

HOPE LUTHERAN PRESCHOOL HANDBOOK

Introduction

Hope Lutheran Preschool is an integral part of the Christian Education program of Hope Lutheran Church. The preschool emphasizes Christian principles and teachings as children interact and participate in activities centered on living and learning. The preschool provides a Christian witness to the community in service to young children and their families.

The focus of the preschool is to provide children with age-appropriate opportunities for spiritual, emotional, social, physical and intellectual growth. Children grow through play, stories, learning centers, Bible lessons, chapel, music, arts and crafts. The preschool offers a morning half-day program for ages 2, 3, 4 and 5-year-old children. The preschool hours for the 3-year-old classes are 8:30AM to 12:00PM. The preschool hours for the 4 and 4/5-year-old classes are 8:30AM to 12:30PM. Early Care is available from 7:00AM to 8:15AM and Extended Enrichment Afternoons are available from 12:00PM to 5:00PM. Doors open for morning drop-off starts at 8:30 to 8:45AM. After that, doors close and parents must ring the doorbell at the front entrance to be let in and drop their children off.

Our program is a combination of free play and group activities guided by qualified teachers and teaching assistants. Curriculum areas include art, music and movement, gross and fine motor development, socialization, language development, early math, early literacy and science concepts. The program includes weekly chapel services, which are supplemented by our “Enduring Faith” curriculum, Bible stories and songs. Christian values are not viewed as a subject apart from our daily living, but rather as the way to live and work together.

Beliefs and Practices Policy

Hope Lutheran Preschool is an integral part of the mission and ministry of Hope Lutheran Church; a congregation affiliated with The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. Hope Lutheran Preschool is a mission of the congregation, providing an opportunity for families from the church and community to enrich their children’s lives with age-appropriate opportunities for spiritual, emotional, social, physical and intellectual growth.

As a faith-based, church-affiliated ministry, all families who enroll children at Hope Lutheran Preschool covenant to support the Christian atmosphere of the preschool. Christian teaching and instruction is not only carried out formally, but is integrated into every activity and lesson, supported by Christian staff who are committed to applying Biblical principles to their teaching, discipline and life.

Hope Lutheran Church and Preschool expects that staff and families of its students will not act in such a way that is contrary to or disrupts the teachings of Hope Lutheran Church in matters of religious faith and personal conduct. While staff and enrolled families are not required to be members of Hope Lutheran Church, staff and families of Hope Lutheran Preschool may not, in a way that may affect the school, promote beliefs that are contrary to the teachings of Hope Lutheran Church or which otherwise weaken the Christian atmosphere of the preschool. Staff and families who challenge the Biblical teachings of Hope Lutheran Church or conduct

themselves in such a way that undermines the Christian atmosphere of the church and/or preschool, may be either excused from the program, have a pause in enrollment or refused enrollment.

As a member congregation of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, Hope Lutheran Church and Preschool affirms the doctrine and practice of the church as derived from the Christian Scriptures, the Lutheran Confessions, and applicable resolutions and guidance of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. Parents are invited to speak with the Pastor(s) if they have questions about the beliefs and practices of Hope Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. Classes are offered by the church several times during the year which enables parents to study the teaching of the Christian faith and the Lutheran Church.

For purposes of this policy, the decision of Hope Lutheran Church, communicated through the Pastor(s) and or Director after consultation with the leadership of the congregation shall be final and binding on what actions and conduct constitutes a violation of this policy.

Curriculum Overview

Statement of Purpose

Hope Lutheran Preschool provides high quality early childhood education, which fosters the development of each child in a Christian environment, which enables the child to feel safe and loved.

Philosophy

Children learn through play, which permits growth to progress along a natural, developmental sequence. We use an emergent curriculum to support and develop children in the following seven domains: Social Emotional, Language/literacy, Cognitive (math and science), Physical, Creative, Approaches to learning and spiritually. We use a combination of large and small group activities, intentionally planned, to encourage curiosity and foster children's development. Children learn God's love for them by seeing that love in their teachers and through a Christian-based curriculum.

"Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well." 1 John 5:1

Goals

Hope Lutheran Preschool provides a high-quality early childhood program that:

- *Develops the whole child: socially, emotionally, physically, intellectually and creatively.*
- *Provides a rich and stimulating environment that encourages curiosity and discovery while establishing responsive and nurturing relationships between teachers and children.*
- *Meets children where they are, according to their emerging interests and skills.*
- *Is Safe and well supervised always*
- *Is Dedicated to Parental Involvement*

- *Above all, is Christ-Centered* - Providing children a loving Christian environment where Christ's love is experienced and taught through word and deed.

Behavior Management Policy

Effective behavior management (discipline) is an integral part of learning. In accordance with our religious philosophy, discipline is a means by which we guide and teach children to behave in ways which show self-respect, and which demonstrate love and care for other people. We use several positive guidance techniques to manage behavior (discipline) in our classroom environments. Praise, positive reinforcement, and redirection are the main tools used in behavior management at Hope Lutheran Preschool. Specific, concrete observations are made, pointing out progress, giving control of the situation back to the child (when possible). Children, as well as adults, find renewal and a desire to improve through the forgiveness of Jesus Christ. Additionally, they find renewal and a desire to improve through forgiveness and love they receive from fellow human beings.

