Peace Lutheran Early Childhood Handbook

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"Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not turn from it."
Proverbs 22:6

Welcome to the joyful world of Early Childhood Education at Peace Lutheran! This handbook is your guide to the exciting journey your child is about to embark on—a journey filled with curiosity, creativity, and connection.

Through play-based learning, meaningful relationships, and a safe, inclusive environment, we aim to foster a love of learning that lasts a lifetime.

In this handbook, you'll find everything you need to know about our philosophy, daily routines, policies, and how we partner with you to support your child's growth. We encourage open communication and collaboration as we partner with you to build the foundation for your child's future.

Thank you for trusting us with this precious chapter of your child's life. We're honored to be part of your family's story.

Peace Early Childhood Team

Philosophy

The purpose of Peace Early Childhood is to provide a Christian atmosphere of learning. We believe that the children of today are the hope of tomorrow, the future. We assist in the development of the person they will become. Our priority is that the influence we have is a positive one. Our goal is to help children transition from one area of development to another with ease and confidence. We strive to meet their physical, social, emotional, intellectual and spiritual needs at each stage of development. The way in which we touch each child's life today will have a lifelong effect on the child's personality and potential for success.

Center Hours

Peace Early Childhood is open Monday- Friday 6:30am-6:00pm year-round. Our center closes promptly at 6:00pm. A late fee of $15.00 will be charged beginning at 6:00pm for the first 15 minutes, after 6:15pm, the charge is $1.00 per minute.

The half-day preschool is offered 9:00am-12:00pm. Children may be dropped off starting at 8:50am in the classroom and picked up promptly at 12:00pm. A late fee of $15.00 will be charged beginning at 12:00pm for the first 15 minutes, after 12:15pm the charge is $1.00/minute. The half-day preschool program is available August-May.

Late fees will be processed with next ACH tuition withdrawal.

Enrollment

Peace Early Childhood enrolls children ages 8 weeks-5 years. Children must be 3 before August 1 and potty trained to enroll in the 3-5 year old Preschool program. A registration fee of $100 per child or $150 per family is due at the time of enrollment. A deposit of one week tuition is due with the enrollment forms. The deposit will be applied to the first week in attendance. **The registration fee and deposit are non-refundable.**

Attendance schedules must remain the same for students enrolled in the infant/classroom throughout the year.

Payment

Tuition payments will be received weekly using the Direct Payment Plan. Tuition will be automatically deducted from your checking or savings account each Friday. Instructions and an authorization form will be provided to you when your child is enrolled in the early childhood program.

Half Day Preschool tuition will be deducted on the first Friday of the **month**.

A $20.00 fee will be charged each time for the first two insufficient fund transactions. The fee will increase to $40 for the third and fourth insufficient fund transactions. On the 5th and subsequent transactions, the fee will increase to $100 and/or your child's enrollment may be ended. If no payment is made for two consecutive weeks your child's enrollment will be terminated. We do not accept checks or cash payments.

Discipline and Guidance Policy

Peace Early Childhood provides a warm, loving, and Christ-centered environment where children are treated with respect, and compassion. We believe discipline is a teaching opportunity that helps children develop self-control, responsibility, problem-solving skills, and respect for others.

We partner with families to support each child's social, emotional, and spiritual growth through positive guidance, encouragement, and consistent communication. Teachers use developmentally appropriate strategies such as redirection, modeling appropriate behavior, positive reinforcement, and logical consequences to help children make good choices and resolve conflicts respectfully.

Any physical aggression or attempted physical aggression—including biting, hitting, kicking, scratching, pushing, or throwing objects—will be documented, and parents will be notified.

- **First Incident:** Behavior is addressed and documented.
- **Second Incident:** Behavior is documented, and parents are notified through Procare.
- **Third Incident:** Parents will be contacted to pick up their child. The child may return the next school day with a fresh start.

A child may be sent home immediately following a single incident if the behavior is severe or creates a safety risk for staff and or children, including fighting, threatening others, or using an object as a weapon.

If classroom interventions are not successful, the Director, teacher, and parents will meet to develop a Behavior Support Plan. Continued aggressive or unsafe behavior, repeated inappropriate language, or failure to work cooperatively with the support plan may result in dismissal from the program.

