based on age in compliance with regulations set forth by the Iowa Department of Human Services. Families that were enrolled for the previous school year will have an opportunity to pre-register prior to the start of general registration. A waiting list will be available if a classroom has reached capacity.

DONATIONS

St. Paul's Early Learning Center is supported by tuition fees, fundraisers and donations. Any monetary donation or donation of toys, equipment, or craft items are greatly appreciated!

PAYMENTS

Payment for fees and tuition should be made payable to St. Paul's ELC. Monthly tuition is due the 1st of every month. Preferred method of payment is through the Brightwheel application.

REGISTRATION FEES

A non-refundable registration fee of \$50 for each child is required upon submission of registration form. Please see the enrollment process for further details.

TUITION

Tuition is due the first week of each month. Monthly tuition is a flat rate regardless of holidays or cancelations. Please see the registration form or enrollment process for ELC's current rates. Additionally, a one-time \$100 program fee will be payable with the first monthly tuition. Tuition and fees are non-refundable.

LATE TUITION FEE

Tuition is due the first week of each month and is considered late if not paid by the end of the second week. A fee of \$15.00 will be assessed for each month that tuition is paid late unless satisfactory arrangements are made in advance with the program director.

FAILURE TO PAY

If a family has received a notice of nonpayment, they must speak with the program director to make satisfactory payment arrangements. If payment is not received within 5 weeks of the original due date, and arrangements have not been made with the program director, the child will be removed from the program.

ITEMS NEEDED FOR ATTENDANCE EACH DAY

Please label all personal items and clothing. A favorite blanket or pacifier is allowed. Please dress children in comfortable play clothes. Shoes should be suitable for running and climbing. The following is a list of items you should bring each day to St. Paul's Early Learning Center:

Infant Room

1. Diapers and wipes
2. Bottles with formula or milk (if applicable)
3. Baby food or cereal (if appropriate)
4. Additional change of clothing
5. Nutritious sack lunch (to meet DHS health standards)

Toddler, Two, Three & Four Year Old Rooms

1. Diapers and wipes (if appropriate)
 2. Disposable training pants and wipes (if toilet training)
 3. Additional change of clothing
 4. Nutritious sack lunch (to meet DHS health standards)
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SPECIAL TREATS OR FOOD ITEMS

All special food items (birthday, holidays, etc.) should be prearranged with the teachers and must be store bought. No homemade treats/snacks will be allowed. There is no obligation for parents to bring birthday or holiday treats, but if you choose to, please try to select nutritious treats.

SNACKS

The money collected through the \$50 snack fee charged at the beginning of the school year will be used by ELC to provide nutritious snacks each day following the nutritional guidelines established by the Iowa Department of Human Services.

LUNCHES

Sack lunches are to be brought from home and must meet the nutritional requirements of the Iowa Department of Human Services.

For infants bottles should be prepared in advance. Refrigeration is available. All baby food sent must be in unopened jars and include a serving utensil.

Older children should bring a lunch **box packed with a small ice pack** to keep food fresh and needed utensils. Each lunch should include at least one serving from each of the following good groups, but may include additional items:

- **Liquid milk** – flavored or unflavored in a thermos to keep it cool
- **Fruit** – may be fresh, canned, dried
- **Vegetable** – may be fresh, canned, juice, or pickled
- **Bread or cereal** – bread, cereal, crackers or grains
- **Meat or protein** – meat, poultry, fish, cheese, eggs, yogurt

Any questions, concerns or special dietary needs can be discussed with a teacher or the program director. If dairy or food allergies exist, please provide a copy of a note from the child's doctor outlining necessary requirements.

ACTIVITIES

Activities will include story time, creative activities, free play in a large gym-type room ("big room") or the playground, lunch and free play in the classroom. All activities are age-appropriate. The infants are stimulated with individual rocking, holding, stroller rides, and hugging. Activities are beneficial to fine and gross motor skills as well as creative thinking and problem solving. St. Paul's Early Learning Center has monthly themes. Crafts, activities, stories, and songs will be planned around the theme of the month.

FIRE AND TORNADO DRILLS

Fire and tornado drills are scheduled monthly on different days of the week to ensure all children are included.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

The staff is trained in emergency procedures and the church staff is available to assist in these situations. Since St. Paul's Early Learning Center is a licensed program, staffing ratios and approved emergency procedures have been reviewed and approved to meet the licensing guidelines of the Iowa Department of Human Services. All St. Paul's Early Learning Center staff are trained in CPR, first aid, intruders and child abuse reporting. All are detailed in ELC's policies and procedures manual.