Below is a copy of the discipline policy for Hope Lutheran Preschool:

We:

1. Praise, acknowledge and encourage children.
2. Acknowledge and validate feelings
3. Help children put words to feelings through social stories and role play
4. Set age-appropriate classroom expectations for children
5. Model appropriate behavior for children.
6. Modify the classroom environment for the current group of children's needs as a preventative measure.
7. Listen to children.
8. Provide alternatives for inappropriate behavior to the children.
9. Redirect children when unsafe choices are made
10. Respect children's needs, desires, and feelings
11. Are responsive to children seeking connection

We DO NOT:

1. Spank, shake, bite, pinch, push, pull, slap, or otherwise physically punish children.
2. Humiliate or shame children in any circumstance
3. Use inappropriate language with children
4. Use food or rest as punishment or reward
5. Leave children unattended, or without supervision.
6. Confine children in locked rooms, closets, or boxes as punishment.
7. Allow discipline of children by children.
8. Criticize, make fun of, or otherwise belittle children's parents, families, or ethnic groups.
9. Use time out

Inappropriate Behavior Policy

When inappropriate and/or unsafe behavior continues after fully implementing our behavior management policy, the child's parents will be called for early pick up for the day. When inappropriate or unsafe behavior persists, we will partner with parents to discuss strategies to connect home to school and school to home to support the child and reach desired results. Partnering with parents may include but not limited to providing outside resources to support the child in our group learning environment. When inappropriate or unsafe behaviors persist and/or escalate after partnering with parents, Hope Lutheran Preschool reserves the right to pause enrollment until the proper support is in place to support the child in our group learning environment.

*"Discipline your son, and he will give you peace; he will bring delight to your soul." -
Proverbs 29:17*

Teacher Guidelines

The role of the teacher at Hope Lutheran Preschool is that of facilitator. Teachers provide age-appropriate activities for children to participate in as well as meaningful experiences that develop the whole child. Teachers provide safe spaces and environments that encourage discovery and curiosity. Teachers facilitate activities in small groups to ensure learning is happening at an adequate pace for each child. Teachers extend children's learning through intentional planning of materials in centers for children to self-explore.

Enrichment Programs

Chapel is offered once a week for all 4-year-old classes, and twice a month for most 3-year-old classes. Church staff will alternate leading this informal worship time of song, storytelling and prayer. All parents and children are invited and encouraged to attend.

In House Field trips – In house field trips are provided for all morning classes to enhance curriculum themes. Our community is rich in possibilities for our children to have appropriate hands-on experiences. We plan for special guests in the community to visit our preschool throughout the year.

Parents as resources - Research has proven that parent involvement can play a crucial role to a child's school success. Hope Lutheran Preschool encourages parents to share their expertise and skills to enhance what is happening in the classrooms.

Fees - Registration and Tuition

Enrollment Policies

Registration is held in late January, for the upcoming school year that begins in August. Staff members, currently enrolled students and current Little Blessings students have priority and will register first. Members and siblings will then register. Any remaining spots will be open to the community on the announced date. After registration is complete for the coming year, a waiting list is started for each age group. If an opening comes available, the director will contact, in order, those on the waiting list. The waiting list is good for the current school year only and is not kept for the next school year.

Registration Fees

A registration fee is required upon enrollment. Registration fees are non-refundable or transferable and must be received at the time of registration. Registration fees are used for materials, supplies, and equipment, which enhance preschool. The registration fee will only be refunded if there is no space available. The registration fee is an annual fee and does not count as one month's tuition. The full registration fee will be due for students enrolling before December 31. The registration fee for students enrolling for the current school year from January – March will be at 60% of the Registration Fee for the class they are enrolling and enrollment in April and May will be at 40% of the Registration Fee for the class enrolling.

Important Facts about Tuition

- ★ **Tuition is due by the 1st of each month starting with the August tuition. *Payments are due each month through May.***
- ★ Tuition payments can be made online through www.myprocare.com, or by check at the preschool. There is a fee assessed by the credit card company on all online payments. If you choose to pay by check, please make them payable to *Hope Lutheran Preschool*. Most banks can also now provide automatic bank drafts, which can be mailed directly to the preschool.
- ★ We cannot take cash at this time, so please pay with check or online.
- ★ **An automatic late fee of \$15.00 will be added to your child's tuition account after the 5th of the month and *should be included with your late tuition payment.*** Hardship arrangements must be made prior to the 5th with the preschool director to avoid the fee.
- ★ A \$25.00 fee will be assessed on all returned checks. **After a second returned check all future tuition payments must be made by certified checks or money orders.**
- ★ **Any tuition fees past due after 30 days will result in dismissal of the student from the program.**
- ★ Checks may be mailed to the preschool, dropped off at the preschool office or handed to a staff member at carpool. **DO NOT put your check in your child's backpack.**
- ★ Tuition payments are non-refundable and non-transferable, and are not affected by holidays or absences. Tuition is a yearly amount, paid in monthly payments (1/2 payments in August and May, full payments September through April), and is not raised for 5-week months or lowered for 3-week months.

Discounts

- **Members of Hope Lutheran Church** will receive a monthly discount of 10% on each child. Members of Hope Lutheran include families or baptized children.
- **Multiple child** tuition discounts will be given to all families based upon the following schedule:

1st child pays full tuition
2nd child receives 15% discount

3rd child receives 20% discount
4th child receives 25% discount

Required Enrollment Information

Registration

Registration is done online through ProCare and is complete when the registration fee is paid at the time of registration. Parents/guardians will receive detailed confirmation of registration within the week of registering for class. Only available space will be shown in ProCare as an available registration. Please select from what is available. If the class you seek is not shown, it is not available. Remember, **Registration fees are non-refundable and non-transferable**, and no discounts (staff, church membership, sibling) are available. An exception is made if you move out of the area before the school year starts or if space is not available. Instructions for registration/re-registration will be emailed to families prior to registration day.

Required Forms for Children

The following forms are required for children to attend preschool. They must be turned in/on file prior to your child's/children's start date. These forms can be found on our website.

- Handbook Sign off-which contains the following
 - Discipline Policy (p. 3-4)
 - Prevention of Shaken Baby and Head Trauma Policy (p. 17-19)
 - Documentation of NC Child Care Law (p. 20-23)
 - Off Premises Authorization (p. 24)
 - Nutritional Opt Out (p. 25)
- Enrollment form
 - Two emergency contacts must be listed and cannot be parents/guardians
 - Pediatrician information is required
- Medical Form & Immunization Records
- Allergy/Asthma/Medical action plans (if applicable)
- Photo Release (link on our website)

Please note: All forms must be updated annually.

