



Family Handbook 2024-2025

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Welcome!

Welcome to St. Luke's Early Childhood Program! We are glad that you chose our program, and we are excited to have your child and family become part of our School Family! The purpose of this Family Handbook is to help you familiarize yourself with the policies

and procedures set forth in the Early Childhood Program. Please take the time to read through the Family Handbook in its entirety to help make your transition into our program as smooth as possible and please feel free to contact us with any questions that you may have!

Days & Hours of Operation & Program Calendar

Hours of operation for the Beginners-4s classes are from 9am to 1pm. Hours of operation for the 5A class are from 9am-2pm. Aftercare is from 1-2pm. Ages are as of August 1st, although the 5A class is for children who will be 5 years of age as of December 31st.

<u>Classes</u>	<u>Ages</u>	<u>Days</u>	<u>Class Size</u>
Beginners	10 months-2 years	M, T, W, TH, F	7-10 children: 2 teachers
2s	2-3 years	M, T, W, TH, F	10 children: 2 teachers
3A, 3B, 3C, 3D	3 years	T/TH, M/T/TH, W/F, or M/W/F	14 children: 2 teachers
4A, 4B, 4C, 4D	4 years	M/W/F, M/T/TH or M-TH	14 children: 2 teachers
5A	4-5 years	M-F	15 children: 2 teachers

You will receive a copy of the program calendar with this handbook.

About St. Luke's Early Childhood Program

St. Luke's Early Childhood Program is a non-profit, outreach ministry of St. Luke's United Methodist Church.

Program Philosophy & Mission Statement

St. Luke's Early Childhood Program employees provide age-appropriate, play-based learning experiences. We offer high-quality opportunities for growth in cognitive, social-emotional, and physical development in a loving, Christian environment.

Knowledgeable and experienced employees are committed to children and families in their journey towards greater growth and development.

St. Luke's Early Childhood Program believes that maturation plus experience influence a child's growth and knowledge. We further believe that early childhood education should help provide enriching educational experiences in all developmental areas of a child's life. Growth in cognition, perception, language development, creativity, social competence, emotional maturity, and physical skill development are the areas that our program shall strive to promote.

St. Luke's Early Childhood Program is unique to other Indianapolis-area programs. We provide an opportunity for children of all ability levels to learn from each other, relate socially to each other, and play together. In addition to skill development, our philosophy is that the tolerance and acceptance of people with differences begins at an early age. This is a special opportunity to develop the foundation for Christian attitudes toward individual differences throughout the child's life.

St. Luke's Early Childhood Program serves children 10 months to 5 years of age (by August 1st of the current school year).

Program Governance

St. Luke's Early Childhood Program is led by both a Director and an Assistant Director. The Director of St. Luke's Early Childhood Program reports to the Director of Children's Ministry. The Director and Assistant Director are advised by the Parent Advisory Council, which advises in matters of policies and procedures, events and activities, and fundraisers, and helps to oversee the ongoing evaluation of our program goals.

Admission Policies

St. Luke's Early Childhood Program will accept children who are at a stage of growth and development which enables them to benefit from the program, and for whose age level the program is staffed and equipped to provide care. There shall be no discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status, such as disability, age, marital and family status, family structure, sexual orientation, gender identity, health status, place of residence, economic, or social situation.

Every child at St. Luke's Early Childhood Program must have the following information on file before starting in our program*:

- Student Registration Form (3 sheets total)
- Health Record
- Immunization Forms

Please note that a child is not considered registered until we have this information, as well as the registration fee, building/supply fee, and first month's tuition.

Special Needs Policy

Children with special needs will be accepted into our program under the guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and reasonable accommodations will be made. All children and families will be treated with dignity and respect for their individual needs and/or differences. The Director and Assistant Director will be responsible for ensuring that confidentiality about special needs is maintained for all families and employees in the program.

If your child has a specific diagnosis, receives some type of therapy, and/or has an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or an Individualized Education Program (IEP), it is important to share that information with us so that we can best support your child. Additionally, we will communicate any observations with you. It is sometimes necessary to consult with outside sources (with families' consent). Outside sources could include consultation with our Coordinator for Special Needs Ministry, the Developmental Enrichment Program, Infancy Onward or other early childhood mental health agencies, Part C early intervention (First Steps), and/or Part B intervention (preschool special education).

Confidentiality Policy

Confidentiality of information about children and families will be maintained at all times. All forms and other information concerning children and families are accessible to parents/guardians, and St. Luke's Early Childhood Program employees. Information concerning children will not be made available to anyone else, by any means, without the expressed written consent of parents/guardians. In the event of a separation, divorce, or custody ruling, please notify the program so that we may ensure that proper procedures are followed. Written documentation will be required.