TOYS

Safe, age-appropriate toys are provided in each room. They are in centers of science, music, dramatic play, music, art, blocks, etc. All are appropriate for learning experiences and fun. We encourage children not to bring toys from home. They may not be safe for all the children in the room and St. Paul's Early Learning Center cannot be responsible if they are damaged or lost.

ILLNESS

Your child may not attend St. Paul's Early Learning Center if he/she has had any of the following symptoms within the previous 24 hours:

- * Elevated temperature of 100 degrees or more
- * Green/yellow nasal drainage
- * Vomiting
- * Diarrhea
- * Undiagnosed skin rashes, infected sores, or impetigo (until diagnosed and treated by a doctor)
- * Pink eye
- * Any communicable disease or condition. Let the center know of any of these so medical notices may be sent home.

TOILET TRAINING

We do not require students enrolled in the program to be toilet trained. Once a family determines to start toilet training, please make staff aware so that we can support your child's efforts. Extra clothing needs to be sent during this time. We request that if you send your child in pull-ups the pull-ups should be of the type that includes easy release tabs on the sides for easy removal.

COMMUNICATION

Your questions and concerns are very important to us. If you have any questions or concerns about your child or the program feel free to visit with your child's teachers or the program director. You will receive monthly newsletters updating you on your child's classroom news via the Brightwheel app.

VISITORS/UNAUTHORIZED ACCESS

Visitors to St. Paul's Early Learning Center must be accompanied by a parent or program staff. All visitors must check in at the church office located on the main floor.

FUNDRAISING

St. Paul's Early Learning Center is supported, in part, by fundraisers which will be held four times each school year. Participation in fundraisers is voluntary.

SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS AND VOLUNTEERS

St. Paul's Early Learning Center is always looking for substitute teachers and volunteers. Please visit with the program director for more information.

DISCIPLINE

St. Paul's Early Learning Center focuses on creating an atmosphere which encourages positive behavior within developmentally appropriate limits. Our goal is to help children develop self-control and self-discipline. Teacher guidance helps children learn appropriate behavior and develop strong social skills. St. Paul's Early Learning Center encourages children to have respect for self and for others. One way which we foster this is by asking that children listen, walk, speak quietly and keep hands and feet to themselves. If intervention is necessary, redirection is our first approach. If this does not work then a short "quiet time" away from the group will be used. If a teacher sees consistent behavior concerns, the teacher will take the concerns to the child's parents and the program director.

ASSESSMENTS

You will receive an assessment in both the fall and the spring from your child's teacher. If you wish to discuss the assessment with your child's teacher, please request a conference with the program director.

SMOKING POLICY

Smoking is prohibited in the building and on church property.

UNLIMITED ACCESS

Parents are given unlimited access to their children. You are welcome to visit your child's classroom at any time. Please notify the program director upon your arrival.

BITING POLICY

When a child bites or is bitten, the parents are informed personally and privately the same day. All information is confidential and names of the children involved in the incident are not shared between parents. In addition, biting is always documented on our standard incident form which is completed and signed by the teacher, parents, and the program director. A copy of the completed incident form will be sent home with the child's parents.

When biting occurs, here is what you can expect from us:

We will put the child's safety first and provide first aid as well as comfort, support, and advice to any child who is bitten.

We will provide appropriate programming for children to help prevent biting.

We will make current information and resources on biting available to you.

We will provide teachers with adequate knowledge and training to deal properly and effectively with biting.

We will take your concerns seriously and treat them with understanding and respect.

We will tell you what specific steps we are taking to address biting and explain the reasoning behind those steps.

We will respond to your questions, concerns and suggestions.

We will keep your child's identity confidential if he or she bites. This helps avoid labeling or confrontations that may prolong behavior.

We wish we could guarantee that biting will never happen in our program, but we know there is no such guarantee. You can count on us to deal appropriately with biting so it will end as quickly as possible and enlist parents help with this. We want the best for all the children in our program. If you want more information on biting or have questions or concerns, please contact the program director.

MEDICAL AND DENTAL EMERGENCY PLAN

All families are required to fill out the Emergency Medical Consent Form included in the enrollment packet that lists doctor, dentist, and hospital preferences. In case of an emergency we

will call 911 and then notify parents. An incident report will be written and provided to the child's parent.

MEDICATION

Epi pens and inhalers are the only medication that St. Paul's Early Learning Center will administer. We require a care plan filled out by your child's physician and it will be posted in his/her classroom in case of emergency. Your child's privacy will be protected. Please see the program director for required paperwork. All other medications must be given by a parent before or after attending St. Paul's Early Learning Center. If medication is required during St. Paul's Early Learning Center hours, a parent can arrange a time with staff that they may come in and administer the medication.

If you need assistance with our parent handbook please let the program director know and we will accommodate your needs