Preschool Scholarship Fund

A Scholarship Fund has been established to help families who experience financial hardship and need assistance with full or partial tuition. Applications are available from the Director and will remain confidential to the Director. Tax deductible donations can be made to the Preschool Scholarship fund at any time by simply writing a check to: "Hope Lutheran Preschool" earmarked for "*Scholarship Fund*."

Late Pick-up

If you are late picking up your child, there will be a **\$1.00 fee charged for every minute past five minutes**. This fee is added to your account at the time of pickup and will be due with your next tuition payment to the preschool. If there are special circumstances that cause you to be late, please speak with the Director.

Withdrawals

A written thirty day notice is required. Tuition is still due as normal during the child's last month of attendance.

Termination

Enrollment of a child can be terminated by the preschool for the following reasons:

- If the preschool staff is unable to meet the needs of a child, as well as provide a safe and progressive learning environment.
- If the registration fee and tuition fees have not been paid on time unless prior arrangements have been made with the director.

Before a child's enrollment is terminated, a parent will be informed of the specific problem and time will be given to correct the problem. Upon termination, any tuition paid in advance will be pro-rated and refunded back to the date of termination.

Children with Special Needs and Their Families

Hope Lutheran Preschool is accepting of all children and enjoys serving children of all abilities. Our staff works hard to identify areas of strengths and areas that need support in all children in our program. Sometimes these observations lead to strategies that we can do in the classroom prior to looking for outside help. There are times we must partner with families to discuss outside support for their child/children. We are happy to provide a list of service providers that we have currently partnered with or have in the past. If your child is already receiving services, please discuss this with us so we can look at ways to support your child.

We welcome the opportunity to work with any specialist who gives assistance to your child while enrolled in our preschool. If at any time the parents and/or preschool feel that your child's needs are different than what we can provide for, we would set up a meeting to discuss other options that would better serve your child. Our school uses the resources of Project Enlightenment and Preschool Services of Wake County to help us work with special needs and situations in our classrooms. They also offer free screenings/consultations in behavioral, physical, emotional and social development to parents who live in Wake County. If you do not live in Wake County, contact the Director or Assistant Director for more information on receiving support from your county's school system.

Screenings

Free vision screenings are provided by Prevent Blindness during the school year for all students. Our staff may recommend speech and/or hearing screenings for your child. We feel that it is much better to treat small

potential problem areas before your child goes off to kindergarten. If your child cannot hear, speak or see properly they will have difficulty learning letters and their sounds and struggle to learn to read. Please speak with your child's teacher if you have any questions or concerns about your child's speech, hearing or vision.

Policies and Procedures

Communication

The quickest way to reach the preschool is to call the main phone number, 919-453-0388. You may also email Preschool@hopelutheranwf.org with any questions you may have. Depending on the nature of your question, the Director, Assistant Director or Administrative Assistant will respond as soon as possible.

Parents may email their child's teacher using their classroom email which parents will receive at the beginning of the school year.

Our website, www.hopelutheranwf.org/preschool, contains a lot of helpful information, including the school calendar, class options and fees, curriculum information and important forms. Additionally, this handbook is on our website which contains all of our policies and procedures.

Both teachers and Leadership send text messages through our ProCare Connect app. This will be our primary way to send important updates from the preschool, including inclement weather delays or closings, information in case of a school wide emergency, and reminders of important events. We will use the cell phone numbers and carrier information provided on your child's registration form to send these text messages, so please be sure to update your information if you change your cell number or carrier.

Additionally, teachers use ProCare Connect to send photos and videos to individual parents as well as the class regarding, updates, activities and reminders to keep families informed.

Each class sends a weekly newsletter, via email, with information about the class and what they are currently learning. Preschool Leadership emails a monthly newsletter, which will give information about the school in general, upcoming events, important dates, etc. This newsletter will be emailed at the beginning of each month. The Director sends a weekly update via email through ProCare with reminders of upcoming events at the preschool and connecting parents to church events.

Phone calls to the school are also welcome, however teachers may not be available during class time to talk on the phone. Informal conferences can be requested anytime by parents and/or teachers for larger conversations to discuss any concerns in the classroom.

Conferences/Assessments

We use developmental assessments for all classes to evaluate children's progress in the seven domains listed in our curriculum section: Spiritual, Physical, Language/Literacy, Cognitive, Social/emotional, creative and approaches to learning. These domains will be used to assess developmental growth and readiness throughout their preschool experience. Conference dates will be scheduled twice a school year in October

and in April. Additional conversations may be scheduled by contacting the teacher or the director. Should a child require special observation or help, the school will work with parents to obtain assistance.

Hours of Operation

Our day starts with drop-off from 8:30AM to 8:45AM. Early Care is available from 7:00AM to 8:15AM. Pick-up for 3's is at 12:00PM, and for our 4's and 4/5's, pick-up is at 12:30PM-lunch is included as part of their day. Extended Care is available from 12:00PM to 5:00PM.

The Director, Assistant Director and/or Administrative Assistant are available in the front office during Preschool hours. You can reach us by phone at 919-453-0388 or email at preschool@hopelutheranwf.org. If you need to have a conversation or meet with your child's teacher, please reach out to Leadership to coordinate a meeting. We are happy to help.

Safe Arrival and Departure

To ensure the safety of all children, Hope Lutheran Preschool requires that you sign your child in and out each day on our ProCare app. Teachers will check that children are signed in as well as document attendance daily on paper. If there are any changes to who will be picking up, please inform the school via email or phone. Alternate pick-up people will be required to ID themselves; please be sure they bring their valid ID with them. **For the safety of the children and staff all entrances to the preschool will remain locked, except during drop off and pick up.**

Pick up and drop off:

Arriving on time is an important part of your child's routine as it provides children with the consistency they need to start their day successfully. Early Care ends at 8:15AM and regular drop off ends at 8:45AM. Additionally, picking up your child on time is equally important. Children do not understand why their parents have not picked them up when all other children have been picked up. If you are late picking up, your child will be waiting in the front office. **Reminder: a late fee of \$1.00 per minute will be charged after the first five minutes of being late to pick up your child. This fee will be added to your account and is due with the next month's tuition.**

