

PEACE LUTHERAN PRESCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK



Peace Lutheran Preschool
is proud to be accredited by:



**National
Accreditation
Commission**
FOR EARLY CARE AND
EDUCATION PROGRAMS

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Appendix A Your Guide to Regulated Child Care

WELCOME TO PEACE LUTHERAN PRESCHOOL!!

On behalf of the teachers, I am delighted to welcome your child and family to Peace Lutheran Preschool! We look forward to getting to know your child and working together with your family to ensure your experience at Peace is wonderful.

Please take some time to read this handbook, as it outlines important policies and procedures and provides answers to common questions. If you have any questions after reviewing the handbook, please feel free to ask the teachers or visit the office. Your signature on the last page is your acknowledgement that you have received, read, and understand, and agree to abide by the policies as they are outlined in this document.

Peace Lutheran Preschool was established in 2010 as a ministry of Peace Lutheran Church. Our mission is to offer high-quality, accessible, and affordable early care and learning programs for children in our community. In line with our founding vision, we have established a sustainable scholarship program that awards between three and five scholarships each year. Additionally, in partnership with the Waunakee Community School District and early intervention specialists, our staff is dedicated to supporting children with special needs.

Peace Preschool is accredited by the National Accreditation Commission for Early Learning Leaders and is licensed by Wisconsin's Department of Children and Families. Each year, our school serves between 70 and 80 children aged three through five. Families have the flexibility to enroll their child in traditional preschool two, three, or five mornings a week, may join the school's popular Lunch Bunch program, or stay for extended "Wrap Around Care." Additionally, the Preschool contracts with the Waunakee Community School District to provide Morning and Afternoon 4K.

Enrollment begins annually in late January. The first week is reserved for families with current or former students and members of the Church congregation. Enrollment opens to the broader community the following week. Applications are processed on a first-come, first-served basis, contingent upon the completion of application forms and payment of fees. Peace Lutheran Church and Preschool are dedicated to serving all children and families in a non-discriminatory manner, regardless of race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, disability, or age.

Preschool staff, including both teachers and administrators, are dedicated to ensuring every child and family has a positive experience at Peace Lutheran Preschool. If you have any questions or concerns at any time, please feel free to talk with your child's teachers, visit the Preschool Office, or call the Director at 608.849.7792.

MEET OUR STAFF:

Director – Sandra Briesath

Program Director - Heidi Gaugert

Bluebird Teachers - Kellie Faulds & Heidi Gaugert

Dragonfly Teachers - Kim Klug, Paige Walzer & Olivia Ripp

Morning & Afternoon 4K Teachers - Patti Bowe, Dawn Wood & Olivia Ripp

Faith Formation Teachers - Suzanne Sackett, Alexis Peterson & Deb McGowan

Dragonfly Lunch Bunch Teachers – Paige Walzer, Kim Klug & Olivia Ripp

4K Lunch Bunch Teachers – Alexis Peterson, Suzanne Sackett & Deb McGowan

Afternoon Wrap Around Teacher – Olivia Ripp, Kim Klug & Paige Walzer

CONTACT INFORMATION

Preschool Office: 608.849.7792

Church Office: 608.849.7732

EMAIL ADDRESS for most staff: firstname.lastname@explorepeace.org

Sandra.briesath@explorepeace.org

Suzanne.sackett@explorepeace.org

Alexis.peterson@explorepeace.org

Heidi.gaugert@explorepeace.org

Kellie.faulds@explorepeace.org

Kim.klug@explorepeace.org

Paige.walzer@explorepeace.org

Olivia.ripp@explorepeace.org

4K Teachers – 4Kowls@explorepeace.org

WEBSITE: www.explorepeace.org/preschool

PEACE PRESCHOOL'S HOURS OF OPERATION

Monday – Thursday 7:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. and Fridays until 2:30 p.m.

MISSION

"Empowering Play. Enhancing Learning."