Arrival & Dismissal Procedures

Because safety is our number one priority, we ask for families' cooperation in observing the following safety measures when arriving or departing from the program:

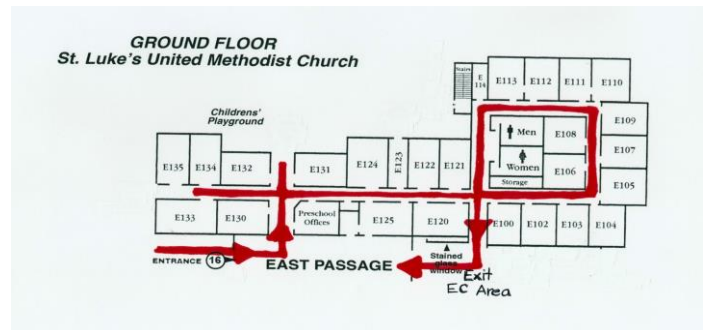
1. We ask that cell phones are not used in the St. Luke's parking lot OR in the hallways as you enter and exit the building. These are designated as cell phone-free zones.
2. Please, keep your children with you at all times. Your children should not be running ahead of you or left unattended at any moment.
3. Park in the northeast parking lot. Use entrance #16. Entrance #17 is closed for security.
4. Arrival - Entrance #16 will open at 8:55am. The doors will close at 9:10am.
5. Dismissal - Entrance #16 will open at 12:55pm for regular dismissal and then again at 1:55pm for 5A dismissal. The doors will close at 1:10pm for regular dismissal and then again at 2:10pm for 5A dismissal.
6. Employees will ask for IDs until they get to know you.

At any other time you wish to enter the Early Childhood Program, entrance #6 to the church is always open. Please follow the signs to the Early Childhood Program area and ring our doorbell (located to the right of the glass security doors) or call us at 317.844.3399.

Court Orders

In the event of a separation or divorce, the program recognizes both birth parents as having custody of a child unless an official court order is on file giving 1 of the parents exclusive custody. In such cases, the program follows the dictates of the court. In the absence of a court order, either parent may pick up.

Late Pick-Up



Children are expected to be picked up on time, especially because children become anxious if they are not picked up at the same time as everyone else. You will be given a warning the first late pick-up and then a \$20.00 late fee will be charged for children who are picked up later than 10 minutes after dismissal (without notification of the Early Childhood Program office). If we are unable to reach you or any of your child's emergency contacts after 30 minutes, we will contact the Indianapolis Police Department and Child Protective Services.

Impaired Individual Policy

The use or possession of tobacco, alcohol, illegal substances, and firearms is prohibited on our premises.

If an authorized intoxicated or impaired person insists on removing a child from the program, the program shall immediately report the incident to the Indianapolis Police Department and Child Protective Services.

Employees

Our employees are here with the best interest of your children in mind. We take full responsibility for the safety and care of the children we greet each day. Employees are screened and selected because of their motivation to do what is best for children. Employees undergo background checks and are trained in First Aid/CPR/Universal Precautions, as well as Child Abuse and Neglect Detection and Prevention. Employees are also required to obtain at least 12 hours of professional development each year on early childhood topics. We ensure that our employees will help guide and nurture your children every step of the way.

Curriculum

Our program provides a wide range of hands-on learning experiences designed to enhance the spiritual, cognitive, language, social-emotional, and physical development of each child. The philosophy behind our program is that young children learn best through play. Learning requires active thinking and experimenting through play activities to find out how things work and to learn firsthand about the world in which children live. While playing in our program, your child will engage in both inside and outside activities and will likely get dirty while doing so. It is important that your child is dressed appropriately to engage in this type of play. We strive to remain current with educational practices for early childhood, and we use the framework of the Indiana Early Learning Standards to help guide our planning.

Supplemental Programs

All of the following supplemental programs are implemented into the Early Childhood Program. These supplements are just that, supplements:

- Learning Without Tears (formerly Get Set for School and Handwriting Without Tears)
- Integrated literacy and phonics, including Zoo-Phonics
- Minds in Motion

Outdoor Play

All children need fresh air and big muscle play time. All children will go outside daily, weather permitting (32 degrees and above). Please dress your children accordingly.