- Drop off and pick up happens in the building at the classroom doors
- Doors open at 8:30am and close at 8:45am for drop off
- If you drop off after 8:45 am, you must ring the doorbell at the front entrance
- Doors open at 12:00pm for 3's at pick up and close at 12:15
- Doors open at 12:30 for 4's and 4/5's pick up and close at 12:45
- If you pick up after the designated time, you must ring the doorbell at the front entrance
- Threes are dropped off and picked up through the front entrance
- Fours and Four/Fives are dropped off and picked up through the back entrance
- Classrooms 7 and 8 are dropped off on the playground using the back playground entrance

Early Drop Off

Early Drop Off is from 7:00AM to 8:15AM and is available Monday through Friday. Register for as few or as many days as you need. Children will be taken to their preschool classes at the appropriate start time. **If you arrive after 8:15AM You must wait for regular drop off to start at 8:30am.**

Extended Care

Extended Care Hours are available Monday through Friday from 12:00PM to 5:00PM. Register for as few or as many afternoons as you need. Extended Enrichment includes lunch, outdoor play, rest time, centers and special activities.

All children who stay for Extended Enrichment will need to bring a healthy lunch from home (see below for lunch information) and a crib sheet for rest time. A small blanket or other comfort item may also be brought in for rest time but is not necessary. Please do not bring pillows. The crib sheet and any other rest time items **must fit inside a 2 gallon sized ziplock bag**, sealed and labeled with your child's name. *Please do not use any other bags for these items.* Due to the number of children who stay in the afternoon and space constraints, all items must be brought in one 2-gallon size Ziplock bag. Due to licensing, the bags must be sealed, with no items hanging out of the top of the bag. These bags can be purchased at Walmart or Target, as well as other local retailers.

Lunches

If your child will be eating lunch as part of their preschool day, they are responsible for bringing a lunch from home. Please send a healthy lunch with your child to school each day. **If your child's lunch includes items that require refrigeration, please place these items in a Ziplock bag, clearly labeled with your child's name, date, and room number and place the bag in your child's lunchbox.** These items will be placed in the lunch bin at school and kept refrigerated until lunch time. Items that must be refrigerated include, but are not limited to, yogurt, cheese, fresh fruit, lunch meat, chicken nuggets, pizza, milk, etc. Please note that hot foods in thermoses will still have to be refrigerated, and we cannot heat up lunches. **All non-refrigerated items should be placed in your child's lunchbox, and will be kept in their cubby until lunchtime.**

Food Allergies

Due to the food allergies of some children, Hope Lutheran Preschool is a ***Peanut and Tree-nut free environment***. **No nut products are allowed in preschool.** Some examples are peanut butter sandwiches, Reece's Cup candy, Ritz Bits with peanut butter, Nutella, almond butter or any other products containing nuts. The staff of Hope Lutheran Preschool is committed to a nut-free environment; however some foods and/or candy contents are beyond our control. Hope Lutheran Preschool has an allergy policy and **if your child has food allergies please discuss them with your child's teacher**. If your child has an allergy plan, please go to the Preschool Office and pick up an allergy form to complete and return. All allergy forms must be completed and signed by your child's physician. Return completed forms, along with any listed medications, to the Assistant Director in the Preschool Office before the first day of Preschool. **Children may not attend preschool without their allergy plans in place first.** Please be sure all medication is in the original container, and if it is prescription medication, the label from the pharmacy must be on the container. If you have any questions about allergy forms or our policies regarding allergies, please contact our Assistant Director.

Snacks

Children are required to bring a snack from home each day. If a child stays for Extended Care, they must bring two snacks each day. Snacks should be nut-free and non-refrigerated. Examples include Goldfish, Honey Maid Graham Crackers, squeezable fruit pouches, individual fruit cups, Cheerios, etc. Please do not bring grapes, berries, or cut fruit, as these items must be refrigerated. **Snacks should be individually**

wrapped or in small ziplock bags, and labeled with your child's name, date and room number. If your child has two snacks, please label one "AM" and one "PM". Snacks should be placed in your child's backpack.

Children's Personal Belongings

Occasionally a child may need to bring a special blanket or toy from home to help with the initial school adjustment. **Please talk to his or her teacher about appropriate things to "share"-- favorite books, pictures or nature items.** It is great to have items that enhance the theme being studied. We also welcome parent talents that can be shared. We follow the county guidelines of not allowing the children to bring any sort of weapons to school (**guns, knives, bow and arrows, missiles, swords, etc.**).

When dressing your child for preschool, please remember we do fun and messy activities. Please dress your child in clothes that you do not mind getting messy. We ask that all children bring a change of clothes in case of accidents, paint or spills. Be sure to switch out the extra clothes as the seasons change. All personal items that come to school (change of clothes, jackets, etc.) **need to be labeled with your child's name.**

Backpacks

All newly enrolled children will receive a new backpack, and a one-time charge will be added to your account in the amount of \$5. These backpacks are smaller, which makes them easier for children to carry and fit into our cubbies. **Due to their smaller size, the backpacks are not suitable for holding heavy or bulky items.** Heavy or bulky items should be carried into school separately. Your child will use their backpack each year they are at Hope Lutheran Preschool. If a replacement backpack is needed, please contact the front office and a \$5 charge will be added to your account.

Birthday Celebrations

Birthdays are special for children. Simple refreshments may be served with the class. Partner directly with your child's teacher if you wish to bring special treats for birthdays. *Please refrain from bringing party favors, balloons or paper products, please.* Birthday treats must be prepackaged and store bought, made in a nut-free facility. Summer birthdays may be celebrated anytime--a good time would be their half birthday.

Class Parties

Teachers partner directly with parents to help with classroom parties. Your child's teacher will let you know how and when to sign up for classroom parties. Parties are usually during the holidays of Halloween, Christmas, Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day and Easter. No classes will have a graduation ceremony. Our staff feels that preschool is a wonderful experience for all children; however, a graduation is not a requirement to move ahead in their learning.