PHILOSOPHY

*"Show me and I forget.
Teach me and I remember.
Involve me and I learn."
Benjamin Franklin*

GOALS

As an organization, Peace Lutheran Preschool is dedicated to achieving the following goals:

1. To foster trusting relationships with every child by offering nurturing, responsive, and attuned care, while engaging in genuine interactions.
2. To stage the classroom environment with the intention to ensure we offer a wide variety of interesting, fun, and engaging opportunities for children to explore.
3. To prioritize the development of children's social and emotional skills as the central focus of our curriculum.
4. To establish trusting partnerships with families to collaboratively create a supportive, stimulating, and safe environment where children feel valued, capable, and empowered.
5. To cultivate a warm, inviting, and supportive atmosphere where families feel at ease and can develop a community of mutual support.
6. To ensure that every teacher receives a competitive salary, benefits, and meaningful perks that recognize and affirm their dedication, high-quality programming, and commitment to early childhood education.
7. To provide teachers with comprehensive training, ongoing support, and resources necessary to effectively implement our play-based curriculum and uphold our mission and philosophy.
8. As a faith-based program, to translate biblical lessons into age-appropriate concepts by highlighting positive human qualities and actions that guide us in living a Christian life.
9. To promote a professional, respectful, supportive, and collaborative work environment among staff.
10. To enhance the delivery of high-quality early care and education by collaborating with early childhood professionals and sharing our expertise, resources, and knowledge.

COMMUNICATION

WAYS WE COMMUNICATE:

EMAIL - The majority of communication is done electronically. Test emails are sent before the new school year begins. Please let your child's teachers and the director know if you have not received an email.

PARENT AND TEACHER CONFERENCES - Parent-teacher conferences are held twice annually in November and March. We invite parents to actively participate in conferences by asking questions, giving us feedback, and establishing age-appropriate goals for your child. Although we offer two conferences annually, we are happy to offer additional opportunities to talk with your child's teachers. If you have questions or concerns at any time during the school year, please feel free to contact your child's teachers to schedule a meeting.

CLASS BULLETIN BOARD - Each class has a bulletin board right outside their classroom. Please refer to this frequently to find lesson plans, newsletters, snack schedules, information about enrichment programming and more.

PARENT MAILBOXES - The preschool classrooms have parent mailboxes outside the classrooms. Teachers and Directors place important paper documents in these each week, so please check them regularly.

PARENT RESOURCE BULLETIN BOARD - is hanging on the wall between the restrooms and the cubby area. You will find a copy of Wisconsin's Child Care Licensing Manual, information about child development, a list of community events, USDA nutrition guidelines, safe sleep guidelines for infants and more.... Information is updated regularly. Take a look.

PRESCHOOL OFFICE BULLETIN BOARD: Interested in licensing inspections or licensing violations, dates of the last emergency drill, or curious about the director's qualifications... Take a look at the bulletin board located on the wall outside the Preschool Office.

CONCERNS, QUESTIONS & COMPLIMENTS

IMPORTANT!! We want your child and family to have a wonderful experience at Peace. If you have concerns or questions, please reach out. Honest, respectful, two-way communication is essential in providing your child and family with an excellent preschool experience. If you have concerns, it is your responsibility to communicate that, so staff have a chance to address them. Frequent communication between parents and teachers usually addresses most concerns. If your concern was not resolved after speaking with your child's teacher, please talk with the director or program director right away. We will work to resolve the issue and if needed or requested, will be happy to schedule a meeting. If your concern is still not resolved after talking with the director, please put your concern in writing and give it to the lead pastor. We ask you to start with your child's teacher and follow the steps listed.

If you need an interpreter, or would like to talk through any policies, curriculum etc., please contact the director.

In our society, we often don't give or get enough compliments. If you have been impressed, are thankful for or noticed an act that went above and beyond, please share that with the director so we can acknowledge and thank our staff.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT & VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

CLASSROOM VISITORS: We welcome and enjoy families stopping by to spend a couple of hours in your child's classroom. You may join your child for an hour, stop in to help with a special project, join your child and the class during "snack time" or you may join your child on their birthday. There are many options.