Communication with Families

We believe that ongoing communication between the program and families is vital to children's development. We encourage you to speak with your child's teachers at drop-off and pick-up times. If you have a concern and need to meet with your child's teachers, please feel free to schedule a meeting with them. If, after a discussion with the teachers, your concerns were not successfully resolved, please feel free to contact the Director. Please note that when addressing concerns, all involved parties must remain composed. Verbal aggression of any kind (yelling, name calling, swearing, or language that could be deemed as harassing or threatening) and physical aggression, especially in front of children, will not be tolerated. For everyone's safety, anyone who is verbally and/or physically aggressive will be asked to leave the St. Luke's premises.

In addition to conversations during drop-off and pick-up times, St. Luke's Early Childhood Program will communicate with families in the following ways:

- The Director will send out a monthly e-mail via Constant Contact with valuable information.
- Teachers will communicate monthly via e-mails, calendars, and/or newsletters and may even utilize an app such as Bloomz or Klassly

- Web page: <https://www.stlukesumc.com/early-childhood-program>
- Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/StLukesECP/>
- You will also receive information from a Parent Council representative from your child's classroom about a variety of events and opportunities throughout the year

Open-Door Policy

St. Luke's Early Childhood Program has an open-door policy. This means that you are welcome to visit the program at any time. However, we do ask that if you are planning a visit that you contact the Director and teachers to set up the best time possible for both parties. We also ask that if your presence begins to impede on children's learning that you limit your time in the classroom. If you have suggestions for our program, we are always open to feedback, as we want to provide the best early educational experience possible for your child and family.

Visitors/Volunteers/Therapists

All outside guests must sign in at the Early Childhood Program office. These individuals do not count as part of our staff:child ratios. If your child is being observed or working with a therapist, please let the office and your child's teachers know ahead of time. All therapists must be able to show their credentials prior to working with a child.

Conferences & Assessments

Family/teacher conferences are scheduled twice per year (in the fall and spring) and as needed should there be a topic that needs discussion. Your child will not have school when their conferences are held. Childcare may or may not be offered, depending on caregiver availability. Fall conferences will be for 3s, 4s, and 5A classes; spring conferences will be for Beginners and 2s classes. Families or teachers may request additional conferences if needed. We encourage all families to meet with their children's teachers, as this is a time to share strengths, areas for growth, and to set appropriate goals for children.

Family Events

St. Luke's Early Childhood Program offers a few family events each school year to build relationships with families and to encourage them to build relationships with each other. These family events include pumpkin carving in October for the 4s classes, valentines in February for the 3s classes, a "Kindy" 500 in May for the 5A class, and preschool par-TEAS in May for all of the preschool classes. Also, in conjunction with St. Luke's United Methodist Church, we offer Truck Town before the school year starts, an Easter Eggstravaganza (typically held the weekend before Easter), and Vacation Bible School over the summer.

Family Education Opportunities

St. Luke's Early Childhood Program will periodically offer book studies and other family education opportunities, and we encourage families to participate! If you are seeking information on a particular topic, please stop by the Early Childhood Program office and let us know!

Volunteering

We strongly encourage you to become involved in your child's early learning experience by sharing your time and talents! Volunteer opportunities include, but are not limited to:

1. Joining our Parent Council: This is an advisory group for our program that meets monthly (childcare is provided), and we discuss staffing, enrollment, upcoming events, fundraisers, etc.
2. Serving as a room parent: Assist teachers with special classroom events, coordinate classroom play dates, etc.
3. Providing hospitality: Arrange refreshments for meetings and special events
4. Providing childcare: Provide childcare during monthly staff meetings and special events
5. Helping with school pictures
6. Helping with screenings (hearing, speech, vision, etc.)
7. Helping with the Scholastic book fair and/or fundraiser deliveries
8. Helping with maintenance needs and take-home projects (sewing, repairing, woodworking, take-home projects as needed)
9. Participating in book studies and family education opportunities: Join 1 of our book studies and/or family education opportunities when offered

Attendance Policy

The Early Childhood Program doors will close at 9:10am. Please have your child here and ready to go by that time so that they do not miss out on learning opportunities and relationship-building with their teachers and peers. We take attendance daily immediately after drop-off. We appreciate a phone call or an e-mail for children that will be late or out of the program for any reason. Please call us at 317.844.3399 or e-mail the Director, Assistant Director, and your child's teachers. If your child is not here and we have not heard from you, we will call you to make sure that everything is okay.

Social Media Policy

St. Luke's Early Childhood Program recognizes that social media has become a part of everyday life for many individuals and families. Social media allows for the free and easy exchange of information, opinions, and images. With particular regard to images of children and to enable St. Luke's Early Childhood Program to keep everyone safe, it is necessary to set our terms around the use of social media in connection with how St. Luke's Early Childhood Program is presented publicly.

