

Little Praisers Preschool and Child Care

Parent Handbook

2010-2011

Welcome to Little Praisers Preschool and Child Care. We are glad you have chosen Praise for your childcare needs. Please take the time to read through this handbook carefully. If you have any questions, please address them with the Office. Again, thank you for choosing Little Praisers!

History

Praise Lutheran Church was founded in 1994 as a mission church within the English District of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. In 1998, we opened our worship facility on Dupont Road. Our goal is to reach out to the community through relevant contemporary worship and community services such as childcare. Our childcare opened its doors for before and after school care in August of 1998. We began offering full time care for ages 6 weeks through 12 years in January of 1999.

Statement of Faith

We believe:

- The Bible is God's Word and is the complete authority for our faith and life.
- There is one true God in three persons; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- Each of us has sinned and is in need of forgiveness. (Romans 3:23)
- God sent His son, Jesus Christ, into our world to suffer and die for our sins so that we can be united once again with Him. (John 3:16)
- We cannot earn our way to heaven- but God, through His grace, has restored us. (Ephesians 2:8-9)
- God hears and answers the prayers of His children when asked in Jesus' name. (John 14:13)
- God ministers to us through His Word and Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion.

Mission Statement

The mission of Little Praisers Preschool and Child Care is to make disciples of children by fostering Christian fellowship and love through a quality Christ-centered preschool and childcare program. We will do this by telling Bible stories, singing, praying and sharing God's love through daily interactions with the children.

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Admittance

Little Praisers Preschool and Child Care is open to all children and is nonsectarian. No child will be discriminated against because of race, color, national origin, sex, or special need. Every child deserves an equal opportunity to know God's love. The ministry will only accept children who are at a stage of growth and development that enables them to benefit from the program. Children whose needs can no longer be met or whose behavior is dangerous for other children, staff members, or themselves will not be admitted or permitted to stay in the program.

Arrival and Departure

Children need to be signed in and out daily on the computer. Please **do not** drop your child off at the door. Each family is assigned a 4 letter/number code that only you will know. We may take a photo of the adults who pick up your child on a regular basis. This picture and/or a photo ID will be used for identification purposes when the staff member does not recognize or know you. Children will be released only to the parents or an adult the parent has authorized. Any other person picking up your child must have written or phone authorization from a parent. They must have a photo I.D. to leave with the child.

Attendance Procedure

Drop off and pick up times are as arranged when you register your child. In no instances shall children be dropped off prior to 6:00a.m. or picked up later than 6:00p.m. Please notify us if your child is absent for any reason. Every family is expected to pay the regular fees even if your child does not attend, unless you choose to use vacation days.

Curriculum

The curriculum used at Little Praisers is called "Voyages". This program gives us weekly Biblical themes with emphasis on several different learning areas. It focuses on science, numbers, dramatic play, large motor skills, small motor skills, puppets, storytelling, and more. We also supplement this curriculum with a phonics program, focusing on letter and sound recognition in the Pre-K and Preschool programs. We will work with your child to develop the skills needed to enter Kindergarten.

Discipline

Discipline is a chance for children to learn how to deal with, and peacefully solve, conflict. It is also an opportunity to learn about grace and forgiveness. The staff will discuss the situation with the children and try to help them solve the conflict themselves. With younger children, redirection to other activities will be encouraged. In some situations (such as when children are biting or seriously hurting others) immediate removal from the situation is required. If a child repeatedly refuses to listen to a teacher

they will be put in time out, after which the teacher will discuss the situation with the child. If this is ineffective, they will be brought to the office and the Head Teacher, Director, and/or Pastor will try to resolve the situation. In all instances, if a child is put in time out or taken to the office the parents will also be notified so we can work together with your child. Because we have responsibility to all of the people at this childcare, children whose behavior that is repeatedly disruptive, dangerous for other children, staff, or themselves, and can't be resolved after 2 or 3 incidents, will not be permitted to stay in the program.

According to State of Indiana guidelines, NO person, while on child care premises, may engage in or direct any of the following actions toward children:

1. Inflict corporal punishment in any manner upon a child's body.
2. Hit, spank, beat, shake, pinch, or any other measure that produces physical discomfort.
3. Cruel, harsh, unusual, humiliating, or frightening methods of discipline, including threatening the use of physical punishment.
4. Placement in a locked or dark room.
5. Public or private humiliation, yelling, or abusive or profane language.
6. Caregiver shall not:
 - a. Associate disciplinary action or rewards with rest.
 - b. Associate disciplinary action with food or use food as a reward.
 - c. Associate disciplinary action or humiliate a child in regard to toileting.
 - d. Use time out for any child less than three (3) years of age.
 - e. Use time out for any purpose other than to enable a child to regain control.
 - f. Physically restrain children except:
 1. When it is necessary to ensure their own safety or that of others; and
 2. Only for as long as is necessary for control of the situation.
 - g. Use punishment to correct unacceptable behavior.

