

St. Peter Lutheran

Hemlock, MI



Early Childhood Parent Handbook

(includes Child Care and Preschool)



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Purpose, Mission, Goals, & Philosophy	2
Play Based Learning	2
Program Options.....	4
Schedules	4
Enrollment Procedures	5
Nondiscrimination Policy	5
Fee Structure	5
Requirements for Enrollment	6
Financial Obligations	6
Withdrawal	6
Attendance.....	6
Calendar	7
Inclement Weather.....	7
Drop-Off & Pick-Up Procedures.....	7
Discipline	7
Conduct Policy	7
Responsibilities.....	8
Employee Screening Policy.....	8
Volunteers	8
Health Appraisal Forms	9
Child Health Care Procedures.....	9
Communicable Diseases	10
Administration of Medication	10
Accident, Injury, and Emergency Procedures	11
Clothing	11
Communications	12
Parent/Teacher Conferences.....	12
Food Procedures	12
Playground.....	12
Your Child's First Days in Preschool	13

PURPOSE, MISSION, GOALS & PHILOSOPHY

Purpose Statement

St. Peter Lutheran Early Childhood (EC) has been established to assist parents in the process of nurturing the young child. The EC is part of the ministry of St. Peter Lutheran Church as we fulfill our Lord's directive to "feed My lambs".

Mission Statement

By the Grace of God, St. Peter Lutheran School exists to nurture and educate God's children in a Christ-centered environment. Through guidance of parents and teachers, students learn to interpret their world in the light of God's Word.

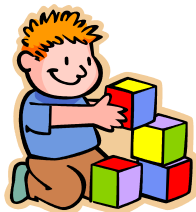
Goals & Objectives -- see Curriculum Guide

Philosophy

The spiritual aspect of the young child's growth cannot be separated from the total growth process. In a Christian setting, each child is valued as an individual, as God's own child, saved by grace through faith. Learning about being a child of God is important to the development of proper Christian relationships.



PLAY-BASED LEARNING



The program at St. Peter Lutheran is "play-based". That is, the program provides a safe environment and basic structure that allows children to learn and develop by engaging their natural curiosity and their innate desire to interact with the world around them. It is developmentally appropriate for children to be allowed to learn and develop at their own pace using materials and methods suited to their age, level of development, and individual needs.

The program offers the following activities:

- **Religious Lessons** - Children learn the love of God as it is shared through Bible stories, songs, and prayers. Christian teachers reflect God's love through daily instruction.
- **Experimental Natural Science** - Experiments with plants, animals, water, and weather help children make sense of the world.
- **Large Muscle Development** - Activities are designed to develop large muscle skills and coordination. Children do this when they jump, hop, climb, throw, catch, run, and balance.
- **Fine Motor Development** - This is the ability to control one's muscles in manipulating small objects. Examples include manipulating puzzle pieces, stringing beads, lacing, cutting, working with play dough, folding paper, and coloring.
- **Rhythm, Music, and Songs** - Music allows children to express themselves and learn to distinguish between sounds. Music can be used to teach other skills, such as counting, recognizing colors, taking turns, and sharing.
- **Dramatic Play** - Through dramatic play children create an environment that often parallels their real world.
- **Visual Discrimination** - Before children begin to read, they must be able to see the similarities and differences in letters and words. Learning to distinguish colors and shapes, as well as letters and numbers, aid children in this.

- **Listening Skills** - This is a prerequisite to reading. Auditory skills developed in preschool help children distinguish between different sounds, and identify and recall sounds. Story time is a daily activity.
- **Language Development** - Songs, stories, poems, finger plays, games, and free time for interaction between children help children make sense of their world.

The Role of Play

When you ask your child what he did in preschool, he may simply say, "I just played." This is a great thing to hear! Play influences the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development of children. Children play to learn!



Young children learn best through manipulation and exploration of materials with opportunities to initiate their own learning process. Preschoolers have important lessons to learn about themselves, so they begin to develop individuality. *Play is learning for children.* It helps them develop control of their bodies, develop problem-solving skills, acquire social skills, and learn how to learn:

- They learn that they can have comfortable, happy times away from home, and that their teachers will comfort and help them.
- They learn that their teachers will encourage them to try out new things and to do things their own way, as long as it is not harmful to others.
- They learn that toys and play materials at school are for all the children, and they can share and take turns.
- They are learning that there are new stories, new words, new songs, new friends, and dozens of new enjoyable experiences.
- They are learning to cut, paint, paste, and color independently.
- They are learning that there is satisfaction in being able to do many other things for themselves.