Staff will never use: Corporal punishment or physical discipline, humiliation, threats, intimidation, or emotional abuse, infliction of pain, withholding food, rest, toileting, or other basic needs, any discipline that is harmful, degrading, or inconsistent with state licensing regulations

We are committed to helping every child succeed while maintaining a safe and nurturing environment for all. In all matters of discipline, our staff seeks to model the love, grace, and teachings of Jesus Christ.

Open Door/Visitor Policy

Our school has an open door policy. Parents are invited to visit, observe and to participate by informing of your intent. Anytime you have questions or concerns about your child or our program, please do not hesitate to ask. No question or concern is ever too small or unimportant.

Personal Belongings

To keep children from being disappointed by a broken or lost toy, we ask that they use the toys provided by the center. Please leave all toys at home except for a small, quiet, SOFT toy for naptime.

Nap Time

Children will have a rest time from approximately 1:00pm-3:00pm. This varies somewhat within each group. Children who do not sleep or wake up early will have a quiet activity until everyone is awake.

Holidays

Peace Early Childhood is open year around. The center is closed on the following holidays: New Years Day, MLK, President's Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Memorial Day, July 4th, Friday before Labor Day, Labor Day, Wednesday before Thanksgiving, Thanksgiving Day, Friday after Thanksgiving, day before Christmas Eve, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. The center will also be closed between Christmas and New Year. The specific days we will be closed will be posted by August. During this closure, families are not required to pay tuition. The half day Preschool program is in session August-May. A calendar will be given to parents in August.

Vacation and School Closing Policy

Two weeks of vacation are provided each year after one year of continuous attendance (a child who attends during the school year and not during the summer months is an example of attendance which is not continuous). No fees are charged during this vacation period. To utilize vacation days, tuition must not be in arrears. Vacation day rate is based on the weekly tuition divided by the number of days your child attends. Partial attendance and vacation can be used during the same week. The year begins with your child's first day of attendance. Please send a message through Procare stating you would like to apply vacation days for the days your child will be absent. The request must be made in advance of your child being absent.

Inclement Weather

Peace Lutheran Early Childhood will be closed for inclement weather when the Mehlville School District is closed. A closure message will be sent to parents via Procare.

Tuition will remain the same for the first five (5) days of closure due to inclement weather. If the center is closed for more than five days, tuition will not be charged.

Supplies Needed

Please provide the following for your child if appropriate:

- Diapers & diaper cream (if needed)
- Infants may have a sleep sack and pacifier
- Two complete changes of clothes
- Small blanket/pillow for rest time (Only for children ages 1 and up)
- Water bottle

Please make sure all items are labeled with your child's name. Bedding will be sent home weekly to be laundered.

One Year Olds may sleep on a cot with parent written permission

Illness

Please note the following rules concerning childhood illness from the Department of Health Licensing Rules for Child Care Centers. Each child shall be observed for contagious diseases and signs of illness throughout the day. If your child becomes sick while at school a call/Procare message will be made to the parents first, then to the emergency contacts. It is important that sick children be picked up within an hour of the parent being contacted. A child exhibiting any of the following symptoms must be sent home:

● More than one abnormally loose stool

● Severe coughing – if the child gets red or blue in the face or makes high-pitched croup or whooping sounds after coughing

- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Tears, redness of eyelid lining or irritation followed by swelling or discharge of pus
- Unusual spots or rashes
- Sore throat or swallowing difficulty
- An infected skin patch – crusty, bright yellow, dry or gummy area of skin
- Unusually dark, tea-colored urine
- Gray or white stool
- Fever over 100 degrees Fahrenheit – (under arm)
- Headache and/or stiff neck
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea more than once
- Severe itching of the body or scalp or scratching of the scalp which may be symptoms of lice or scabies

Please note: Children must be fever/symptom free for 24 hours without the use of over-the-counter medication before returning to school. We appreciate your cooperation in keeping all the children healthy.

Tuition will remain the same if your child is absent due to illness

Medication

Medication will only be given to a child with written permission from the pediatrician and a signed medication form by parents. This includes over the counter as well as prescription medications. All prescription medication must be in the original container, labeled with the child's name, the physician's name and phone number, dosage, and when and how to be administered. Parents need to hand medication to their child's teacher for safe storage.

Arrival/Departure

All children must be signed in and out each day. Children will only be released to the parent and any other person listed on the authorized pick-up list. Please notify the staff at drop off or by phone, email or Procare message if someone else is picking up. Please make sure whoever is picking up has his/her photo ID.

Child Abuse & Neglect

Teachers and centers are mandated by law to notify authorities of any suspected cases of child abuse and neglect.