This policy covers, but is not limited to, the following social media channels:

- Facebook
- Instagram
- X (formerly Twitter)
- LinkedIn
- Snapchat
- YouTube
- Personal blogs

St. Luke's Early Childhood Program has chosen to create a Facebook account (<https://www.facebook.com/StLukesECP>) that we encourage you to follow, as we will regularly post images and will post information regarding upcoming events and relative to parenting here. However, we also respect that some families do not want their children's images posted on social media, and we will respect these wishes.

St. Luke's Early Childhood Program recognizes that families may be regular users of social media and has no intention to curtail their use of it beyond reasonable requests to adhere to safety regulations and professionalism. To maintain a safe and productive learning environment, the following guidelines are provided:

- Remember that anything that you post on social media cannot be considered fully private, regardless of how strong your privacy settings are
- Be aware of the permanency of the Internet and think before you post. Once something is sent out, it may be permanent and unable to be retracted
- Be aware of how you discuss St. Luke's Early Childhood Program in conversations on social media. Do not reveal:
 - The names of St. Luke's Early Childhood Program employees or volunteers or any other identifying information
 - The names of other children or families who attend St. Luke's Early Childhood Program or any other identifying information
- If you have any concerns about how any aspect of St. Luke's Early Childhood Program is run, do not discuss it on social media. Such concerns should always be reported to the Director so that they can be investigated, discussed, and resolved formally
- If any opinions are shared on social media that could have a detrimental effect on St. Luke's Early Childhood Program, its employees, volunteers, children, and/or families, St. Luke's Early Childhood Program will follow formal proceedings to investigate
- Cyberbullying will not be tolerated. Harassing, dissing, flaming, denigrating, impersonating, outing, tricking, excluding, and cyberstalking are all examples of cyberbullying. Engaging in these behaviors, or any online activities intended to harm another person (physically or emotionally) will result in disciplinary action, up to and including removal from the program. In some cases, cyberbullying is considered a crime
- Any images or videos taken at St. Luke's Early Childhood Program are for personal use only and should not be shared on your own social media, as it is not acceptable to post images or videos of other children without the express written consent of their families

- Nothing in this policy shall prohibit personal or private social media use by employees, volunteers, families, or children unrelated to and outside of the program
- If you become aware of any inappropriate online behavior, please immediately report it to the Director for investigation

Clothing

For purposes of safety, children must wear appropriate play clothes and shoes. Slippery-soled dress shoes, open sandals/flip flops, and Crocs are potentially dangerous and should not be worn. Your child will have the opportunity to work with water, paint, glue, playdough, sand, and other messy materials. Please dress your child in washable, comfortable clothing that is free of complicated fasteners. Positive self-concepts and independence can be fostered when children can do things for themselves. Please bring a seasonally-appropriate complete change of clothing for your child (including socks and shoes) in case of accidents, spills, or typical messes created from play and please make sure that all items are clearly labeled. We will be playing outside most days, weather permitting, so please send jackets/coats, hats, and mittens/gloves when it gets colder.

Toilet Training

Not every child develops at the same rate and is ready to be toilet-trained at the same age. When readiness signs for toilet training are observed, teachers will work with children and families. Readiness signs involve the child's ability to tell the teacher about a soiled diaper, to show signs of discomfort while in a soiled diaper, and/or to express an interest in using the toilet.

Toilet training means:

- The child can and does tell the teacher that they have to use the toilet
- The child is able to pull down their own clothing
- The child uses the toilet on their own
- The child can and does pull up their own clothing

Children will never be punished or humiliated due to toileting accidents. Accidents and inconsistencies will occur at both home and at the program. However, if a child is not fully toilet-trained and is having multiple accidents per day to where there are hygiene concerns for the other children, we will ask that the child wear a Pull-Up or a diaper until they are fully toilet-trained. For hygienic purposes, children that are working on toilet training or are fully-toilet trained must wear underwear. All classrooms are equipped with bathrooms, toilets, and handwashing sinks. Our Parents' Day Out classes have changing tables in them, but our preschool classes do not, so we work with the families to toilet train children before they enter the 3s classes.

Toys

Teachers may request that toys or special items be brought in for show-and-tell or other special occasions, but toys should not be brought to the program unless this is the case. If a toy or special item is brought in for show-and-tell or another special occasion, please make sure that it is clearly labeled. Please do not send in breakable objects, money (unless requested), candy, gum, or toy weapons.

Snacks & Treats

Families are asked to donate healthy snacks, and 1 snack is served each day. Please see your child's classroom schedule or sign-up. Ideas for snack: Teachers will let you know if there are children with food allergies in the classroom and give you a list of safe snacks. Some popular snack ideas include Goldfish, animal crackers, graham crackers, pretzels, fresh fruits and vegetables, raisins, and cheese cubes.