Dramatic play is also of great value to a child. As children act out certain roles, they are trying to discover what the grown-up world is all about. To help broaden the young child's experiences, the progressive teacher will frequently change the dramatic play center and provide various props for the many adult roles they might assume. In this way, the teacher can set the scene for the child to be a mail carrier, engineer, firefighter, service station attendant, grocery clerk, pilot, nurse, doctor, painter, baker, beautician, police officer, teacher, pastor, and more!



PROGRAM OPTIONS & SCHEDULES:

Our child care is not open during preschool school hours of 8:00am-11:15am. Students must be registered for child care in order to receive care. We do not accept "drop-off" care (students who would be dropped off in the middle of the day). Students must be dropped off by 10:00am in order to receive care on non-school days. There are several program options available:

Preschool

- Monday – Friday from 8:00 – 11:15 a.m.

Child Care

- Before School: Monday – Friday from 7:00 a.m. – 7:35 a.m.
- After School: Monday – Friday from 11:15 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
- **Child Care on No School Days:** We will offer child care for PS-8th grade students on days we do not have school with the exception of the days noted on the school calendar from 7:00 am-5:30 pm. Children that will be here through the lunch hour will need to bring a lunch from home. The cost is \$5.75/child/hour.

Note: Child Care is open most days except holidays, one week during the summer, the Friday after Thanksgiving, and the week between Christmas and New Years. See yearly calendar for a full list of dates we are closed for care.

Preschool Schedule *Tentative Daily*

Preschool Schedule

8:15	Preschool Arrival
8:30	Jesus Time (devotion, music, singing)
9:00	Calendar
9:10	Snack
9:20	Outdoor play
9:35	Clean-Up, Bathroom Break, Wash Hands
9:40	Centers
10:30	Gym
11:00	Bathroom Break, Wash Hands, Pack-Up
11:10	Prayer
11:15	Dismissal

Daily
Schedule

ENROLLMENT, FEES, FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS, AND WITHDRAWAL

Enrollment

Our Lutheran School's primary mission is to teach children about Jesus. Any parent desiring a quality Christian education for children may apply for admission. Please contact the school office and arrange for an appointment with the principal or the early childhood director if desired. Applications will be considered according to the following order before March 15. After March 15, it will be on a first come, first serve order.

1. Children of communicant members of St. Peter Church or another area LCMS Church
2. Community families with siblings currently attending St. Peter Lutheran School
3. Children of families without a church home
4. Children of members of other denominations

Including the above, a child must be at least two years and six months old (30 months) in order to enroll in preschool. **The child must be toilet trained and wear cloth underwear, not "Pull Ups" to be a part of the preschool program.** A registration packet can be obtained online on our website: www.stpeterhemlock.org. An application and the \$80 nonrefundable application fee must be submitted to reserve a spot for your child.

Nondiscrimination Policy

St. Peter Lutheran Early Childhood admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, of its admissions policies, nor its athletic and any other school-administered programs.

Fee Structure for Child Care for Preschool

\$5.75/hour; late fee after 5:30: \$5/15 minutes



Fee Structure for Preschool

1. The following fee schedule is charged:
 - A. \$1,500/child/year for 3 days
 - B. \$1,700/child/year for 4 days
 - C. \$1,900/child/year for 5 days
2. Since this program is totally supported by tuition fees and is dependent upon a minimum number of enrollees, it is required that fees be paid promptly. Below are payment options available in our student information system, FACTS.
 - A. Payment choices are:
 - a. Annual Payment
 - b. Semi-Annual Payments
 - c. Seven Equal Payments
 - B. If students are withdrawn from the program, a prorated refund will be given upon request.

Requirements for Enrollment

The following are required for registration; all items must be turned in before enrollment:

- A current application form completed by the parent or guardian
- A current health form completed by a doctor
- An emergency information card
- No space can be left blank per the State Licensing Department
- A copy of the child's birth certificate (copy can be made in the office)
- The application fee
- Child must turn 3, or 4, by September 1st for Preschool
- All immunizations must be up to date and a copy is needed for the office
- A signed Handbook/Licensing Notebook Form



Financial Obligations

There is an initial application fee of \$80. This fee is non-refundable. The application fee remains the same no matter what month of the school year the child enters our program.

Change-of-Contract Fee

If you reduce the days and/or times that your child will attend childcare or preschool, you will be assessed a Change of Contract fee of \$20 each time you change your contract once the school year begins.

Withdrawal

Center-Initiated Withdrawal

At times the EC may not be able to meet the needs or level of care that your child requires. If difficulties arise, you will be contacted, and a program of constructive action will be developed. If significant improvement is not made within a reasonable time, the school will make a request for withdrawal. Such grounds include the following:

- A child who poses a threat to the physical and/or emotional health of others.
- Failure of parent to comply with preschool policies.
- Failure to provide current health information and child information.
- Late tuition payments.