Toilet Learning

While we prefer children to be potty trained, we assist children who are in the toilet learning process. Our classrooms do not have changing tables but have child-sized bathrooms for toileting routines. Therefore, it is important for children to have started this process prior to school. Please bring in an adequate number of diapers/pullups for your child each day. Each item must be labeled with your child's name and kept in their backpack in his/her cubie. Please bring several changes of clothes and underwear for children who are in the toilet learning process.

Outdoor Play

We go outside daily as required by our license. Please dress your child appropriately for outdoor play. We follow the childcare weather watch to determine if weather is too inclement to go outside. **Please send hats, coats, gloves or mittens during the colder months.** Because our weather changes often, please send clothing that children can layer as the temperatures change throughout the day. All items should be labeled with your child's name and left in your child's cubby.

Inclement Weather Policy

We work with the church to discuss and determine our plans for opening, closing or adjusting operating hours during inclement weather.

When we experience inclement weather, we will let you know about closings or delays through text messages sent through ProCare Connect. **If you are not currently receiving text messages from us, please be sure to call us with your updated cell phone and cell carrier information.** Text messages are the most effective way for us to communicate with you, and we will not be posting closings or delays in any other formats.



We **will not** post to any of the television stations, so please be sure to check your text messages to see if we are closed or delayed. Please use your best judgment when bringing or picking up your child when weather is hazardous in your area. Always remember safety first.

Health and Safety Policies

Safety Drills

Fire drills are conducted monthly, and Lockdown and Shelter-in-place drills are practiced quarterly at preschool, in accordance with North Carolina Licensing requirements. During these drills your children are taught where their safe location is, how to get there quickly and appropriate behavior while remaining in the designated location.

Staff Health and Facility Cleanliness

Every effort is made to promote the physical well-being of all persons involved in our program. A health form provided by the program is required for each child in the program. All staff persons are required to have a health assessment and TB screening.

All classrooms and bathrooms are cleaned and disinfected daily. Throughout the school day tables are cleaned before and after eating snack or lunch. Staff and children's hands are washed upon arrival, after toileting, before/after eating, before/after playing in water tables, and after playing on the playground. Toys are sanitized daily in all classrooms. We have a cleaning company that comes each night to thoroughly clean our facility.

No Smoking Policy

By law, children are required to be in a smoke free and tobacco free environment. Smoking and the use of any product containing, made, or derived from tobacco is not allowed on our campus. This includes all buildings, grounds and parking lots.

Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

Any parent or staff member who suspects a child has been abused or neglected must notify the proper authorities. This requirement applies regardless of where the abuse may have occurred, be it at the child's home or the child care center.

NC law requires any person who has reason to suspect child abuse or neglect to report the case to the local county Department of Social Services (DSS). In addition, the Division of Child Development must be called at (919) 662-4499 or (800) 859-0829 to make a report of suspected child abuse or neglect in a child care program.

Reports may be made anonymously. A person cannot be held liable for a report made in good faith.

Sick Child Policy

Please do not bring your children to school if they are sick. If a child exhibits symptoms such as fever, pink eyes, earache, headache, flu, stomach virus, vomiting or diarrhea within the last 24 hours, please keep him or her at home. This is for your child's welfare as well as that of other class members.

Children should be free of fever and other symptoms for at least 24 hours (possibly longer depending on symptoms) before returning to school.

If a child becomes sick while at school, a parent will be contacted to take the child home. **Parents are expected to pick up their child within the hour.** If a parent cannot be reached the emergency contact will be called. If neither parent nor emergency contact person can be reached and the director feels it necessary, the child will be removed from the room and cared for in the director's office area until either a parent or emergency contact person is available to pick up the child. An Illness Report will be filled out by Preschool Administration. This report will inform you as to why your child is being sent home and when they may return.

For the child's welfare as well as that of other class members and staff, please notify the director or your child's teacher if your child becomes sick or develops a communicable disease. The usual childhood diseases, as well as COVID, Flu, RSV, Strep Throat, Impetigo, Hand, Foot & Mouth, Scarlet Fever, and head lice must be reported so that necessary precautions can be taken immediately. If your child is taking any medication during the year, please inform the teacher. Behaviors and toilet needs often change as a result of medications.

Slight scrapes, bumps or bruises will be given first aid (washed with soap and water and a band aid or ice pack) by the school staff member present. If the child's injury requires further medical attention, the teacher and/or director will contact the child's parent. An Incident Report will be completed and must be signed by both the staff person treating the child and the child's parent. The report will be kept in the child's file and a copy given to the parent.

Allergy and Medical Plans:

Please let us know if your child has any allergies, either identified or suspected. We will need an Allergy Plan completed if your child's physician recommends medication, such as Benadryl or an EpiPen. Other Action Plans are needed for chronic medical conditions like seizures, asthma, diabetes, etc. If any of these medical conditions apply to you, please speak to Leadership so proper plans are put in place for your child.

If a child requires medicine to be administered during the preschool day, whether prescription or over the counter, a written permission form needs to be signed by the parent. All medications given to children by Hope Lutheran Preschool Staff must be in the original container. Please do not send any medications or ointments in your child's backpack. This includes diaper creams, sunscreen, hand lotion, lip balm, etc. If your child needs any of these items during the school day, please communicate this with the front office.

All medication and forms must be turned into the front office for review prior to the child starting/returning to school. Children cannot be in attendance without the proper permission to administer medication forms and medical plans in place.

Your Child's Behavior Changes

It is the responsibility of the parents to provide the preschool with any family changes and illnesses that may change your child's behavior. Ex: domestic issues, family illnesses, your child being on medication, etc.

Playground Safety Rules

When children are on the Playground during preschool, they are expected to follow the playground rules. They are posted on the fences around the playground as follows:

Playground Rules:

Adult Supervision is required

1. No climbing on or over the fence.
2. Please keep gates closed.
3. Feet first/Bottoms down on the slide.
4. No climbing up the slide.
5. Children must be seated for swinging, no jumping out of the swings.
6. Only adults may push the children on the swings.
7. Shoes must be worn while on the playground (no spiked shoes)
8. No climbing on top of the monkey bars.
9. Keep sand in the sandbox.
10. Please clean up all litter.