Dress Code

Please make sure your child has weather-appropriate clothing and shoes on each day, suitable for indoor and outdoor play. Children should wear sturdy shoes that stay firmly on their feet. Flip-flops are not allowed.

Drug, Alcohol, Toxic Substance, and Firearms Policy

We prohibit the use of tobacco, unintended use of a toxic substance, and the use of alcohol or any illegal substance in our facility. Firearms are also prohibited from our campus, unless they are being carried by an authorized officer of the law. The childcare does not have in its possession any alcoholic or illegal substances.

Praise Lutheran Church does store communion wine in a location of the church not used by the childcare facility. It will remain in a locked room separate from the daily childcare operation.

Emergency Information

Please inform Little Praisers immediately when emergency information changes.

This includes:

1. New phone numbers (work and home)
2. Changing the list of people who can or cannot pick up and/or who we can call when an emergency occurs
3. Any temporary changes that may be in effect

Enrollment

For your child to be enrolled at Little Praisers, an annual enrollment fee of \$50 per child or \$75 per family must be paid. In addition to the enrollment fee, all paperwork including shot records, doctor's release, consent forms, and a financial agreement must be kept up-to-date. All paperwork must be completed and returned within 30 days of a child beginning at Little Praisers or attendance may be restricted.

Extended Leave Policy

For times when you wish to remove your child(ren) from Little Praisers for a period of time, but want to ensure a spot for your child upon your return, we have an extended leave policy. Extended leave is defined as greater than a 10-day consecutive absence. Some of the common reasons for taking an extended leave include, but are not limited to: maternity leave, teachers' children taking the summer off, loss of job, or lay-offs.

To maintain enrollment, the following fees must be kept current:

Weeks 1-6 of the extended leave: 25% of your regular weekly fees

Weeks 7-12 of the extended leave: 50% of your regular weekly fees

After week 12, you must pay 100% of your regular fees to maintain enrollment.

If payments are not kept current, childcare services may be terminated.

All extended leaves are granted at the discretion of the Director and/or Child Care Board, and must be approved in writing. An extended leave form is available in the office. We appreciate any advanced notice you can give in these situations. Extended leave is intended to be granted only once per year, though special exceptions may be considered by the Director and/or Child Care Board.

The exception to this policy will be school-aged children who wish to leave for the summer. Because those spots can be temporarily filled by Summer Camp students, school aged children will not be charged a leave fee to hold their spot during the summer. The extended leave policy will apply to school-age students during times of the year other than summer break.

Family Assistance

Praise Lutheran Church is willing to assist families with their spiritual growth and with personal counseling by its pastors, if the need arises. We will periodically offer special programs which are open to you and your family. We also accept CANI payments to help with financial needs.

Field Trips

Field trips are occasionally planned to enrich the student's learning. Field trips will be scheduled 2 weeks in advance whenever possible. There will usually be a field trip fee between \$1.00 and \$5.00. You can request that your child stay at Little Praisers with another class and/or teacher if you prefer they do not go. To ride on the school bus your child must weigh 41 lbs. If your child does not weigh 41 lbs, he/she may stay at the facility or parents can provide alternate transportation arrangements.

Financial Policies

All of our financial policies are clearly spelled out in the financial agreement you received upon enrollment. If you have any further questions please contact the Director or Business Manager at any time. Rate adjustments are evaluated each year in February. The increase will be effective in the fall, when a new school year begins. If fee increases are necessary, you will be notified in writing at least two weeks prior to the increase.

Holiday Closings

Little Praisers will be **closed** on the following Holidays. Regular tuition is still required for these days since we provide paid holidays for our full time staff. You do have the option of choosing to use one of your vacation days on any of these Holidays as long as you have not used them previously in the year.

*New Year's Eve	*New Year's Day	*Good Friday	*Memorial Day
*Independence Day	*Labor Day	*Thanksgiving Day	
*Day after Thanksgiving	*Christmas Eve	*Christmas Day	

If a Holiday falls on a weekend, a week-day will be used for that holiday.

Illness

If your child becomes ill while at Little Praisers, you will be notified immediately and expected to have an authorized adult coming to get your child within a half hour. Please do not bring your child to Praise if they:

- a. Have a fever of 100 degrees or higher
- b. Have communicable diseases (pink eye, impetigo, chicken pox, etc.)
- c. Are vomiting
- d. Have diarrhea

- e. Have a severe cold/and or cough
- f. Have a severe sore throat
- g. Have an unidentified rash
- h. Are not well enough to attend school (for school age children)

Children cannot return to Praise until they have been fever-free without the aid of medication for 24 hours or have a doctor's release to return. Please notify us if your child has a communicable disease, so we can take necessary cleaning precautions and notify other parents of the exposure and symptom. The final decision about allowing ill or recovering children to attend L.P. belongs to the Director.