Parent-Initiated Withdrawal

A written notice, given two weeks in advance, will be necessary for withdrawal. If this is not provided, regular tuition will be charged.

Policies & Procedures



POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Attendance

It is very important to your child's emotional and social well-being to be prompt for the start of each class. Teachers will start class at the assigned time. Attendance for each session is essential for continuity of the program. A routine of attending classes helps children develop concepts of space and time.

Calendar

The PS program follows the St. Peter K-8 school calendar. Child Care is available year-round except for major holidays. See the office however, for exceptions.

Inclement Weather

You will receive a notification from the school informing you of school closings. Closings will also be listed on the radio, TV, internet, etc. as "St. Peter Lutheran, Hemlock".

Drop-off and Pick-Up Procedure

Students may be picked up and dropped off at the Early Childhood entrance. If someone other than the parent is picking up the child, that person's name must be on the child's emergency card. Proof of identity will be asked of the person who is picking up the child. This is for the protection of your child. We are concerned about your child's safety.

Discipline

Our primary discipline objective is to show the love of Jesus. It is our goal to ensure the safety and well-being of our students while promoting a good self-concept and teaching self-control. It is our duty to provide a safe and caring environment; therefore, children will be prevented from harming themselves, other children, adults, and equipment. We do not believe that corporal punishment, in any form, is appropriate in our center. The following are the procedures most commonly used to discipline (teach) a child who misbehaves:

1. The child will be asked to stop the action and will be redirected to an appropriate activity.
2. The child will be asked to discontinue the action and may be reminded that a certain consequence will follow. This may involve removal from the group or a "time out" break.
3. The child who continues will be given a "time out" break and instructed to return to the group when the negative behavior is discontinued.
4. If the situation cannot be corrected after teacher/child discussion and "time out," the child may be removed from the classroom.
5. The parent may be asked to come and take the child home for the rest of the day.

The program is designed so that the daily activities will hold a child's interest. Because of this, there are few incidences of improper behavior. The staff will use positive methods of discipline on a regular basis. We will look for and encourage self-control, self-direction, positive words and actions, and cooperation. Praise a child and watch him grow!

Conduct Policy

We strive to provide a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment for students. Our conduct policy for staff and children reflects this.

- Respect for self and others.
- Respect for one's own property and/or property of others.
- Respect for one's own body and/or another person's body.
- Responsibility for cleaning up and caring for classroom.

Responsibilities

Parent Responsibilities

The responsibilities of parents of students enrolled in St. Peter Lutheran EC include the following:

- Complying with the guidelines listed in this handbook.
- Paying all fees when due.
- Notifying the school office when child is absent.
- Notifying the school office of all communicable diseases.
- Checking the weekly newsletter and your mailbox for information about the program.
- Participating in various activities throughout the year (parties, conferences, etc.).

Teacher Responsibilities

Teacher responsibilities include:

- Communicating with parents on a weekly basis as well as individually regarding any concerns that arise.
- Arranging times to meet with parents as needed.
- Keeping the classroom orderly, nicely decorated, and child-appropriate.
- Evaluating toys and other materials used in the classroom for safety, cleanliness and good repair.
- Planning and executing a weekly lesson plan, keeping program goals and developmental guidelines in mind.
- Working to create a quality preschool program, with Christ as our guide.



Employee Screening Policy

Your child's safety is top priority with our caregivers. All employees must be of good, moral character. Employees must have a check for a history of substantiated abuse and neglect through the Department of Human Services using ICHAT. Employees are familiar with the Child Protection Law as it relates to child abuse and neglect.

All employees must have current CPR and First Aid certification; there will be at least one employee with certification on duty at all times. Employees must have also completed a course on blood-borne pathogens within six months of hiring. Employees are required to attend staff orientations. They must have a current TB test.

Volunteers

Volunteers will be supervised at all times. They must sign an "Abuse and Neglect" statement and may be checked for a history of substantiated abuse and neglect through the Department of Human Services using ICHAT. Volunteers who volunteer for four or more hours per week for more than two weeks must have an ICHAT screening. They must also have a current physical with a TB test.