Helping Your Child Adjust to Preschool

- Do your best to be on time. Rushing is difficult for preschool children to process.
- You might find that the fullness of preschool affects your child's sleeping patterns. Please be aware of this and adjust where necessary to ensure your child is getting adequate rest.
- Talking to your children about what to expect at school helps them understand their day and what is to come
- Establish a healthy, consistent drop-off routine to help with the separation process during drop-off. Please partner with your child's teacher and leadership when challenges arise with drop-off; we are here to help.
- Talk to your child ahead of time when a change in your family's routine is coming up. Remember children thrive on routine and disruptions bring about confusion and sometimes challenging behaviors. Partner with your child's teacher when changes in routine occur so they can support your child as they navigate the change.
- Label all clothing or items to avoid confusion with another child's things (Coats, sweaters, backpacks, etc.).
- Please read all newsletters and notes sent home with your child for Important information about your child's classroom and preschool activities.
- To avoid them being broken or misplaced, please keep toys and precious items at home. Additionally, toys from home make the drop off process challenging. To help with this, have your child leave toys in the car or with mommy/daddy before entering the building.

Non-Discriminatory Policy

Hope Lutheran Preschool admits students of any race, color, or national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. Our school does not discriminate based on race, color, or national or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

"Now let the fear of the Lord be upon you. Judge carefully, for with the Lord our God there is no injustice or partiality..." - 2 Chronicles 19:7

Prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome and Abusive Head Trauma

Belief Statement

We, Hope Lutheran Preschool, believe that preventing, recognizing, responding to, and reporting shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma (SBS/AHT) is an important function of keeping children safe, protecting their healthy development, providing quality childcare, and educating families.

Background

SBS/AHT is the name given to a form of physical abuse that occurs when an infant or small child is violently shaken and/or there is trauma to the head. Shaking may last only a few seconds but can result in severe injury or even death. According to North Carolina Child Care Rule (childcare centers, IOA NCAC 09 .0608, family childcare homes, IOA NCAC 09 .1726), each childcare facility licensed to care for children up to five years of age shall develop and adopt a policy to prevent SBS/AHT.

Procedure/Practice

Recognizing:

- Children are observed for signs of abusive head trauma including irritability and/or high pitched crying, difficulty staying awake/lethargy or loss of consciousness, difficulty breathing, inability to lift the head, seizures, lack of appetite, vomiting, bruises, poor feeding/sucking, no smiling or vocalization, inability of the eyes to track and/or decreased muscle tone. Bruises may be found on the upper arms, rib cage, or head resulting from gripping or from hitting the head.

Responding to:

- If SBS/ABT is suspected, staff will:
 - Call 911 immediately upon suspecting SBS/AHT and inform the director.
 - Call the parents/guardians.
 - If the child has stopped breathing, trained staff will begin pediatric CPR.

Reporting:

- Instances of suspected child maltreatment in child care are reported to Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) by calling 1-800-859-0829 or by emailing webmasterdcd@dhhs.nc.gov.
- Instances of suspected child maltreatment in the home are reported to the county Department of Social Services. Phone number: 919-250-3947.

Prevention strategies to assist staff* in coping with a crying, fussing, or distraught child

Staff first determine if the child has any physical needs such as being hungry, tired, sick, or in need of a diaper change. If no physical need is identified, staff will attempt one or more of the following strategies:

- Rock the child, hold the child close, or walk with the child.
- Stand up, hold the child close, and repeatedly bend knees.
- Sing or talk to the child in a soothing voice.
- Gently rub or stroke the child's back, chest, or tummy.
- Offer a pacifier or try to distract the child with a rattle or toy.

- Take the child for a ride in a stroller.
- Turn on music or white noise.

In addition, the facility:

- Allows for staff who feel they may lose control to have a short, but relatively immediate break away from the children.
- Provides support when parents/guardians are trying to calm a crying child and encourage parents to take a calming break if needed.

Prohibited behaviors

Behaviors that are prohibited include (but are not limited to):

- shaking or jerking a child
- tossing a child into the air or into a crib, chair, or car seat
- pushing a child into walls, doors, or furniture

Strategies to assist staff members understand how to care for infants Staff reviews and discusses

- The five goals and developmental indicators in the 2013 North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development, [ncchildcare.nc.gov/PDF forms/ NC Foundations.pdf](http://ncchildcare.nc.gov/PDF/forms/NC_Foundations.pdf)
- How to Care for Infants and Toddlers in Groups, the National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families, www.zerotothree.org/resources77-how-to-care-for-infants-and-toddlers-in-groups
- Including Relationship-Based Care Practices in Infant-Toddler Care: Implications for Practice and Policy, the Network of Infant/Toddler Researchers, pages 7-9, www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/nitr_inquire_may_2016_070616_b508compliant.pdf

Strategies to ensure staff members understand the brain development of children up to five years of age

All staff take training on SBS/AHT within first two weeks of employment. Training includes recognizing, responding to, and reporting child abuse, neglect, or maltreatment as well as the brain development of children up to five years of age. Staff review and discuss:

- Brain Development from Birth video, the National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families, www.zerotothree.org/resources/1%-brain-wonders-nurturing-healthy-brain-development-from-birth
- The Science of Early Childhood Development, Center on the Developing Child, developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/inbrief-science-of-ecd/

Resources

Parent web resources

- The American Academy of Pediatrics: www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-home/Pages/Abusive-Head-Trauma-Shaken-Baby-Syndrome.aspx
- The National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome: <http://dontshake.org/family-resources>

- The Period of Purple Crying: <http://purplecrying.info/>

Facility web resources

- Caring for Our Children, Standard 3.4.4.3 Preventing and Identifying Shaken Baby Syndrome/Abusive Head Trauma, <http://cfoc.nrckids.org/StandardView.cfm?StdNum=3.4.4.3&=4>
- Preventing Shaken Baby Syndrome, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/kb/trprev/Preventing SBS 508-a.pdf>