*Each child will be expected to bring a reusable water bottle to the program each day.

Lunches

Lunches are provided by the families. Food must be brought in clean, insulated, sanitizable containers and all containers/lunchboxes must be clearly labeled. We encourage families to send healthy lunches that include fresh fruits and vegetables. Please be sure that food is cut into small pieces, as to avoid choking hazards. Grapes, strawberries, hotdogs, etc. should be cut to avoid choking hazards. Please refrain from packing Lunchables, as these are difficult for the children to open. We do not have microwaves in the classrooms so all items will be served as is.

Birthdays

If your child wishes to share a birthday treat with the class, please notify the teachers the week before. In accordance with the Marion County Health Department, all treats must be purchased at a store and brought in their original, unopened containers (we cannot accept homemade treats) with a label showing all ingredients.

The policy for birthday celebrations is as follows:

You may send in a treat that the teachers have approved and birthday napkins for the child's celebration. Due to food allergies and our desire to treat our children equally, no lunches, pizzas, cakes, large cupcakes (mini size are fine), or treat bags can be brought into the program. We want all children to feel special.

Breastfeeding

We do have a private nursing persons room available on site if you are here and need to utilize it. Please see the Director or the Assistant Director if this is the case.

Food Allergies

Please be aware that we have children in our program that have food allergies. Based on the severity of the allergy, teachers may need to coordinate seating arrangements in the classroom to avoid cross-contamination.

When a child with food allergies attends St. Luke's Early Childhood Program, the family will be provided with an Allergy Action Plan to be filled out by the child's healthcare provider. This Allergy Action Plan must be filled out in its entirety and returned to the program before the child begins. Families should also provide the program with appropriate medication and equipment should children have an allergic reaction (Benadryl, EpiPen, etc.) and train employees (if necessary) on how to use medication and equipment.

Registration

Registration for the following school year will open in late January to current Early Childhood Program families. Open registration then begins in February. Current Early Childhood Program families shall have first priority for placement. Previously non-enrolled church families shall have the next priority. Following church family registration, the registration process shall be open to the community. Please note that a child is not considered registered until we have the Student Registration Form, as well as the registration fee, building/supply fee, and first month's tuition. All fees and first month's tuition are non-refundable, as staffing and the budget for the following school year are built based off of the number of children registered.

Tuition Payments/Fees/Withdrawal/Refunds

Tuition is based on the actual costs of operating the program divided by the number of children enrolled. Tuition payments are divided into 9 equal payments, not based on the number of days children attend each month.

Registration Fee: \$50.00 (non-refundable) per child

Building/Supply Fee: \$125.00 (non-refundable) per child

Total due at Registration: \$175.00 + first month's tuition

Tuition is due the first day of the month, and payments can be made via ACH, check, money order, or cash. Tuition checks and money orders may be placed in the tuition drop-box located on the wall just outside of the Early Childhood Program Office. Checks and money orders should be made payable to St. Luke's Early Childhood Program (St. Luke's ECP for short). Please make a note for our Treasurer if the child's name differs from the name on the check or money order. Please do not put cash in the tuition box; please see the Director or Assistant Director. A tuition payment for the entire semester or entire school year may be made if desired.

Please be patient if you experience a delay in the deposit of your payment. If you have any questions, you may contact our Treasurer, Kathy Hockett, at hockettk@stlukeseccp.com.

For special payment arrangements of tuition, please contact the Director or Assistant Director.

Overdue Tuition Payment Fee: Monthly tuition is due the first day of each month. On the 10th of the month, any unpaid account will be considered delinquent, and charged a \$20.00 late fee. The following school year's registration/tuition deposits and registration for siblings are not accepted for children whose accounts are not current.

Returned Check Fee: A fee of \$25.00 will be due on any returned check. If checks are returned twice with non-sufficient funds, tuition must be paid with cash or money order for the remainder of the school year.

Withdrawals: Each child is enrolled for the entire school year or the balance of the school year. 2 weeks' prior notice, or 2 weeks' tuition, is payable upon child's withdrawal from the program.

Refunds: Please note that there are no refunds for hours or days missed due to illness, family vacations, program delays or closures, or withdrawals.

Hold Fee

In the event that a family has officially been offered a spot in the program, and the family chooses to accept the spot, but not use it immediately, the family will need to pay full tuition in order to hold the spot.

Vacation Time

If your child will be absent due to vacation, please notify the Director, Assistant Director, and your child's teachers in advance. We are closed for various holidays and breaks, but we realize that families also take vacations outside of those times. Please note that there are no refunds for hours or days missed due to family vacations.

