

'23-'24 Edition

Parent Handbook



A MINISTRY OF
IMMANUEL
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Table of Contents

Introduction	1	Communication	16
Enrollment	3	Medical Information	17
Program	5	Emergencies	19
Curriculum	9	Regulations and Limitations	20
Procedures	12		

Introduction

Welcome

We would like to invite you and your child on an incredible journey of learning and growing, not only physically, but also emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually. We plan to work together with you as your child develops in so many ways.

This Parent Handbook was designed to let you know about the policies and procedures that Little Lambs Early Childhood Center (LLECC) has in effect. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this handbook please feel free to arrange a time to speak with the Director.

You will be notified of any changes in this handbook by newsletter, e-mail, postings on the web site, or notes sent home with your child.

Program

Little Lambs Early Childhood Center offers preschool and provides valuable learning experiences for children ages three through five in a Christian environment. It is open to families of the community during the Fall, Winter, and Spring according to a calendar set each year. Little Lambs will not operate unless it is licensed by the State of Michigan, Department of Human Services, Bureau of Child and Adult Licensing (BCAL).

Facility

Little Lambs operates inside the building of Immanuel Lutheran Church, as a ministry of this congregation. The Little Lambs classroom provides ample space for most learning activities. Little Lambs also makes use of other areas of the building which are approved by the State of Michigan. A playground is adjacent to the building with developmentally appropriate equipment for preschoolers.

Purpose & Philosophy

Little Lambs takes seriously our obligation to teach and train children in accordance with the Savior's command: *"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations... teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you"* (Matthew 28:19-20), and *"Feed my lambs"* (John 21:15).

Thus, the purpose of Little Lambs is to share the precious love and forgiveness of Jesus with the children who attend the center and also with their families. Each child, parent/guardian, and staff member will be treated with the same love and respect that God has shown to each of us.

Mission Statement

As a ministry of Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church, Little Lambs Early Childhood Center exists to build upon the foundation of the Christian faith while providing an excellent education to our congregation and our community.

Statement of Belief

Little Lambs operates as a ministry of Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church; therefore, all teaching will adhere to the teachings of the Bible as the members of Immanuel have also bound themselves to this teaching. We believe that there is one triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We believe that God is

the perfect creator and preserver of all things; that we are saved from sin only by the life, death and resurrection of the Son, Jesus; that the Holy Spirit works faith in our hearts so that we may enter the kingdom of heaven.

While we welcome children and families from any religious background, we reserve the right to teach in accordance with the teachings of Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church. For more details on the doctrine of Immanuel, please feel free to talk with the director or with the pastor, or visit www.wels.net.

Goals

Although parents have been given the primary responsibility for the training of their children, the church is to assist the parents in their God-given directive to train their children in the knowledge and instruction of the Lord. Complete cooperation between home and school is absolutely necessary for the welfare of the children. Therefore, it shall be the goal of this early childhood program to:

- Provide a developmentally appropriate education for 3-5 year olds
- Assist parents in meeting their God-given responsibilities
- Minister to the children and their parents in their roles as saved children of God
- Provide a Christ-centered education by incorporating Bible lessons in all areas

Objectives

Consistent with our mission and goals, Little Lambs provides a program which focuses on development of the whole child with the following objectives:

1. Spiritual Growth
 - To learn that Jesus is our Savior from sin
 - To learn of God's love through Bible stories, prayers, and songs
 - To respond to God's love in everyday life
 - To share the Good News of what Jesus has done for us with others
2. Intellectual Growth
 - To develop a positive approach toward learning
 - To be able to follow directions
 - To increase attention skills
 - To develop a curiosity about the world that God made
 - To develop effective language skills
 - To develop the ability to think critically and solve problems effectively
3. Social/Emotional Growth
 - To grow in Christian love, respect, and empathy
 - To develop positive social skills
 - To develop independence and self-control
 - To express feelings in an appropriate manner
 - To develop respect for one's own rights as well as the rights of others
 - To develop an understanding and respect for cultural diversity
4. Physical Growth
 - To develop large and fine motor skills
 - To improve good health and grooming habits
 - To care for one's own personal needs
 - To develop good nutrition habits

Enrollment

Enrollment Eligibility

Little Lambs Early Childhood Center accepts children who are three, four, or five years old at the time of enrollment. All children must be able to use the toilet, wipe, flush, and wash their hands independently by the start of their enrollment (no diapers and pull ups). The enrollment roster for the following school year will be finalized in the spring. If there are any open spots, parents may be allowed to enroll their children after the roster is finalized.

According to state regulations, children who are 33 months of age may be enrolled with written parental permission. Little Lambs reserves the right to accept these applications on a case by case scenario.

Little Lambs does not discriminate based on race, color, national or ethnic origin, or gender.

Enrollment Process

Parents who express an interest in enrolling their child in Little Lambs will be given an Enrollment Application form and asked to complete it, along with being offered a time to tour the center. Applications may be submitted throughout the year.

The roster for the school year will be set in the Spring on a date decided upon by the Director. Families who wish to enroll must meet with the Director, Lead Teacher, or Pastor, visiting the center with their child before the roster is set. The roster will be decided based upon enrollment priority status and when applications were received. The families who are on the roster for the next school year will be mailed/given a registration packet to complete. All other families will be put on the wait list and notified of their position. **Registration fees must be paid for the upcoming school year by the last day of the current school year**, or that child's position is forfeited and will go to the first family on the wait list. Registration fees are non-refundable.

Enrollment Packet

The following mandatory forms must be completed before a child may begin attending Little Lambs Early Childhood Center:

- ✓ Application Form
- ✓ Registration Fee
- ✓ Child Information Record
- ✓ Immunization Records
- ✓ Physical performed within the last year
- ✓ Walking Field Trip Permission Form
- ✓ Topical/Non-prescription Medication Permission
- ✓ Financial Agreement
- ✓ Photo/Video Release Form, *if applicable*
- ✓ Food Agreement
- ✓ Parent Handbook Notification
- ✓ Parent Notification of the Licensing Notebook

Enrollment Priority

Children who apply to Little Lambs will be assigned an enrollment priority status according to the following:

1. Children already enrolled in Little Lambs
2. Siblings of past or current LLECC Children
3. All other applicants

Within each priority status families will be ranked based on when their application was received and goodness of fit in the Little Lambs Program. Immanuel Lutheran Church's Board of Christian Education, as directors of Little Lambs, reserve the right to make final decisions on all enrollment matters.