If your child needs to be on medication while at the center, it must be in its original container. Parents must fill out a medication form authorizing staff to administer medication.

Parents must have a back-up plan for care for their children in the event that they cannot attend Little Praisers due to illness, extreme weather, or a building problem.

Illness Postings

When children or staff members of Little Praisers have been diagnosed with an illness that may be contagious, the number of persons within the program who have that disease will be posted on the door of the program, along with information about the disease, including its symptoms.

Late Pick-Up Fees

If pick up has not occurred by 6:00p.m., there will be a \$10 charge per child. For every 15 minutes thereafter, an additional \$10 per child will be charged. If you have not contacted Little Praisers by 6:15p.m., the other contact persons on your list will be called to pick up your child(ren). If no one who is authorized has responded or picked up by 7:00p.m., Child Protective Services will be contacted.

Nutrition

Your child will be served breakfast, mid-morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack throughout the day. Our menus are planned with nutritional needs and child friendliness in mind. Children with food allergies will need a list from the doctor of foods to which they are allergic, as well as any special instructions necessary. Children are encouraged to try all foods but are not forced to eat. You are welcome to send a packed lunch or snacks with your child.

Open Door Policy

Little Praisers has an "open door" policy. That means you are welcome and encouraged to drop in at any time. Some parents enjoy having lunch with their children on occasion.

Parents may bring their own lunch or purchase one. For whatever reason, stop in and see us at any time.

Parking and Parking Lot

On days when Northwest Allen County and/or Fort Wayne Community Schools are in session, please park in the marked parking spaces during bus hours of 7:00-8:30AM and 2:30-4:15PM. When buses are not running, you may park temporarily in the circle drive for drop-off and pick-up.

Please do NOT leave children unattended in your vehicle, or leave your car running unattended. For the safety of everyone, children and adults, please drive slowly and carefully in our parking lot. Thank you!

Personal Belongings

Your child should bring a complete set of extra clothing including socks, underwear, pants, and shirt or dress. Every child needs appropriate outdoor clothing each season including boots, mittens or gloves, hats, snow pants or an extra pair of pants in the winter. If he/she is still of napping age, you should bring a blanket, small pillow, and/or stuffed toy. Please make sure your child's name is on everything you bring.

Besides stuffed toys for nap time, no other toys from home should be brought to Little Praisers.

Programs

Throughout the year there will be programs scheduled in which the children will participate. Some things we have done in the past include a Fall Festival, a Thanksgiving feast, a Christmas program, and singing in church services at Praise. Parents are encouraged to attend these programs with their children. Most of the time, the children will have made something or will be performing for you on these days. You are always more than welcome to attend any event or church service at any time.

Special Needs

If there are any special needs your child has such as allergies, diabetes, or a need for medication, we are equipped to handle these situations. We do need to be informed. If there are treatments, medication, or reasonable modifications we need to make for them, we can do this with the doctor's permission. Please bring in a statement from your child's doctor explaining the special need(s) and required accommodations.

Staff to Student Ratios

Little Praisers follows state recommendations for staff to student ratios. In each age range, that means:

Infants	1 teacher to 4 children
12-30 months	1 teacher to 5 children
2 ½ to 3 (potty trained)	1 teacher to 7 children
3 years old	1 teacher to 10 children
4 and 5 year olds	1 teacher to 12 children
Kindergarteners	1 teacher to 15 children
1 st grade and up	1 teacher to 20 children

We do everything in our power to maintain the above ratios.

Staffing Policy

In the event a regularly scheduled teacher is absent for any reason, Little Praisers will use substitute teachers and /or other staff members to fill in for this position. We will also have children ‘visit’ various rooms within their age group if numbers are low to maintain correct student to staff ratios in each room. All substitute staff undergo the same pre-hiring requirements as regular staff members.

Weather

Little Praisers Preschool and Child Care will not close due to weather unless there is a state of emergency declared for Allen County. In that case all businesses are required to close. We generally take children outside unless the temperature is 92 degrees or above, or 25 degrees or below, or the ground is too muddy, though the final decision for taking children outside rests with the Director. Please make sure to send appropriate attire with your child’s name on it. If your child is too ill to go outside, he or she should not be at Little Praisers.

Withdrawal

If you must withdraw your child from Little Praisers, a written notice of at least 14 days must be given. If you withdraw without giving notice, you must continue to pay for two full weeks. Vacation days cannot be credited toward your last two weeks. If your last day will be mid-week, tuition for the last week will only be pro-rated if your account is paid in full by the Friday before your last week of attendance.