Parent- Teacher Conferences

Conferences are held in November for all preschool age children. Conferences for infants & 2-year-olds will be conducted if a teacher or parent feels the need. Please contact your child's teacher or the Administrator to schedule a conference.

Dress

We recommend that children be dressed in washable play clothes that he/she can manage by themselves after using the restroom. Please make sure your child wears tennis shoes to easily participate in gross motor activities. If your child wears "center" clothes home, please wash and return them promptly so they are available for another child.

Outdoor Play

The children play outside weather permitting. Please make sure to send an appropriate jacket/coat, hat and gloves during the winter months. We will follow the Office of Childhood Child Care Weather Watch Guidelines. Office of Childhood - Child Care Weather Watch | Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Playground rules:

1. Be kind to your friends.
2. Take turns/share.
3. Keep your hands and feet to yourself.
4. Go down the slide feet first.
5. Hold on when climbing.
6. Use kind words.
7. Mulch stays on the ground.
8. Stop when the teacher says "stop."
9. Help keep the playground clean.

Sanitation

We work very hard at trying to keep the spread of infectious diseases to a minimum. We have thorough hand-washing practices for both staff and students. Diaper changing stations are sanitized after every diaper change.

In addition, we keep the handling of soiled diapers and clothing to a minimum. For this reason, soiled clothing is NOT rinsed out at school but put in a bag and sent home.

Medical Exam & Immunizations

A physical examination form completed and signed by a physician must be submitted within 30 days of your child's first day of attendance. All students are required to provide a current immunization record on or before their first day at Peace Early Childhood.

Medical exemptions are permitted only when a child's pediatrician certifies in writing that immunizations would be detrimental to the child's health. Medical exemption documentation must be updated annually. Children who are not immunized may be excluded from school during outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases. Parental/Guardian exemptions are not permitted.

To ensure your child's health records remain current, please provide an updated immunization record whenever your child receives additional vaccinations. Parent or guardian exemptions are not accepted.

Teacher Qualifications

Our educators are loving, compassionate, and certified Christian professionals who bring a deep understanding of child development. They create age-appropriate learning experiences that nurture each child's growth—intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually.

All staff members are required to be trained in Infant/Child CPR and will attend Professional Development classes to earn continuing education hours throughout the year.

Meals

Breakfast, lunch and afternoon snacks are provided for the children enrolled in the all-day program. Breakfast is served from 8:00am-8:30am and lunch is served from 11:00am-12:00pm. Afternoon snacks are served after rest time. All meals are served with whole milk for infants/toddlers and 2% for ages 2 and up. Water is served with afternoon snack for ages 2 and up. If your child has food allergies, please notify the office staff upon enrollment. Parents will need to provide an allergy action plan (if needed) and necessary medications. Expiration dates on medication will be monitored and will need to be replaced as needed.

Emergency Procedures

Fire Drills are conducted monthly, and Tornado drills are every 3 months.

Weapon Policy

To ensure a safe environment, weapons of any kind are prohibited on center property and at center-sponsored activities. This policy applies to all staff, families, visitors, and volunteers, except authorized law enforcement officers. Violations may result in removal from the premises and notification of law enforcement.

Field trips

Preschool age children will go on field trips. Parents will be given as much advance notice as possible of field trips. A parent or guardian is required to attend with his/her child. Alternate care will not be available at Peace Early Childhood if a child/parent is unable to attend. Unscheduled walks within the church property may be taken without parent notification. Peace Early Childhood will participate in In House field trips. All appropriate background screenings will be completed prior to field trips/events.

Parent Involvement / Procedure to Negotiate Differences & Difficulties

We encourage you to be involved in your child's school experience. When children see their families involved, they understand the value of education and benefit from a strong partnership between home and school. We welcome parents and guardians to visit, volunteer, read to the class, or join classroom activities.

If you have a question or concern, please talk with your child's teacher first. If the issue is not resolved, please contact the Director. If needed, concerns about Center policies or decisions may be submitted in writing to the Senior Pastor, who will review them and respond in a timely manner.

We believe that open, respectful communication is the best way to work through concerns and build strong relationships. Our goal is to handle every situation in a Christ-centered way that supports our children, families, and school community.

Termination Policy

In the event your child(ren) no longer needs to attend Peace Early Childhood a two-week written notice/Procare message is required.

Peace Lutheran Early Childhood Program 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 based on race, color national and ethnic origin in school administered programs.