If there is a waiting list:

When an opening is available the Director will contact the parent by phone and/or email to offer enrollment. The family has two business days to respond. If the family does not respond or does not want to enroll, the next family on the waiting list will be contacted about the opening. If the family accepts enrollment, they have two business days to submit the registration fee to secure their spot.

Little Lambs administration will give the parent an enrollment packet upon the family accepting enrollment. All forms should be completed and turned in at least two days prior to enrollment.

Referral Credit

Parents who refer a new family to Little Lambs will receive a \$50 referral credit for each new family enrolled full-time. This credit will be applied to your child's tuition.

To receive the credit, the referring family must be listed on the initial application of the new family and the new child must attend for a minimum of 6 months.

Tuition and Fees

Tuition rates are based on the number of school days over the school year, **regardless of your child's attendance**. Registration and tuition rates will be reviewed and may be adjusted annually by the Board of Education.

Tuition	(Please see the attached payment schedule.)
Tuition plus Extended Care	(Please see the attached payment schedule.)
Registration Fee	\$75.00 (non-refundable)
Late Pick-up Fee	\$5.00/5 minutes
Sick Child Fee	\$5.00/5 minutes (begins 1 hour after parent/guardian has been notified)

Extended Care

Extended care will be offered between the hours of 7:30-8:00am, and 4:00-5:00pm for students enrolled at Little Lambs. **Parents must enroll in extended care before the school year starts.** If parents decide to enroll in extended care after the beginning of the school year, they must speak to the Director. If children not enrolled in extended care are left in extended care, late pick-up fees will apply.

If your child attends the **morning extended care, please pack a breakfast** for us to serve them here during those morning hours if they have not yet eaten breakfast at home.

Multiple Child Credit

A second or third child credit will be offered if a family has two or three children enrolled in Little Lambs at the same time. Tuition for the second and/or third child will be reduced by 10%. The full registration fee will still apply to each child.

Payment Procedure

Please see the attached payment schedule. Tuition payment options are weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, semester, or annual.

Tuition payments must be made **before care of child begins. The first tuition payment is due two weeks before the first day of school.** Payments can be made by cash, local personal check, or money order. Bills

and account statements will be given out in a timely manner to help you keep track of your child's tuition fees.

For students who end up joining Little Lambs after the beginning of the year, tuition for the first payment will be pro-rated for the days prior to their enrollment.

Failure to pay tuition or fees on time will result in a \$35.00 late fee. The late fee is due along with your current balance within one week. Three missed payments may result in termination of your child's enrollment. Returned checks are subject to a \$35.00 service charge. After 3 returned checks have been received, cash or a money order will be required for all succeeding payments.

At this time, credit card payments are not accepted.

Little Lambs accepts a variety of tuition assistance and subsidy programs (such as DHS, Tribal, Coast Guard, Border Patrol), handling each situation on a case-by-case basis.

Program

Code of Conduct

Whenever people work together, certain standards of reasonable conduct help maintain a cooperative, orderly, and efficient atmosphere. The success of Little Lambs relies on the professionalism of all employees and parents/guardians. The Code of Conduct outlines standards of conduct for employees and parents/guardians involved with Little Lambs. Examples of appropriate behavior include the following:

- Demonstrate respect for all children, families, and staff
- Maintain an atmosphere of open communication and cooperation
- Exhibit friendliness and concern toward one another
- Adhere to specific expectations for staff or parents/guardians

Staff Expectations

We request that the staff of Little Lambs Early Childhood Center adhere to the following guidelines:

- Never allow a child to leave the classroom alone.
- Supervise all student activities to ensure a safe, orderly environment and to be available to provide emergency intervention as needed.
- Communicate with parents in a clear and timely manner.
- Keep information regarding children and families confidential.
- Initiate communication with parents when concerns arise regarding the spiritual, physical, or academic well-being of a child.
- Provide age appropriate instruction and discipline within a loving, encouraging, Christ-centered environment.
- Assist children in self-control and self-discipline.
- Wear appropriate clothing for working with children.
- Represent Little Lambs in a professional manner.
- Be creative in implementing the overall program curriculum.
- Keep educational and administrative areas clean and organized.
- Report to work at the scheduled time.

Expectations of Parents/Guardians

We request that parents and guardians adhere to the following guidelines:

- Accompany your child to and from the classroom.
- Bring your child to the center on time and pick your child up promptly at the end of each day.
- Provide a written note if someone other than you will be picking up your child from the center.
- Communicate respectfully with teachers about any challenges and concerns.
- Read all school communication carefully.
- Notify the center promptly when your child will be absent.
- Make regular attendance a high priority and avoid unnecessary and inappropriate absences.
- Dress your child in weather appropriate and comfortable play clothes and shoes.
- For safety reasons all shoes must have backs to them, even sandals.
- Clearly label boots, coats, book bags, etc. with your child's name.
- Maintain an adequate supply of seasonally appropriate extra clothes for your child.
- Meet your financial obligations to the school.
- See that children do not bring personal belongings to the center without prior permission.
- Understand that if a child is absent for 5 days without communication from parents/guardians, the child may be subject to dismissal from Little Lambs.
- Ensure that children are well rested.
- Sign your child in and out daily.
- Keep your child home when ill/contagious disease.
- Provide your child's teacher with up-to-date contact information.

While not required, parents and guardians are strongly encouraged to volunteer at Little Lambs. We also encourage you to regularly attend worship and/or look into attending a Bible Information Class to become more familiar with the truths we will be teaching your children throughout the day.