VOLUNTEER OPTIONS:

1. INDOOR COMMITTEE/ VOLUNTEER: Help with regular housekeeping and "prep" tasks such as refilling glue bottles, taking artwork off the walls, coordinating Scholastic Book club, making playdough, fixing broken toys, disinfecting toys, or helping out in the classroom by reading to a small group of children or facilitating a board game, blow-up playground balls, etc.

2. OUTDOOR COMMITTEE / VOLUNTEER: Pulling tricycles out of the garage and setting up a tricycle track, helping us keep up the garden by weeding, harvesting, etc.

3. SPECIAL EVENTS / INDOOR VOLUNTEERS: Coordinate meals for Parent-Teacher Appreciation, help with fundraisers, bake treats to be given to neighbors or special helpers, take down bulletin boards, prepare a special snack, etc.

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK REQUIRED: All individuals wishing to spend time in the classroom or building must complete and pass a criminal background check before stepping into a classroom.

4K PROCESS: Families of 4K students must complete a criminal background check through the Waunakee Community School District. Applications are completed electronically and available free of charge through the school's website.

PRESCHOOL PROCESS: Families with children enrolled in the Dragonfly or Bluebird class need to complete the "Volunteer Criminal Background" form and return the completed document to Sandra or drop forms off in the Preschool Office.

Family members wishing to volunteer need to complete the same process as parents/guardians.

ATTENDANCE

REPORT ABSENCE: IF your CHILD WILL BE ABSENT, whether because of illness, an appointment, needs a day to rest, vacation, etc., it is important you email your child's teachers and Sandra. Please send us an email notifying us of the absence.

ABSENT DUE TO ILLNESS: In the event your child will be absent because of illness, in your email to your child's teachers and Sandra, include a brief description of your child's symptoms, onset of symptoms, are other family members are experiencing the same (is it contagious?) and if the child was seen by a medical provider, what was the outcome.

Having this information allows us to **track illness and notify families** of classmates - if appropriate.

SCHOOL CLOSING

WEATHER-RELATED SCHOOL CLOSINGS

WCSD CLOSED: In the event the Waunakee Community School District closes schools due to weather, such as snow, ice, or other threatening weather conditions, Peace Lutheran Preschool will automatically close. You will NOT receive additional communication from the Preschool about the closing. If the WCSD closing is communicated through local news channels, Peace Preschool will also be closed.

WCSD 2-HOUR LATE START: If WCSD has a **two-hour delay** due to weather, Peace Preschool will open at 9 a.m.

THREATENING WEATHER: If threatening weather appears during the time your child is at school and the preschool will be closing early, the Preschool staff will contact you with updates and directions. Closing the preschool due to poor weather conditions is at the director's discretion.

WEATHER-CONDITIONS

We do go outside in cold weather. Please dress your child to go outside in the snow and rain.

State Licensing Rules that address temperature:

1. When outdoor temperatures reach 90 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, children may not be taken outside.
2. When the temperature outside reaches zero or below with or without wind chill, children may not be taken outside.

AIR-QUALITY

Air Quality – We follow guidance provided by “Air Now” to determine when it is safe and not safe to spend time outdoors.

SAFETY, SAFETY, SAFETY!

FOBS: In order to ensure the safety of the children and staff, it is critical that everyone follow the safety rules. Each family is issued a fob that will allow entry to the building using the yellow main entrance to the church. Do not share your fob with anyone you don't know and do not allow anyone to enter the building with you.

PLEASE NOTE: Fobs are only effective if we all work together and DO NOT ALLOW STRANGERS into the building. If you meet up with a visitor who wants to enter the building, please ask them to wait in the air lock/vestibule/front main entrance and ask them to ring the preschool or church doorbell and/or let office staff know of the visitor.

DROPPING YOUR CHILD OFF IN THE CLASSROOM SAFELY: When dropping off your child, make sure the teachers knows you are leaving. A quick greeting or eye contact to ensure the teacher is aware your child is now under their supervision.