Early Development & Well Being, Zero to Three, www.zerotothree.org/early-development

References

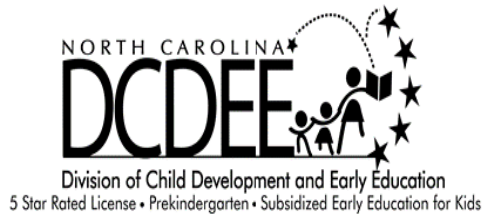
1. The National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome, www.dontshake.org
2. NC DCDEE, ncchildcare.dhhs.state.nc.us/general/mb_ccrulespublic.asp
3. Shaken baby syndrome, the Mayo Clinic, www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/shaken-baby-syndrome/basics/symptoms/con-20034461
4. Pediatric First Aid/CPR/AED, American Red Cross, www.redcross.org/images/MEDIA_CustomProductCatalog/m4240175_Pediatric_ready_reference.pdf
5. Calming Techniques for a Crying Baby, Children's Hospital Colorado, www.childrenscolorado.org/conditions-and-advice/calm-a-crying-baby/calming-techniques
6. Caring for Our Children, Standard 1.7.0.5: Stress <http://cfoc.nrckids.org/StandardView/1.7.0.5>

Application

This policy applies to children up to five years of age and their families, operators, early educators, substitute providers, and uncompensated providers.

6/30/17

Effective Date



**Division of Child Development and Early Education
North Carolina Department of Health and Human
Services
820 South Boylan Avenue
Raleigh, NC 27699
Revised February 2018**

Summary of the North Carolina Child Care Law and Rules

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability in employment or provision of services.

What is Child Care?

The law defines child care as:

- three or more children under 13 years of age
- receiving care from a non-relative
- on a regular basis - at least once a week
- for more than four hours per day but less than 24 hours.

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services is responsible for regulating child care. This is done through the Division of Child Development and Early Education. The purpose of regulation is to protect the well-being of children while they are away from their parents. The law defining child care is in the North Carolina General Statutes, Article 7, Chapter 110.

The North Carolina Child Care Commission is responsible for adopting rules to carry out the law. Some counties and cities in North Carolina also have local zoning requirements for child care programs.

Star Rated Licenses

Centers and homes that are meeting the minimum licensing requirements will receive a one star license. Programs that choose to voluntarily meet higher standards can apply for a two through five star license. The number of stars a program earns is based upon the education levels their staff meet and the program standards met by the program.

Family Child Care Homes

A family child care home is licensed to care for five or fewer preschool age children, including their own preschool children, and can include three additional school-age children. The provider's own school-age children are not counted. Family child care homes will be visited at least annually to make sure they are following the law and to receive technical assistance from child care consultants. Licenses are issued to family child care home providers who meet the following requirements:

- Home providers must be 21 years old with at least a high school education or its equivalent, and mentally and emotionally capable of caring for children.
- He or she must undergo a criminal background check initially, and every three years thereafter.
- All household members over age 15 must also undergo a criminal background check initially, and every three years thereafter.
- All family child care home providers must have current certification in CPR and first aid, complete an ITS-SIDS training initially (if caring for infants 0 –12 months) and every three years, the Emergency

Preparedness and Response (EPR) in Child Care training and create the EPR plan. They also must complete a minimum number of health and safety training and ongoing training hours annually.

All family child care homes must meet basic health and safety standards. Providers must maintain verification of children's immunization and health status. They must provide developmentally appropriate toys and activities, as well as, nutritious meals and snacks for the children in care. All children must participate in outdoor play at least one hour per daily, if weather conditions permit.

Child Care Centers

Licensing as a center is required when six or more preschool children are cared for in a residence or when three or more children are in care in a building other than a residence. Religious-sponsored programs are exempt from some of the regulations described below if they choose to meet the standards of the Notice of Compliance rather than the Star Rated License. Recreational programs that operate for less than four consecutive months, such as summer camps, are exempt from licensing. Child care centers may voluntarily meet higher standards and receive a license with a higher rating. Centers will be visited at least annually to make sure they are following the law and to receive technical assistance from child care consultants. Licensed centers must meet requirements in the following areas.

Staff

The administrator of a child care center must be at least 21, and have at least a North Carolina Early Childhood Administration Credential or its equivalent. Lead teachers in a child care center must be at least 18 and have at least a North Carolina Early Childhood Credential or its equivalent. If administrators and lead teachers do not meet this requirement, they must begin credential coursework within six months of being hired. Staff younger than 18 years of age must work under the direct supervision of staff 21 years of age or older. All staff must complete a minimum number of training hours, including ITS-SIDS training for any caregiver that works with infants 12 months of age or younger. All staff who work directly with children must have CPR and First Aid training, and at least one person who completed the training must be present at all times when children are in care. One staff must complete the Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) in Child Care training and create the EPR plan. All staff must also undergo a criminal background check initially, and every three years thereafter.

Staff/Child Ratios

Ratios are the number of staff required to supervise a certain number of children. Group size is the maximum number of children in one group. Ratios and group sizes for licensure are shown below and must be posted in each classroom.

Age	Teacher: Child Ratio	Max Group Size
0-12 mths	1:5	10
12-24 mths	1:6	12
2 years old	1:10	20
3 years old	1:15	25
4 years old	1:20	25
School-age	1:25	25

Centers located in a residence that are licensed for six to twelve children may keep up to three additional school-age children, depending on the ages of the other children in care. When the group has children of different ages, staff-child ratios and group size must be met for the youngest child in the group.

Space and Equipment

Centers must have at least 25 square feet per child indoors and 75 square feet per child for ½ the total licensed capacity outdoors, if licensed over 29 children. Outdoor play space must be fenced. Indoor equipment must be clean, safe, well maintained, and developmentally appropriate. Indoor and outdoor equipment and furnishings must be child size, sturdy, and free of hazards that could injure children.

Curriculum

Four and five star programs must use an approved curriculum in their four-year-old classrooms. Other programs may choose to use an approved curriculum to get a quality point for the star-rated license. Activity plans and schedule must be available to parents and must show a balance of active and quiet, and indoor and outdoor activities. Rooms must be arranged to encourage children to explore, use materials on their own and have choices.