Insurance

The children and staff at Little Lambs Early Childhood Center are covered with appropriate accident and liability insurance from Brotherhood Mutual Insurance Company.

Program Organization

The Little Lambs Early Childhood Center Director also serves as a lead teacher. The director is responsible for planning and implementing the curriculum. The director is the supervising authority of all Little Lambs staff and volunteers. Little Lambs is a ministry of Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church. Therefore, the director and staff are supervised by the Board of Christian Education, the Church Council, and the voters of Immanuel.

Procedures and Policy Changes

Procedures and policies will be upheld as stated in the parent handbook. Any new or amended procedures or policies will be communicated by parent newsletter/memo or a posting on the web site, or relayed by another form of communication.

Open Door Policy

Little Lambs has an open door policy. Parents/guardians are welcome to visit their child and the classroom at any time. Rather than dropping in unexpectedly, please inform your child's teacher if you will be stopping by so that classroom routines are not interrupted.

Parents will also be offered multiple opportunities to volunteer in their child's classroom. Such opportunities may include eating lunch with their child, reading a book or leading an activity in the

classroom, chaperoning field trips, and sharing information with the classroom which may be of interest or fit with the season.

The director is available to you should you have the need or desire to discuss anything with her. If you would like to make suggestions, comments, or express concerns, please make an appointment so that such a meeting will not interfere with the normal classroom day.

Time and Days of Operation

Little Lambs Early Childhood Center will be open during the Fall, Winter, and Spring according to a calendar set each year from 7:30am until 5:00pm, Monday through Friday. Breaks in the weekly operation of Little Lambs are scheduled ahead of time and parents are notified of these off days at enrollment.

Daily Routine

7:30 – 8:00	Breakfast/Free Play
8:00 – 8:30	Arrival/Book Choice
8:30 – 8:45	Welcome/Morning Message
8:45 – 9:00	Bible: Doves/ Small Group: Bluebirds
9:00 – 9:15	Bible: Bluebirds/ Small Group: Doves
9:15 – 9:30	Large Group
9:30 – 9:40	Stories/ Handwashing
9:40– 9:50	Snack
9:50 – 9:55	Planning
9:55 – 10:45	Work Time
10:45 – 11:00	Clean-up
11:00 – 11:15	Recall/ Prep for Outside Time
11:15 – 12:00	Outside Time
12:10 – 12:45	Lunch
12:45 – 1:00	Transition to Cots/ Quiet reading on cots
1:00 – 2:30	Rest Time: Children are expected to rest quietly; they may engage in quiet activities on their cot when they awaken.
2:30 – 3:00	Wake Up/Pack up for the day
3:00 – 3:30	Prop Story/Science or Math Lesson
3:30 – 3:40	Stories/Snack
(3:40– 3:55	Movement Lesson (During Winter months))
3:45 – 5:00	Outside Time/ Full Day Pick Up (4:00pm) / Extended Care until 5pm

Emergency Closings

School closings will be made known on the Little Lambs Facebook page, and/or with a message sent through our Class Dojo application. We understand that in many of our families all the caregivers work full-time, and backup care is difficult to arrange. We will always take that into account, along with the safety of our staff and children, when calling for school closings. Every attempt will be made to remain open for the benefit of working parents in the event of severe weather occurring during the middle of the day. However, it is within the discretion of the Program Director/Board of Christian Education to close

early due to hazardous conditions or unforeseen circumstances. In this event, parents will be contacted by phone and will be expected to pick up their child within 1 hour of notification.

Class Size and Ratio

Little Lambs will remain under the State of Michigan requirements for class size and ratio in order to provide quality care for your children. Since the classroom will be made up of 3-5 year olds, Little Lambs will remain under the ratio requirements set forth for children who are three years old:

- A minimum of two staff members, one of whom is a caregiver, shall be in the building at all times when seven or more children over three years of age are present.
- There shall be one caregiver for every nine children or each fraction of nine.

Caregiver to student ratio may also be kept lower by the regular presence of volunteers in the classroom. Due to the size of our current facility, enrollment will be capped at 18 children.

Special Needs

As a licensed child care facility we are mandated to follow the guidelines of the ADA. Little Lambs rejoices in the fact that God has made each of us special in our own ways. Therefore, we will make reasonable accommodations to include children who have disabilities in our classrooms. We implement developmental screening into our curriculum in order to learn more about each child and provide additional support if needed. We partner with the Intermediate School District of Sault Ste Marie to help refer children for special services if they qualify. We welcome specialists into our classroom and love to facilitate those relationships in our school. Though we teachers may not be experts about each disability that may affect the children in our care, we take extra time to educate our staff about each individual child's strengths and weaknesses. When we understand each child's unique capabilities, we can better modify our practices and environment to best meet the needs of our classroom. If it is determined that we cannot adequately meet the needs of each child, we will work with parents/guardians as well as community partners to help find an alternative program that will meet the individual needs of the child.

Volunteer Program

At times, volunteers may be used at Little Lambs Early Childhood Center. The director, teacher assistants, and volunteers have received a Child Protective Services (CPS) Central Registry clearance from the Department of Human Services (DHS), and have had a criminal history check.

Documentation from the department of human services that a volunteer has not been named in a central registry case as a perpetrator of child abuse or child neglect shall be on file at the center before having unsupervised contact with a child in care. Documentation will also be on file at the center that a volunteer has not been convicted of any of the following before having unsupervised contact with the children.

- a) A listed offence, as defined in section 2 of the sex offenders registration act, 1994 PA 295, MCL 28.722
- b) Child abuse or neglect
- c) A felony involving harm of threatened harm to an individual within the 10 years immediately preceding the date of hire.

For the safety of the children, all parents are asked to obtain a DHS Central Registry clearance. No parent or volunteer will be able to drive for a field trip, participate in room activities, or be alone with the children without DHS clearance on file in the Early Childhood Center room. All volunteer field trip drivers have received DHS clearance, have a current and valid Michigan drivers' license on file, and have produced current proof of insurance.