SIGNING YOUR CHILD IN AND OUT EVERY DAY: You must sign your child in daily, using the "Sign In / Sign Out" attendance clipboard. Teachers should always be able to rely on the number of children signed as the accurate count of the children in their care. Not only is the process of "Signing In and Out" a critical safety measure, but also a licensing and accreditation requirement. Failure to "Sign In or Out" can result in a licensing violation, fine or worse! If you have left and suddenly realize you forgot to sign in or out, please send a text or email to your child's teachers and director, and we can make the correction. Teachers need to be able to count on the "sign in" as accurate. In the unlikely event of an emergency, it is important to be able to rely on the attendance clipboard to accurately reflect the children in care. During an emergency, there are too many things that require attention; this is one important task that we want to check off the list of worries.

"PICK UP" PROCEDURE - Very Important!!

BLUE EMERGENCY CARD: Every child is required to have a completed Blue Emergency Card on file.

Side 1: Lists family contact information, medical provider, and any medical conditions.

Side 2: **Names & phone numbers of individuals permitted by you to pick your child up.

**Individuals you have given permission to pick your child up from Preschool, have your permission to pick your child up from Preschool any time, without additional permission from you and for the duration of the school year.

Although it is not required to provide additional permission to those listed on the Blue Card, unless you are 100 % confident every Preschool staff member and subs will recognize the individual you are sending to pick your child up, we ask you to provide written, advance notice of any change in your regular pick up routine. Pick-up time is very busy, having advance notice allows teachers to plan and be prepared.

BLANKET PERMISSION: If you prefer not to give anyone blanket permission to pick your child up, you may provide written authorization on a case-by-case basis.

PHOTO ID REQUIRED: Individuals not part of the weekly routine, please ensure they bring a valid photo ID to every pickup. A Wisconsin Driver's License is preferred, as staff can easily recognize it.

NOT ON BLUE EMERGENCY CARD & NO WRITTEN PERMISSION: We will not release your child.

UPDATE BLUE EMERGENCY CARD: You may add or delete names on the Emergency Card at any time.

RUNNING LATE / EMERGENCY: If you are running late to pick up, please notify us as soon as possible by email, text or call the Preschool Office at 608 849 7792. If no one answers, leave a voicemail. Staff always check messages whenever a child is not picked up on time and we haven't heard from the parent.

"DROP OFF" PROCEDURE

RESTROOM: Before dropping your child off, please take your child to the bathroom and have them use the toilet. Our classrooms do not have bathrooms. Taking children to the bathroom interrupts important work and takes teachers out of the classroom.

AND

WASH HANDS: Before leaving the bathroom, please help your child wash their hands following the directions in the photos.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES & PRACTICE

FIRE DRILLS: Preschool-wide fire drills are practiced monthly. In the event of fire, children and staff gather near the sandbox on the large, fenced-in playground.

TORNADO DRILLS: School-wide tornado drills are practiced monthly and any time the siren sounds. Children and staff gather in the bathrooms located across the hall from the lunchroom.

EVACUATION PROCEDURE: If the building needs to be evacuated for a non-emergency reason, children and staff will walk and seek shelter at the high school. We will do our best to keep you updated as events unfold and as soon as we have safely relocated.

EVACUATION DUE TO CREDIBLE THREAT: UNDISCLOSED EVACUATION SITE: In the event the Preschool has to be evacuated because of a credible threat, Preschool staff and children will relocate to an undisclosed and prearranged location. Once it is safe to do so, either staff or emergency personnel will communicate the pick-up location. For safety reasons, this location is not shared publicly. This precaution helps protect children and staff, as threats often come from individuals familiar with someone in the school community.

LICENSING RULES

The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families oversees Peace Lutheran Preschool. If you are interested in reviewing "group child care" rules and guidelines – DCF 251, please reference the document posted by the Director's office or can be found online:
<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/publications/pdf/205.pdf>

Results from the licensing specialist's unannounced inspections are posted on the bulletin board outside the director's office for parents to review.