Health and Safety

Children must be immunized on schedule. Each licensed center must ensure the health and safety of children by sanitizing areas and equipment used by children. For Centers and FCCHs, meals and snacks must be nutritious and meet the Meal Patterns for Children in Child Care. Food must be offered at least once every four hours. Local health, building, and fire inspectors visit licensed centers to make sure standards are met. All children must be allowed to play outdoors each day (weather permitting) for at least an hour a day for preschool children and at least thirty minutes a day for children under two. They must have space and time provided for rest.

The following requirements apply to both centers and homes:

Transportation

Child care centers or family child care homes providing transportation for children must meet all motor vehicle laws, including inspection, insurance, license, and restraint requirements. Children may never be left alone in a vehicle and child-staff ratio must be maintained.

Program Records

Centers and homes must keep accurate records such as children's attendance, immunizations, and emergency phone numbers. A record of monthly fire drills and quarterly shelter-in-place or lockdown drills practiced must also be maintained. A safe sleep policy must be developed and shared with parents if children younger than 12 months are in care.

Discipline and Behavior Management

Each program must have a written policy on discipline, must discuss it with parents, and must give parents a copy when the child is enrolled. Changes in the discipline policy must be shared with parents in writing before going into effect. Corporal punishment (spanking, slapping, or other physical discipline) is prohibited in all centers and family child care homes. Religious-sponsored programs which notify the Division of Child Development and Early Education that corporal punishment is part of their religious training are exempt from that part of the law.

Parental Rights

- Parents have the right to enter a family child care home or center at any time while their child is present.

- Parents have the right to see the license displayed in a prominent place.
- Parents have the right to know how their child will be disciplined.

The laws and rules are developed to establish minimum requirements. Most parents would like more than minimum care. Local Child Care Resource and Referral agencies can provide help in choosing quality care. Check the telephone directory or talk with a child care provider to see if there is a Child Care Resource and Referral agency in your community. For more information visit the Resources in Child Care website at: www.ncchildcare.nc.gov . For more information on the law and rules, contact the Division of Child Development and Early Education at 919-527-6335 or 1-800-859-0829 (In State Only), or visit our homepage at: ncchildcare.nc.gov

Reviewing Files

A public file is maintained in the Division's main office in Raleigh for every licensed center or family child care home. These files can be:

- viewed during business hours (8 a.m. -5 p.m.);
- requested via the Division's web site at www.ncchildcare.nc.gov; or
- requested by contacting the Division by telephone at 919-527-6335 or 1-800-859-0829.

How to Report a Problem

North Carolina law requires staff from the Division of Child Development and Early Education to investigate a licensed family child care home or child care center when there has been a complaint. Child care providers who violate the law or rules may be issued an administrative action, fined and may have their licenses suspended or revoked. If you believe that a child care provider fails to meet the requirements described in this pamphlet, or if you have questions, please call the Division of Child Development and Early Education at 919-527-6335 or 1-800-859-0829.

Child Abuse, Neglect, or Maltreatment

Every citizen has a responsibility to report suspected child abuse, neglect or maltreatment. This occurs when a parent or caregiver injures or allows another to injure a child physically or emotionally. It may also occur when a parent or caregiver puts a child at risk of serious injury or allows another to put a child at risk of serious injury. It also occurs when a child does not receive proper care, supervision, discipline, or when a child is abandoned. North Carolina law requires any person who suspects child maltreatment at a child care facility to report the situation to the Intake Unit at Division of Child Development and Early Education at 919-527-6335 or 1-800-859-0829. Reports can be made anonymously. A person cannot be held liable for a report made in good faith. The operator of the program must notify parents of children currently enrolled in writing of the substantiation of any maltreatment complaint or the issuance of any administrative action against the child care facility. North Carolina law requires any person who suspects child abuse or neglect in a family to report the case to the county department of social services.

Off Premise Activity Authorization

Off premise activities refer to any activity which takes place away from a licensed and approved space. License and approved space includes primary space, outdoor space, single use rooms, or other administrative areas that have been approved for use.

I give my permission to Hope Lutheran Preschool for my child to participate in off premise activities, including:

- Going to the Church Sanctuary for Chapel and other activities
- Going to the Church Building for Music Class
- Going to the Preschool and/or Church parking lots for Fire Drills
- Going to the CC/FH and /or Youth Center for special activities
- Going on Nature Walks around the Church Property
- Going to the field beside the upper parking lot for organized outside activities

I understand that my child will not be leaving the Preschool/Church property at any time.

Nutrition Opt Out Form

Child Care Rules .0901(d) and .1706(c) state:

When children bring their own food for meals and snacks to the program, if the food does not meet the nutritional requirements specified in Paragraph (a) of this Rule, the operator must provide the additional food necessary to meet those requirements unless the child's parent or guardian opts out of the supplemental food provided by the operator as set forth in G.S. 110-91(2) h.1. A statement acknowledging the parental decision to opt out of the supplemental food provided by the operator signed by the child's parent or guardian shall be on file at the facility. Opting out means that the operator will not provide any food or drink so long as the child's parent or guardian provides all meals, snacks, and drinks scheduled to be served at the program's designated times. If the child's parent or guardian has opted out but does not provide all food and drink for the child, the program shall provide supplemental food and drink as if the child's parent or guardian had not opted out of the supplemental food program.

I plan to provide all meals, snacks and drinks for my child and do not want his/her meals, snacks or drinks supplemented to meet the Meal Patterns for Children in Child Care Programs from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), which are based on the recommended nutrient intake judged by the National Research Council to be adequate for maintaining good nutrition.

Since I opted out, if I do not provide all the meals, snacks or drinks for my child, I understand that the program will provide supplemental food and drink.

Thank you for reading through the Hope Lutheran Preschool Handbook. Please click the link below for the Parent Signature Page. We will need this page on file before your child can start the program.

[Hope Lutheran Preschool Signature Page](#)