If you are a family member would like to become a volunteer, please speak with the Director in order to pick up a volunteer packet containing all the necessary paperwork. It may take 1-2 weeks for the paperwork to be processed.

Lake State Students

At times Little Lambs may partner with Lake State Superior University to assist with the training of college students in their Early Childhood Education program. These students will undergo the same background checks as all volunteers. They will never be left alone with the children in the classroom. They will work within the parameters of LSSU's rules, as well as the staff rules and code of conduct put forth in our handbooks. We are delighted to be able to offer this partnership to LSSU in order to build strong future leaders in Early Childhood Education.

Curriculum

Learning Activities

Little Lambs strives to provide a well-rounded education and environment for God's little people. Our preschool uses the HighScope Preschool Curriculum as its basis for education because we believe that this research-based curriculum facilitates child learning in the best way possible. We plan our daily schedule so there is a good balance between active and quiet, large motor and fine motor, imaginative and concrete, small group and large groups, social and personal activities. We also understand that every child has his/her own personal developmental schedule and we try our best to design all activities so each child will have a successful challenge. We currently use the HighScope Curriculum for preschool, and the WELS Christlight Curriculum for preschool Bible Time. The curriculum includes daily outdoor play, experiences relating to language, reading, dramatic play, science, math, blocks, movement, music, and more.

Assessments

As we continue to strive for excellence in our program, assessment plays an important role in achieving high quality. With daily observation, we can assess each child's development informally, but we also take time to use formal assessment pieces in our program. We use Ages and Stages Questionnaires at the beginning of each school year to help us take a snapshot of each child's development as they begin their year with us. This questionnaire helps pinpoint any concerns or areas of growth a child might need. The other formal assessment tool that we use is COR advantage. COR helps us assess all the domains of learning such as Approaches to Learning, Social and Emotional Development, Physical Development and Health, Language, Literacy, and Communication, Mathematics, Creative Arts, Science and Technology, and Social Studies. In December and May, we sit down with the parents of our school to discuss each child's progress at our parent teacher conferences.

Bible Time

As a ministry of Immanuel Ev. Lutheran Church, and a Lutheran Early Childhood Center, we want your child to understand the love that Jesus has for him/her. Every day the children will have an opportunity to grow in their faith by hearing God's Word during specific time devoted to teaching the Bible.

This Bible Time will include Bible songs, stories, and simple memory treasures from the Bible.

Little Lambs uses Northwestern Publishing House's (the publisher of the Wisconsin Synod) Christ Light curriculum. Each week, a sheet about each lesson will be sent home that contains information regarding the lesson taught, memory treasures, and parent activities.

Chapel is held once a week, led by the pastor. In place of Bible Time, the children will be able to attend chapel in the sanctuary of Immanuel Lutheran Church. Pastor will conduct chapel worship using a simplified order of service which reflects the patterns of worship found in the historic liturgies of the Christian church.

In case of a substitute teacher from outside of our synod serving as the lead teacher for the day, Pastor will conduct the Bible Time Lesson.

Your child will learn Bible History as it truly is: history. Since the Bible is truly God's Word, the history we find in the Bible is true. From the account of God's 6-day creation of the universe, to his promises to return on Judgment Day, God's Word does not contain any errors or falsehoods. The central message running throughout the entire Bible is that God loves us so much that he sacrificed his own Son, Jesus, to save all people from their sinfulness. You are encouraged to speak with the pastor to learn about what your child is being taught, and to ask specific questions. One of the best ways to get to know the teachings to which the members of the congregation hold themselves is to come to worship. Helpful online resources can be found at our church body's website: wels.net.

Because the primary mission of Little Lambs is to teach God's love and plan for salvation, students may not be "excused" from religious instruction. It is an integral part of all daily activities.

Animals

Animals can be a great learning experience for young children. Therefore, pets may be used occasionally to supplement the regular educational program. All cats and dogs will have copies of immunization records on file before appearing at Little Lambs. All animals will be supervised by appropriate animal care personnel.

Children will not be allowed to pet or hold stray animals in the neighborhood.

Any classroom pet areas will be maintained in a sanitary manner. No pets will be present in the food prep area or at food service times.

Please inform the director of any pet allergies your child may have.

Water Fun

We may, on occasion, plan fun days outside in the water. You will be notified in advance of these days. Your child should wear easy on/off clothes, preferably lightweight and fast drying. Please bring a beach towel. A signed sunscreen permission form should be on file for each child. *Make sure your child has a change of clothes in his/her cubby.*

When water fun activities involve swimming, those activities may only take place in an area that is maintained in a clean and safe condition. If using a public or private pool, care will be taken to make sure it is inspected and has been issued a permit for operation by the environmental health authority. If using a public or private beach, LLECC will assure that the water has not been deemed unsafe. Children will not be allowed in private wading pools or hot tubs. A first aid kit, rescue pole or throwing rope and ring buoy, signaling device, and working telephone will be readily accessible on the premises.

LLECC will obtain and keep on file written parental permission regarding their child's participation in swimming activities. During a swimming activity, the standards of the "swimming caregiver-to-child ratio" as determined by the State of Michigan will be followed:

- A lifeguard shall be on duty and shall not be included in the caregiver-to-child ratio.
- For non-swimmers 3 years of age and older, there shall be an in-the-water ratio of 1 caregiver to 4 children when the water level is at the child's chest height or lower.
- For non-swimmers 3 years of age and older, there shall be an in-the-water ratio of 1 caregiver to 1 child when the water level is above the child's chest height.
- For swimmers 3 years to 4 years of age, the in-the-water ratio shall be the same as the classroom ratio.
- Caregivers shall be both actively engaged in providing direct care, supervision, and guidance, and physically able to assist children quickly.

Any instructional swim shall be conducted under the supervision of a qualified water safety instructor and where instructional swim is part of the organized program. In this case, the ratio of caregivers to children will be the same as the classroom ratio, and the instructor will not be included in the ratio.