Safe Conditions Policy

The following steps will be taken to ensure that your child is safe while attending St. Luke's Early Childhood Program:

- Children will be actively supervised by at least 2 qualified adults per classroom (adults who have completed a background check, drug screen, First Aid/CPR/Universal Precautions and all other required trainings, and have a negative TB test)
- St. Luke's Early Childhood Program will not care for children in areas that are actively being remodeled or painted. The Director, in conjunction with the Operations and Facilities teams, is responsible for maintaining all interior and exterior surfaces, including walls, ceilings, floors, equipment, furnishings, and toys, in a safe condition, free of sharp points or jagged edges, splinters, protruding nails or wires, loose parts, rusty parts, or materials containing poisonous substances
- St. Luke's Early Childhood Program will take the following steps to maintain our facility:
 - Keep the program area safe, clean, and sanitary
 - Clean and sanitize equipment, furniture, toys, linens, etc. on a daily basis and/or when they become soiled or contaminated

Supervision Policy

- There will always be at least 2 qualified adults per classroom
- Maximum group sizes and adult:child ratios will be maintained at all times
- Adults will actively supervise all children by sight and sound at all times
- Adults will regularly count children, especially during transitions and outdoor play
- To aid with supervision during outdoor play, the play areas are enclosed by fences
- Other adults, such as the Director and/or Assistant Director, will be available to assist in case of an emergency

Alternate Care

Alternate care is the responsibility of the families when St. Luke's Early Childhood Program is closed for holidays, breaks, professional development days, staff work days, inclement weather, etc. It is very important to find alternate care before it is needed.

Substitute Care

Should 1 of your child's regular teachers request time off or be ill, a qualified substitute teacher will be placed in the classroom. If no substitute teacher can be found, the Director or Assistant Director will step in to cover the classroom.

Transportation Policy

St. Luke's Early Childhood Program does not provide transportation to and from the program. Each child shall have a complete Student Registration Form that lists people authorized to pick up when needed or in case of an emergency. No child will be released to a person not authorized by a parent/guardian to pick up the child. Employees will request identification if the individual is unknown. If you need to add or remove names or make any other changes to your child's emergency card, please stop by or call the Early Childhood Program office.

Guidance Policy

It is our policy and belief that all children will be treated with love and guidance. It is our objective to reinforce positive behaviors and redirect challenging behaviors. We will help the child problem solve in order to be successful in the classroom with their peers and teachers. St. Luke's Early Childhood Program utilizes Conscious Discipline as our framework in guiding children in the right direction. Employees shall use positive guidance to communicate with children, using helpful statements, and encouraging the children to make safe choices with adult support.

If a child is experiencing difficulty in our setting, we may request a meeting with the child's family. The intention is to support the child's success in our program and to create an individualized behavior support plan to better meet the needs of the child.

Please read through our comprehensive Positive Guidance Policy for more detailed information as to how we will address any challenging behaviors.

It is the policy of this program not to disclose the names of the child(ren) who may have caused injury to another child(ren). This ensures each child's/family's privacy.

Biting/Hitting

Biting and hitting are behaviors that can be common with toddler-aged children and even older children who may not be able to effectively communicate their needs or express their feelings due to a developmental or speech delay. Biting and hitting will always be discouraged, and the child will be supported to find other solutions to gain what the need is or to express their feelings. If biting or hitting becomes a problem, the Director and teachers will meet with the family in order to problem solve and find a solution. Our policy is:

1. Provide first aid if needed and document incident
2. Inform families
3. Follow our Positive Guidance Policy

Child Abuse & Neglect Reporting Policy

St. Luke's Early Childhood Program is required by Indiana law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect to Child Protective Services. During the first few weeks of employment, and on an annual basis, all employees receive documented training in recognizing and reporting child abuse and neglect. The guidelines for reporting suspected child abuse and/or neglect are as follows:

1. Refrain from questioning the child and suspected perpetrator(s) beyond gathering information to report the suspected abuse and/or neglect to Child Protective Services
2. Employees shall immediately report suspected child abuse and/or neglect to the Director
3. Employees and Director will call Child Protective Services at 1.800.800.5556

Reporters of suspected child abuse and/or neglect will not be discharged for making a report unless it is proven that a false report was knowingly made.

If an employee is accused of child abuse and/or neglect, the employee will be put on leave pending the Child Protective Services investigation. However, no accusation or affirmation of guilt will be made until the Child Protective Services investigation is complete. Any employee found guilty of child abuse and/or neglect will be immediately terminated.