The State of Michigan Department of Human Services licenses St. Peter Lutheran Early Childhood. We adhere to all state and community rules regarding fire, safety, health, and staffing requirements. **St. Peter Lutheran EC is required to maintain a Licensing Binder. Parents have access to the binder whenever preschool is open please ask the director about its location.**

Health Appraisal Forms

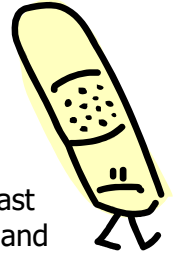
We require that a Health Appraisal for each child be on file in the office. It must verify immunizations and that the child has had a recent physical examination. Health Appraisals are valid for one calendar year. No student can start school without a completed health form. The penalty for not enforcing these requirements is loss of our preschool license. If you have any questions concerning the above, contact the director.

CHILD HEALTH CARE PROCEDURES

Hand Washing Procedures

The following procedures will be used for hand washing:

1. Have a disposable paper or single-service towel available.
2. Turn on the water to a comfortable temperature between 60 – 120 degrees.
3. Moisten hands with water and apply soap.
4. Rub hands together vigorously until a soapy lather appears and continue for at least 10 seconds. Rub areas between fingers, around nail beds, under fingernails and jewelry, and backs of hands.
5. Rinse hands under running water until free of soap and dirt. Leave water running while drying hands.
6. Dry hands with a clean, disposable paper or single use cloth. Turn off tap with disposable paper or single-service towel.



Hand Washing

Hand sanitizers, water basins, and pre-moistened cleansing wipes are not approved substitutes for soap and running water. Hands will be washed after preparing food, using the toilet or helping a child use the toilet, touching an animal or its dishes, blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing into your hands, helping a child blow his or her nose, treating wounds or giving medicine, touching a sick or injured person, or after handling garbage, a cleaning cloth, soiled shoes, or something that could be contaminated; they should be also washed whenever they look or feel dirty.



Hand-washing posters are positioned by each sink to remind students and caregivers to wash their hands. Our health care resource is Saginaw County Health Department.

Handling Bodily Fluids

St. Peter Lutheran Early Childhood uses precautions when handling bodily fluids, as instructed in the blood borne pathogen training. The following steps are to be followed for cleaning and sanitizing:

1. Wash area/surface with warm water and soap/detergent.
2. Rinse area/surface with clean water.
3. Spray, submerge, or wipe the article/surface with bleach water.
4. Let area/surface air dry.

Communicable Diseases

It is our goal to maintain a healthy classroom. Children who are ill should not come to school. If your child exhibits symptoms of, or is diagnosed with a contagious disease, please report this to the director or school office at once. St. Peter Lutheran Early Childhood is required by law to report all contagious illnesses and diseases to the Saginaw County Health Department. The preschool director will notify parents so they may watch for symptoms or keep them home if they so desire. Your confidentiality will be respected.

For the protection of all children, your child will not be permitted to attend preschool if he has any of the following symptoms: ***fever, diarrhea, vomiting, discharges of the eyes or ears, heavy nasal discharges, persistent cough, strep throat, flu, conjunctivitis (pink eye), chicken pox, a rash, head lice, COVID-19 or other communicable disease.*** If such a condition presents itself while your child is at preschool, you will be called and your child will be sent home. All symptoms are assessed at the discretion of the director. It is necessary that you make arrangements so that your child can be picked up from school within one hour if your child is ill.

Fever

A child with a fever will be sent home. Fever is not contagious, but whatever is causing the fever usually is. Therefore, the child must be fever-free (without the use of fever-reducing medication) for 24 hours before returning to school.



If a physician has treated the child, a note must accompany the child's return to the center from the physician. The note should state that the child is no longer contagious and may return to the center and participate in the normal activity level without restriction. If your child has a chronic cough or running nose due to an allergy, provide a statement from your physician to the preschool director to keep in your child's file.

Vomiting

A child who has vomited will be sent home and may return to school when he or she has not vomited for 24 hours.

Administration of Medication

- No over-the-counter or prescription medication is to be given to a child unless the parent fills out the proper medication form. If a parent fails to fill out a form, he/she must return to the preschool to do so. Verbal permission is not legally acceptable.
- Medication may be given or applied only with prior written permission from the parent. Prescription medication must be in the original container, stored according to the instructions, and clearly labeled for the specific child. The pharmacy label must also indicate the physician's name, instructions, and name and strength of the medication, and potential side effects.
- On the medication form, employees should record the time medication was given and who administered the medication. The caregiver shall keep the medication out of the reach of children and shall return the medication to the parent.
- For safety reasons, children are not allowed to have cough drops.
- Medication forms are available in our office and on our website.