Television & Computer Policy

In the first few years of life children learn so much by interacting with other people. That is why we believe that television is inappropriate while at school. On special occasions, such as parties or many days inside due to weather, the children may watch an interactive video to change the routine. Television and movies will not, in themselves, be methods of childcare or behavior management.

Computers/tablets will be used to increase school-readiness in academic knowledge via age appropriate programs. The computers/tablets will not, in themselves, be a method of childcare or behavior management.

Outdoor Play

The playground is designed to provide children the opportunity to grow in their large motor abilities and in their appreciation for God's creation. The daily schedule includes time outdoors at least two times a day as the weather permits.

Temperature Policy

In our effort to balance outdoor play with the health needs of the children, Little Lambs has a research based temperature policy to determine if the temperature outside is safe for extended playtime. The following chart is for the actual temperature. If the wind-chill is below 0 °F there will be no outdoor play.

10 °F and below – No outdoor play, indoor large motor activities

10°F to 32°F – Shortened outdoor play time

32°F to 90°F – Normal outdoor play time

90°F to 100°F – Shortened outdoor play time

100°F and above – No outdoor play time, indoor large motor activities

Field Trips and Special Occasions

Occasionally, the class will take field trips, have special visitors, or hold special activities at the center. Parents will be informed in advance of these special occasions by one or more of following: the newsletter, posters, or individual field trip notes that include the details of the trip, such as the destination and the time children will leave and return to the center.

We assume that all children will be participating in these activities. Unfortunately, Little Lambs does not have the capacity to hold teachers back to care for one or two children. If you feel that your child should not participate in these special activities for one reason or another, please make other arrangements for childcare on that day.

Parents, grandparents, and other special relatives are welcome to join the field trips. Many times, our field trips will rely on these volunteers for transportation. Each child must have a signed permission slip on file in the office before being permitted to go on the field trip.

Please provide your child's car/booster seat for the day of the field trip and attach your child's name to it. Michigan law requires all children under the age of 8 years to be secured in a car seat or booster seat.

Volunteers will be asked to assist during the field trip in order to lower the adult-to-child ratio. LLECC staff must take along emergency phone numbers for each child's parent and the persons to be contacted if a parent cannot be reached, the phone number of each child's physician, and a first aid kit. Any staff member, parent or other volunteer providing transportation for a field trip will be required to fill out the Certification for Field Trip Transportation (BCAL-5046) form. All volunteer drivers must have DHS clearance, have a current and valid Michigan drivers' license on file, and have produced current proof of insurance.

Special Days

Parties are learning experiences and we will celebrate many wonderful things by which God has blessed us. Since we are a Christian early childhood center, we will observe the true significance of Christmas and Easter for Christians.

Parents may choose to celebrate their child's birthday on or near its given date by providing the class with a snack for the day. Please inform the director ahead of time so that the snack schedule can be properly planned. Parents will be notified of any food allergies in the class. Your child's birthday will also be announced at the beginning of the day to the class via a "Morning Message".

Items from Home

Little Lambs will provide a wide variety of educational toys to play with, so we ask that you do not bring toys from home. This will prevent home toys from being lost or broken. Sleeping buddies or pillows are the exception. They will be kept in the cubbies or rest time bags until rest time and returned immediately after.

Procedures

Child Orientation

We understand that beginning a new school away from parents can be very frightening, overwhelming, and confusing. Therefore, the staff at Little Lambs Early Childhood Center will do everything possible to help ease the transition.

Parents/guardians are invited to visit their children in the classroom. Let the Director know when/if you would like to come visit and she can offer you times that would work the best, and accommodate your schedule.

Since emotions show themselves strongly around naptime, the teacher will work to ease and comfort the children as they fall asleep with simple routines such as naptime songs, being tucked in, and light back rubs/pats.

Separation anxiety is not only difficult for the child but can be hard for the parents as well. Please call anytime and we will be glad to let you know how your child is doing. We will do our best to communicate openly with you and we hope you will do the same. This shows your child that we are people they can trust and allows us to do our very best to guide and teach them.

Arrival & Departure

Parents are expected to accompany their child to and from the classroom. Your child will not be allowed to leave the classroom alone. We will not release your child to anyone other than the people listed on the Child Information/Emergency Card without your permission. **If anyone will be picking up your child from preschool other than yourself, the teacher must be informed in writing.** A 15 minute window is allowed before 8am and after 4pm, which will not be charged as a late fee.

Philosophy of Guidance

Child guidance is implemented in a way that promotes the development of self-esteem and problem-solving skills. The director will develop a daily schedule, classroom routines and consistent expectations in order to create an environment where the child feels safe and secure.

Aggressive behavior is responded to through respectful education. Children's feelings are treated with respect as valid responses to their situations. Children are taught the skills to express their feelings and handle frustration and anger in ways which do not hurt their friends or disrupt the classroom.

Community resources may be accessed to assist with challenging behaviors or developmental concerns, upon the consent of the child's family.

Positive Discipline

Discipline is derived from the word "disciple," meaning "to teach." Therefore, at Little Lambs Early Childhood Center we do not think of discipline as punishment, but rather as a means of teaching. One objective of Little Lambs is to assist children in improving self-control.

Our early childhood center is Christ-centered; therefore, every attempt will be made to maintain Christian discipline. Although a word or action may not be acceptable, the child in error will still be shown that they are loved. In cases of unacceptable behavior, the following guidelines will be used:

- ✝ Prevention
 - Maintaining a well-planned schedule with little wait time
 - Changing activities when children become restless

- ✝ Redirection
 - Focusing the child's attention on something else besides what is frustrating him/her
 - Helping the children to redirect their emotions into proper, safe, outlets.

- ✝ Positive atmosphere
 - Making positive requests (e.g., "Please walk," vs. "Don't run.")
 - Acknowledging the achievements and positive behavior of each child.