Tobacco, Alcohol, Illegal Substances, & Firearms Policy

- The use or possession of tobacco, alcohol, and/or illegal substances is prohibited on our grounds
- All employees will maintain sobriety while at work. Employees that are inebriated, intoxicated, or otherwise under the influence of mind-altering or polluting substances will be required to leave the premises and subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination
- If an authorized intoxicated or impaired person insists on removing a child from the program, the program shall immediately report the incident to the Indianapolis Police Department and Child Protective Services
- No firearms or other lethal weapons will be allowed on our grounds. Adults required to carry firearms as a function of their job are exempt from this part of the policy

Emergencies

In order to protect your child in the event of an emergency, we ask that you keep any emergency contact information for your child current. This includes:

- Emergency medical authorization in case you cannot be reached
- Phone numbers for yourself and at least 2 other people who are authorized to pick up your child
- A list of your child's allergies and other health-related information (medications, etc.)

If we would need to evacuate the building, we would gather at St. Luke's Lodge. In all emergency situations, families will be notified via telephone, text message, or e-mail as soon as the situation allows.

Security Measures

The Early Childhood Program hallway doors are locked Monday-Friday between drop-off and pick-up times. Entrance #16 is also locked during these hours. Anyone arriving after drop-off or before pick-up will need to call the Early Childhood Program office at 317.844.3399 or enter through entrance #6 and ring the doorbell outside of the Early Childhood Program hallway doors.

First Aid/CPR/Universal Precautions

Employees are trained annually in First Aid, CPR, and Universal Precautions.

In Case of Child Illness

Parents/guardians will immediately be notified in the case of a child illness. A copy of each child's record is kept on hand in the Early Childhood Program office. Every effort will be made to contact the child's parent/guardian before calling the emergency contacts listed, but these alternate contacts will be called if the child's parent/guardian cannot be reached.

In Case of Child Medical Emergency

Parents/guardians will be immediately notified in the case of a medical emergency. A copy of each child's record is kept on hand in the Early Childhood Program office. Every effort will be made to contact the child's parent/guardian before calling the emergency contacts listed, but these alternate contacts will be called if the child's parent/guardian cannot be reached. If necessary, we will have the child transported to the nearest hospital by ambulance. A St. Luke's Early Childhood employee will accompany the child to the hospital until the child's parent/guardian arrives.

In Case of Employee Serious Illness, Injury, or Death

In the event of an employee's serious illness or injury or in the event of an employee's death, the Director will notify the families of the situation and the plan for substitute care.

Power Outage/Plumbing Issue

In the event of a power outage or plumbing issue, employees will remain calm and explain the situation for the children and find safe activities for children to participate in while awaiting the return of power and/or water. The Director will determine if the power/plumbing outage is confined to the facility or includes surrounding areas. Unless the power outage or plumbing issue is accompanied by an emergency situation requiring evacuation, children will be kept inside. Should power and/or water fail to return to the building within 1 hour, families will be contacted to come pick up their children, and the program will remain closed until power and/or water is restored.

Inclement Weather

When inclement weather arises, and we must decide whether to delay or close the program, we take the safety of our families and our employees into consideration. Since we are on the border of Marion and Hamilton Counties, if Washington Township or Carmel Clay Schools are delayed due to inclement weather, we will also be delayed, and our delayed start time will be 10:30am with regular dismissal remaining at 1pm and 5A dismissal remaining at 2pm. If Washington Township or Carmel Clay Schools are closed due to inclement weather, we will also be closed for the day. If Washington Township and Carmel Clay Schools make different decisions due to inclement weather, we will go with the greater decision (for example a closure over a delay).

Should the need arise to close early due to inclement weather, we will notify families as soon as possible via telephone, text message, or e-mail.

Standard delays or closures will be announced via a Constant Contact e-mail, Facebook, and our answering machine (317.844.3399). Please note that there is no reimbursement for hours or days missed due to delays or closures.

Fire Drills/Fire/Risk of Explosion Procedures

In an effort to keep everyone safe and prepared in the event of a fire, we schedule monthly fire drills. These drills keep our program up to code with the local Fire Marshall.

- Anyone who discovers smoke, fire, or risk of explosion will immediately pull the lever at the nearest fire lever station
- Employees and children will calmly and quickly follow the posted evacuation procedures, leaving via the nearest exit and taking families' contact information with them
- Anyone is authorized to use the fire extinguisher where safe and necessary, but the evacuation of all children and employees should always take priority
- If we cannot re-enter the building, families will be contacted as soon as possible

Tornado/Severe Weather

In an effort to keep everyone safe and prepared in the event of a tornado/severe weather, we schedule tornado drills during the month of March.