ACCIDENT, INJURY, EMERGENCY & PROCEDURES

In the event of accidental injury to a child while at school, the parent will be contacted and/or a written report will be provided. There will be a copy for the parent to sign and a copy for St. Peter Lutheran Early Childhood files. The staff is trained in CPR and first aid. The director and/or teacher will make decisions about the care of the child. The Child Information card, signed by the parent(s), permits the school to authorize medical treatment. In the case of serious injury and emergency transportation is necessary, immediate action will be taken. Parents will be contacted, and a written report will be made.

In case of a dental emergency, we will follow the same procedure as indicated on the emergency card.

Fire Procedure

1. Fire signal is a continuous ringing of fire buzzer and an announcement to evacuate the building over our bell/tone system.
2. Children exit the room following the aide or volunteer parent.
3. Exit room, turn right to the nearest exit.
4. Teacher checks restrooms, turns off lights, takes class list and follows the class.
5. Children walk to the center of the basketball court where roll call is taken.

Storm Procedure

1. The warning is an announcement over our bell/tone system to seek shelter immediately.
2. Children exit the room, following aide or volunteer parent, to get into a safety position in the hallway.
3. Teacher checks both restrooms, turns off lights, and takes class list.
4. Everyone is to kneel, head down, facing wall.
5. Roll call is taken.
6. Stay in kneeling position until "All Clear" is given.
7. Follow the instructions on the emergency escape map posted above the door in the room.



St. Peter Lutheran Early Childhood does have a plan for a "shelter in place" event in case of an emergency which is not a fire or a storm.

CLOTHING

Children should wear clothes that give them freedom to move and play without the fear of getting dirty. Clothing must be in good repair. For safety, shoes must have at least a strap across the back. No open-toed shoes are allowed. Shoes must be appropriate for indoor and outdoor play. Pebbles from the playground are painful when wearing sandals or Crocs. Outdoor play occurs regularly. Label all clothing, shoes, boots, etc. **All children must have a complete change of season-appropriate clothes at school. This includes a shirt, a pair of pants or shorts, a pair of underwear, and a pair of socks. Label all spare clothing with child's name. Send the change of clothes to school in a Ziploc bag.**



Dress your child in comfortable play clothes and suitable outdoor clothing (coats, snow pants, hats, mittens, etc.). Children should have snow boots if they want to **play** in the snow. Children should have snow pants if they want to **lay** in the snow. When there is mud or snow outside, children must have a pair of shoes or boots to wear outside and a pair to wear inside the classroom. **Extra shoes may be left at school.** Due to health issues, slippers are not allowed.

COMMUNICATIONS

If you have any suggestions, questions or concerns about what is happening at school, how your child is getting along, etc., please contact the teacher and/or director. If you need to leave an immediate message, please call the office at 989.642.5659. If you have something that can be addressed after school, you may either call or e-mail at kelly.fehn@stpeterhemlock.org.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES FOR PRESCHOOL AGE

Parent/Teacher Conferences will be scheduled in the fall and spring. Conferences will be used to discuss progress, development, and kindergarten readiness. Parents are welcome to schedule a time to meet with the preschool teacher any time throughout the school year. Strong parent interest and participation are essential to the success of your child's educational program.

FOOD PROCEDURES

Snack in PS

Parents are asked to send a snack with their child for AM snack time.

Please read labels of all snacks. If your child has a food allergy, please notify the Director in writing, along with the suggestion(s) you may have for accommodating this.

Lunch

For children who stay all day, parents may provide their daily lunches or they may purchase hot lunch. Please make sure to label your child's lunch box and anything that belongs inside.



Birthdays

For birthday treats, please refrain from cupcakes with the thick swirl frosting on the top. Sending in a healthy treat is always an option. See the teacher for ideas.

PLAYGROUND

The playground has been inspected and is age-appropriate for children 2–12 years old with adult supervision. Outdoor play occurs regularly. There is a designated toddler play area.

YOUR CHILD'S FIRST DAYS

The first few days of care may bring mixed emotions even to seemingly independent children. They are being separated, perhaps for the first time, from their primary caregivers on whom they have depended until now. There are many ways you can help your child adjust to preschool. Here are some hints:

- Be sure to say goodbye to your child when you leave. Slipping away will only add to the feelings of desertion. The teachers are willing to help both child and parent learn that separation is okay.
- Be sure to return for your child at the promised time.
- Do not make the child feel that preschool is something to "get them out of the way," especially if there is a younger sibling to be cared for at home.
- Be sure to ask all about their day!
- Prepare your child for starting preschool, but be careful not to overdo it. Too many glowing terms may lead to disappointment and a letdown feeling later.
- Discuss any concerns about your child with the teacher privately, not in front of them.

St. Peter Lutheran 
PRESCHOOL

St. Peter 
Toddler 
Care  