- ✝ Consistent atmosphere
 - Having consistent application of rules by the Little Lambs Director and other teachers

- ✝ Dignity
 - Handling misbehaviors privately (a child's misbehavior will not be announced to the class)
 - Ensuring teachers and volunteers treat each child as a unique gift from God and avoid stereotyping
 - Acknowledging the child's emotions and reassuring them that they are valid responses.

If consistent and blatant misbehavior becomes a cause of concern, the teacher will arrange to speak with the parents. If, after continued consultation with the parents, a child's consistent and blatant misbehavior becomes a detriment to the other children or the early childhood program, the Early Childhood Director and Board of Christian Education may request that the parents withdraw their child from Little Lambs.

Termination of Enrollment

By Parent/Guardian

A two-week written notice must be given to the director of Little Lambs if a parent/guardian wishes to withdraw a child. In addition, there must be no outstanding fees owed to Little Lambs. Tuition fees are non-refundable through the last day of the notice and all outstanding fees must be paid. These requirements apply to any withdrawal of your child, whether temporary or permanent.

By the Center

The director may terminate the enrollment of any child under the following circumstances:

1. Both the Little Lambs staff and the parents concur that the current enrollment of the child at the center is not meeting the needs of the child; the required two-week notice may be waived. Any credit balance will be refunded within two weeks.
2. The parents are in violation of established policies and practices of the center including code of conduct, non-payment of fees, failure to submit required information such as enrollment forms, or

not observing the rules and practices of the center. Since the discipline policy will have been followed, the center is not required to give a two-week notice.

The staff will make every effort to meet exceptional needs of children through the staff/child ratio and staff training. The director, teachers, and family may meet prior to enrollment to discuss the child's needs and determine how Little Lambs can meet those needs. If necessary, an action plan will be set in place.

If a child's behavior or attention needs are such that he or she is having difficulty with the program or causes an unreasonable burden on the program, a conference will be scheduled. A child's continued attendance will be decided in consultation with the child's family and based on the best interests of the child and the center.

Little Lambs Early Childhood Center reserves the right to admit or withdraw any child after consultation with the staff, family, or outside professionals, if necessary.

Health Policy

The health and wellness of each child in our care is important to us here at Little Lambs. We require up-to-date immunization records (unless a child has a medical contradiction form from his or her doctor), as well as current well-child visit records or other appropriate physical forms from the doctor that are done annually. We keep these documents in each child file and update the records when appropriate and according to Michigan's licensing standards. If a family is unable to find proper care or is uneducated on the importance of immunizations and well-child visits, we will facilitate their growth by connecting them to community services and education opportunities. While each child attends Little Lambs, we will communicate through newsletters, direct messages, phone calls, and face-to-face interactions to inform every parent about health and wellness that we have noticed about their child. We will follow our school's policies on illnesses, absences, and injuries (see pages 17-19).

Nutrition Policy

As we strive to help our community's children grow up safely and in good health, a strong focus on nutrition is essential. Our goal is to ensure that every child in our care experiences positive nutritional habits, foods, and experiences.

A morning snack, lunch, and an afternoon snack are scheduled every day. Breakfast is scheduled for children arriving before 8:00 am. Parents are required to send a sack lunch for their child if the child is a full day student. All parents are required to send a reusable and clearly labeled water bottle to school with their child daily. Use of water bottles allow our students to have easy access to water throughout the day. If a water bottle is forgotten, school will provide a cup for children to use. When parents pack lunches, we ask that they consider what foods will best fuel their child's body and mind. A focus on independence and kindergarten readiness can also be considered as parents pack foods that children can open and access independently.

Little Lambs provides two family style snacks per day during the assigned snack times in our daily schedule. In order to properly meet the nutritional needs of healthy children, we follow the nutritional guidelines provided by The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Please visit www.michigan.gov/cacfp for more detailed information about this program. We make sure to provide healthy options for each snack we serve. When children have allergies, we provide proper substitutes for those children.

Parents are required to inform their child's teacher of any food allergies or special dietary needs. All parents will then be notified of any foods that must be avoided in a shared snack such as a birthday treat or other special occasion.

Because nutrition education is so important to us, we will take time to send home newsletters and provide other educational opportunities for parents.

Children will wash their hands and faces before and after eating meals and snacks.

Meals and Snacks

Each full day child should bring a nutritious sack lunch to school every day. Each child's food should be clearly labeled with the child's name. Care will be taken to ensure that children are not sharing items from their lunches in order to prevent any food allergy complications. A refrigerator is available if a child's lunch needs to be kept cold, a microwave is available for lunches that need warmed.

Nutritious and well-balanced snacks will be provided twice a day by Little Lambs. Children with allergies to the day's snack will be provided with an alternative snack.

Children attending morning extended care should also bring a separate breakfast to school each day as needed. Each child's food should be clearly labeled with the child's name.

Naptime

Each child remaining more than 4 hours will have naptime every afternoon. If a child is unable to sleep, he/she may look at books quietly on his/her cot so as not to disturb the other children. Each child will be given his/her own cot to use while at the center. Parents are asked to provide their child's bedding which will be sent home weekly for laundering. Sleeping buddies (stuffed animal or blanket) from home are encouraged if the child needs "a friend" to help get to sleep. Sleeping buddies will stay in the child's backpack or nap-bag before and after naptime.

Bathroom Breaks

Bathroom breaks will be taken regularly and when needed. They will be followed by the washing of hands. Staff and children will follow these steps in washing of hands: 1) wet hands with water, 2) thoroughly lather and scrub with soap, and 3) rinse with clean water. Alternative method will be the use of hand sanitizer.

Cultural Competence Plan

At Little Lambs we strive to respect all the individual cultures of our students and their families, and any other cultures that are not represented by our student body. We will make every effort to make everyone who crosses our threshold feel comfortable. As a Christian organization we will provide the children with a Christ centered education, which includes a 15 minute "Bible time" lesson every day, along with a once a week devotional in the church with our Pastor. Different cultures will be discussed and studied as the children bring them up and as they are planned into the weekly themes.