In the event of a tornado warning, all children and employees will calmly and quickly move to their designated shelters (interior rooms without windows) in the building, taking their emergency bags and families' contact information with them.

Physical Examinations & Immunizations

A health examination is required for each child prior to admission to the program (see Health Record). All children that register at St. Luke's Early Childhood Program must have current, age-appropriate immunizations and the Health Record form on file by their first day of school. Per Indiana law, we cannot reject a child who may not be current on immunizations because of a documented medical or religious reason as allowable by Indiana law. If a vaccine-preventable disease occurs, we will require all unvaccinated children to be excluded for up to 3 weeks, depending on the disease. Families will be notified, in writing, of any significant occurrences or problems that might affect their children, including exposure to communicable diseases.

Medication

Regulations prevent us from giving any prescription or non-prescription medications at the program. We may only administer medication in the case of an emergency, such as for chronic conditions like allergies or asthma. For these chronic conditions, the action plan must be updated annually. All medications must be labeled and kept in the Early Childhood Program office.

Sunscreen/Insect Repellent

Please be proactive and put sunscreen and/or insect repellent on your child prior to arrival at the program. Because sunscreen and insect repellent are considered medications by the State of Indiana, we are not allowed to put these on your child, and we do not supply these.

Illnesses

In an effort to control illness in our facility and to do what is in the best interest of our children and employees, the following guidelines have been made. If your child has had any of the following health issues within the past 24 hours, your child should

remain home and additional communicable disease guidelines are listed below. If any of the listed issues are observed, your child will be sent home:

- ⊗ Fever of 100+ degrees
- ⊗ Ear infection
- ⊗ Discolored discharge coming from the eye(s)
- ⊗ Runny nose with thick, discolored mucus
- ⊗ Sore throat
- ⊗ Persistent cough
- ⊗ Vomiting
- ⊗ 2+ loose, runny stools/diarrhea

If your child has a fever of 100+ degrees or any of the above symptoms, they may not return until they have been fever and symptom-free, without the use of medication, for at least 24 hours. The Director and Assistant Director should be notified if a child has a communicable disease. In addition, please use your best judgement to return your child to the program when they have enough energy to fully participate in activities, their diet and sleep patterns are back to normal, and they are no longer feeling discomfort.

Additional communicable disease guidelines from the Indiana Department of Health are as follows:

Conjunctivitis (Pink eye): Children should remain home until after they have seen a doctor and have been approved for readmission. For bacterial conjunctivitis, children should remain home for 24 hours after starting topical antibiotics

COVID-19: We follow the current CDC guidelines when it comes to COVID-19. As stated above, children should remain home if they are showing any of the common signs and symptoms of COVID-19, such as a fever of 100+ degrees, a runny nose with thick, discolored mucus, a sore throat, a persistent cough, vomiting, diarrhea, etc.

Hand, Foot, & Mouth Disease: Children should remain home if they have "weeping" lesions on their hands and feet and/or blisters in their mouths. As stated above, children should also remain home if they have a fever of 100+ degrees

Head Lice: While head lice do not pose a health hazard, head lice can spread to other children and employees. Children who have a live louse and/or 2 or more eggs/nits within 1 inch of the scalp will be temporarily excluded from the program until treated with the appropriate medication. In order to re-admit, after treatment, the child will need to report to the Early Childhood Program office to be checked for a louse and/or nits

Influenza: As stated above, children should remain home if they are showing any of the common signs and symptoms of influenza, such as a fever of 100+ degrees, a runny nose with thick, discolored mucus, a sore throat, a persistent cough, vomiting, diarrhea, etc.

Norovirus: Children should remain home until they are asymptomatic (no vomiting or diarrhea) for at least 24 hours

Shigellosis: Children should remain home until they are asymptomatic (no vomiting or diarrhea) for at least 24 hours

Streptococcal Pharyngitis (Strep Throat): Children should remain home for at least 24 hours after starting antibiotics

Varicella (Chicken Pox): Children should remain home if they have new or open lesions. Children may return to the program once there have been no new lesions for at least 24 hours and all existing lesions are crusted over

For additional communicable disease guidelines, please contact the Director and Assistant Director.

If your child becomes ill during the day and is found to have any of the above-mentioned symptoms or is not able to fully participate in the daily routine, we will notify the family. Your child is to be picked up as soon as possible. If the parents/guardians cannot be reached or you are unable to pick up your child within 30 minutes, those people on your child's emergency list will be contacted. Please be prepared and have a back-up plan if your child were to become ill and you would need to make alternate arrangements for your child's care. Please keep all work, cell, and emergency phone numbers current.

Updated 6/2024