When discussing other cultures, the staff at Little Lambs will

- Accept the home language of the students' families.
- Respect the home culture of the students' families.
- Promote and encourage the involvement of all families in the program. Encourage parents and family members to share information about their culture with our class.
- Study cultures without bias or stereotypes, engaging in realistic discussions fueled by the children and guided by the staff.

We as a staff will make time to learn more about the cultures of the students in our care in order that we might be able to teach them in the best possible way. If families require additional services, we will contact community helpers through the Intermediate School District to set up additional assistance.

Clothing

Michigan has a wide range of weather; therefore, we ask that you dress your child appropriately for the day's weather. We will be going outside as often as the weather allows.

DRESS FOR PLAY! Keep in mind that while your child is at Little Lambs we may be doing creative, messy activities. Please don't send your child to school in dressy clothes which might limit his/her ability to learn and play. Instead, please dress your child in comfortable clothing and shoes that allow for easy movement.

Please make sure that all shoes have backs to them, even sandals, so they stay on the children's feet and pose no potential tripping hazards.

Your child will also need at least two complete sets of extra clothing (shirt, pants/shorts, underwear, socks) and an extra pair of shoes in case accidents occur. Please update these as your child grows and the weather changes.

Communication

Child's File

Each child will have a file kept in the Little Lambs office. This file will include the child's name, date of birth, gender, application, start date, hours and days, health assessment, immunization record, doctor information, hospital information, parents/guardian information, emergency contact and escort, emergency medical record, field trip permission, accident reports, incident reports, medication record, and other records as needed. These records will be checked and updated annually. The information in this file is available to the parents of the child at any time.

Newsletters & Notes

The director of Little Lambs may send home a newsletter about various aspects of child development. You may also receive occasional notes regarding specific events, a monthly calendar of important dates for the class, and a yearly schedule of days of operation.

Class Dojo

Class Dojo is also our daily communication tool. Pictures of your child, important notices, lesson plans, and other forms of communication will be sent through Class Dojo. By signing up with Class Dojo you are agreeing to let us take photos of your child to send to you daily. You are also able to personally message the teacher and other parents through this application. Please feel free to share the photos from Class Dojo with family and friends!

Posted Information

The following are posted in the classroom and/or on the news board:

- Emergency Exit Plans
- Emergency Procedures
- Sanitary Procedures
- Discipline Agreement
- Daily Schedule
- Upcoming Events
- Weekly Lesson Plan

Parent Involvement

Little Lambs values the participation of parents/guardians in the program. We are committed to the goal of providing a program of a consistently high quality for all enrolled children. The center recognizes that there will be occasions when problems arise or disagreements occur between parents/guardians concerning policies or delivery of services. In that event, the parent is encouraged to discuss the matter first with the appropriate staff member. If further action or discussions are required, please contact the director, who will endeavor to make a prompt response and take specific action where necessary.

Little Lambs recognizes that strong communication links between the parents/guardians and the center's staff foster a healthy environment for childcare and an organization which is mindful of parents'/guardians' objectives. Parents/guardians are encouraged to communicate their suggestions, questions and concerns. An anonymous parent satisfaction survey will be sent out in December for those who wish to give suggestions in a more private manner.

Medical Information

Illnesses & Absences

Little Lambs Early Childhood Center is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for children and staff. If a child becomes ill while at the center we will make sure that he/she is comfortable and away from the rest of the children. We do not have the facilities to care for sick children, so it is important that the child be picked up as soon as possible. Every effort will be made to contact the parents/guardians; however, after 30 minutes of unsuccessful attempts, we will contact the emergency contacts listed on the registration form. The sick child may remain at the center for 1 hour after the parent or guardian has been notified before a fee will be charged at a rate of \$5.00/5 minutes.

Your child will be sent home if any of the following symptoms are observed:

- A fever over 101 degrees orally or 100 degrees auxiliary (under the arm)
- A skin rash not identified by a practicing physician
- Infected area of skin (impetigo, ringworm)
- 3 incidents of diarrhea in one day
- Unusual or unexplained loss of appetite, fatigue, irritability, or headache
- Vomiting illness – until vomiting resolves or until a health care provider determines the illness to be non-communicable, and the child is not in danger of dehydration
- Evidence of head lice
- Persistent coughing
- Discharge or drainage from eyes, nose, ears, or open sores
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Sore throat
- Pain that interferes with normal activities
- Chills or achiness

If you are unsure whether your child may attend, please contact Little Lambs before bringing him/her to the center.

**** PLEASE CALL IF YOUR CHILD WILL NOT BE ATTENDING SCHOOL! ****

A child may not be readmitted to school until a release is obtained from a licensed physician or the Chippewa County Health Department for the following diseases:

- Whooping Cough
- Diphtheria
- Meningitis
- Typhoid Fever
- Tuberculosis
- Any unusual disease

For the following, no Health Department release is necessary, but the child shall be excluded as indicated. A child excluded from school will need a doctor's written certificate that the child may attend school. The director may override any doctor's note if she feels it is necessary for the child's protection or for the protection of other children.

- Strep throat - exclude until 24 hours after appropriate antibiotic therapy has begun or for 10 days if no antibiotic is used
- Ringworm - exclude until child has been under active treatment by a physician, but should not participate in skin-to-skin activities
- Chickenpox - exclude until 6 days after the first crop of eruptions
- Shingles - exclude until 6 days after the first crop of eruptions
- Hepatitis A - exclude until 7 days after onset of jaundice
- Impetigo - exclude until under medical treatment by a physician
- Measles - exclude until 4 days after rash appears
- Mumps - exclude for 10 days from onset of illness
- Lice - exclude until treated with an anti-parasitic drug and until all nits have been removed; the director or lead teacher will determine if child is nit free
- Pinkeye - exclude until 24 hours after starting antibiotic treatment
- Rubella - exclude for 7 days after onset of rash
- Scabies - exclude until adequately treated with scabicide

Sick children may return to Little Lambs when:

- A physician has examined the child and has a written statement that the child is no longer ill, and/or
- There is no remaining evidence of illness. Child must be symptom-free for a minimum of 24 hours without any symptom-controlling medication and have been eating regular foods.

If you feel that your child is too ill to participate in the daily activities of the classroom, including outside play, field trips, or special activities, please make other childcare arrangements until your child is able to participate in the center activities.

Staff members with the above symptoms will also follow these guidelines.

In the event your child has been exposed to a communicable disease while at Little Lambs by a child, staff member, or volunteer, you will be verbally notified when you come to pick up your child.

Allergies

Since allergies have become more frequent, any and all necessary precautions will be taken. If your child has an allergy that Little Lambs should be aware of, please make sure to note it on the necessary forms. Parents will be notified of which allergies are present in our center by posting appropriate notifications in our room and sending home a note when a child with an allergy begins school with us.

Medication

If possible, administer your child's medicine before bringing him/ her to school. If medication must be administered during your child's time at Little Lambs, medication will only be given or applied to a child by the director or lead teacher, and only with prior written permission from a parent. For this purpose, parents will be provided with the Medication Permission and Instructions for Child Care Homes/Child Care Centers (BCAL-1243) form. Topical nonprescription medication such as sunscreen and insect repellent requires written parental authorization annually. Prescription medication shall have the pharmacy label indicating the physician's name, child's name, instructions, and name and strength of the medication. Prescription medication will be administered according to the instructions on the pharmacy label and nonprescription medication according to the directions on the original container unless authorized by a written order from the child's physician.

Staff of LLECC will make sure all medication is kept in its original container, stored according to instructions, and clearly labeled for a specific child at the center. All medications will be kept in a locked box, or a location that is completely out of reach for the children. Medication must never be left in a child's backpack. Medication will be returned to the child's parent or destroyed when the parent determines it

is no longer needed or if the medication has expired. LLECC will maintain a record of the time and amount of medication administered (with the exception of topical nonprescription medication such as sunscreen and insect repellent) on the child's BCAL-1243 form. The signature of the caregiver administering the medication will be included.

Note: Unless specified, "medication" refers to all prescription and nonprescription medications.

Emergencies

Medical

If a child becomes seriously injured or ill while at Little Lambs, a staff member will provide necessary first aid and comfort to the child. The parent will be notified immediately.

If the situation requires immediate medical attention, another staff member or adult will make the necessary phone calls in the following order:

- 911
- Child's parents/guardians
- Emergency contact person (if parents cannot be reached)

A staff member will fill out an illness or accident report (Incident Report (BCAL-4604) and a copy will be provided to and signed by the parent/guardian.

Weather & Other

All emergency procedures are posted in the classroom along with the escape routes. Fire drills are practiced quarterly. Tornado drills are practiced twice between April and October. Severe weather is taken seriously and will be monitored closely. In an emergency situation, the following actions will be taken:

Tornado Warning – The staff and children will move to their assigned location (the basement Fellowship Hall) and sit on the floor against the wall until notified to return to the classroom.

Severe Weather – In case of severe weather conditions, Little Lambs Early Childhood Center will close at the discretion of the school administration. Every attempt will be made to remain open for the benefit of working parents. However, if staff members are unable to come to work and ratios cannot be met, LLECC will be required to close.

Fire – The staff and children will exit the building according to the posted escape route and assemble at their assigned locations on the church grounds.

Other – We will deal with each emergency individually and contact parents as soon as possible.

Evacuation Procedures

1. Children will be led by staff members out of the church via the posted evacuation routes.
2. Staff will check the class attendance lists to ensure that all children are accounted for.
3. Staff and children will remain a safe distance away until the "all clear" is given.
4. When required, safe shelter will be sought in the basement of 605 Washington Way.

Regulations and Limitations

No Smoking

Little Lambs Early Childhood Center is a smoke-free environment. At no time will parents, staff, or others smoke in the building, on the grounds (parking lots, entrance area, and playground), or on field trips.

Child Abuse or Neglect

As Christians, God has given us the command to “Love one another as I have loved you.” Child abuse and child neglect is not only unloving toward the child, it is against the law. As such, all child care providers are required to report all incidents of suspected or actual abuse or neglect of children. We are obligated by law to report such instances or reasonable cause to suspect such instances to the proper authorities.

Staff Health Requirements

All staff members have a Medical Clearance Request (BCAL-3704) form on file, and have tested negative for tuberculosis. If the center becomes aware that a staff member or volunteer has contracted a communicable disease, then the center shall notify the parents. The staff/volunteer member who has contracted the communicable disease will be asked to remain absent from the center until they are no longer contagious/presenting a threat to the health of the other staff/volunteers/children.

General Staff Qualifications

Teachers at Little Lambs meet or exceed Michigan licensing standards. Staff members are trained in first aid, signs and symptoms of illness, and CPR. All staff are required to complete a minimum of 16 in-service hours each calendar year in the field of early childhood education.

A staff member shall not be present in the center if he or she has been convicted of any of the following:

- a) A listed offence, as defined in section 2 of the sex offenders registration act, 1994 PA 295, MCL 28.722
- b) Child abuse or neglect
- c) A felony involving harm or threatened harm to an individual within the 10 years immediately preceding the date of hire.

Other Information

Immanuel Lutheran Church

Immanuel Lutheran Church has been serving the people of the Sault Sainte Marie area since 1900. Immanuel is a member of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Immanuel seeks to glorify God by saving souls and strengthening saints through the gospel of Jesus Christ. Immanuel currently has about 150 souls who are baptized members.

Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS)

The Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod is a confessional Lutheran church body made up of about 1,300 churches, serving approximately 400,000 men, women, and children. There are WELS congregations throughout the United States and Canada, and churches within our confessional unity throughout the world (The Confession Evangelical Lutheran Conference).

Those WELS congregations that make up the synod have banded together to fulfill a common calling – encouraging each other in our faith and sharing God’s message of a Savior with the rest of the world.

For more information

Please feel free to call Little Lambs Early Childhood Center at (906) 632-2640 with any questions regarding the center or church. We will be happy to assist you.