MANDATED REPORTERS of SUSPECT ABUSE OR NEGLECT

As per Wisconsin's Department of Children and Families, Child Care Licensing 251, all Peace Lutheran Preschool employees, volunteers and practicum students "who know or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected is mandated by law to report their observations to the Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline. Failure to do so may result in a fine, imprisonment or being barred from working in child care.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

PROACTIVE STEPS: If your child has chronic health conditions, including allergies and/or asthma, that may impact your child's health while at school, please let your teachers know. Having that information has answered many questions throughout the years.

DAILY - BEFORE STEPPING INTO THE CLASSROOM – Please help your child wash their hands using the steps pictured in each bathroom.

ILLNESS POLICIES

RULE OF THUMB: If your child is not well enough to participate fully in all preschool activities, including going outside, he/she is not well enough to be at preschool.

HEALTH CONDITIONS THAT REQUIRE YOUR CHILD TO STAY HOME:

Fever = temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher
Diarrhea = 2 or more loose stools within 2 hours
Has vomited within the past 24 hours

RETURNING TO SCHOOL AFTER ILLNESS:

Fever-free for the past 24 hours (without the aid of medication)
Has not vomited within the last 24 hours
Stools are returning to normal.

CHILD BECOMES ILL WHILE AT SCHOOL:

If your child becomes ill at school, we will move them to the office to rest in a quieter environment. While your child rests, we will contact you and kindly ask that you pick your child up within 30 minutes of being notified. If we cannot reach you, we will contact the emergency contacts you provided to arrange for your child's pick-up.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

To protect everyone at preschool, we follow the rules outlined by Wisconsin's Department of Children and Families and Madison, Dane County Public Health regarding communicable diseases. While safeguarding privacy, we will notify families of children who may have been exposed. The infected child will be excluded from the program until the incubation period has passed, the illness has been treated or as specified by the child's medical provider.

If your child is infected with hepatitis and HIV infections, please get in touch with the director to discuss the return to school timeline and plan.

ALLERGIES

If your child has conditions that mimic illness, such as a runny nose because of allergies, please let us know or better yet request a note from your child's medical provider stating the child's condition is not contagious and the child may attend school.

ACCIDENTS

Accidents requiring more than a simple Band-Aid, are reported to parents. In the event of a serious emergency, staff will contact EMS first and then the family. It is important to let your child's teachers and the director know of a new phone number or address.

MEDICATION

Preschool staff will administer medication, apply diaper cream, lotion, or lip balm as long as permission has been provided by correctly completing and turning the "Authorization to Administer Medication" form in to the Preschool's Director. According to the Preschool's licensing agent, the Department of Children and Families, everything ranging from Chapstick, lotion, hand sanitizer, to diaper cream requires a completed "Medical Authorization Form" be on file. "Authorization to Administer Medication" are available in the Preschool's Office.

STOCK EPI PEN

The Preschool has been trained and has received a stock EpiPen to be used on any child or adult in case of an allergic reaction. If an Epi Pen is injected in error, there are no adverse reactions. However, if experiencing an anaphylactic shock and an EpiPen is not injected, the individual may lose their life.

TUITION, FEES & SCHOLARSHIPS

MONTHLY TUITION: Monthly tuition is withdrawn automatically from the bank account provided on the ACH Agreement. Tuition is withdrawn on the 10th of the month, August through May. Unless the child's attendance changes or fees are assessed, tuition remains the same each month.

Full tuition will be collected monthly regardless of "non-school days", snow days, family vacation or child's illness. Peace Preschool follows the WCSD's calendar. Please check the Family Calendar for the specific days.

If payment is not collected for any reason, associated fees will be added to the next tuition invoice and automatically withdrawn.

If you need a copy of your invoice, please let Sandra know. You will receive an invoice in September, as well as a year-end statement for tax purposes.

*Please note, on days 4K is NOT in session, Faith Formation, Lunch Bunch and Afternoon Wrap Around are not available.

LATE PICK UP, MISSED SNACK, & MISSING OR LATE PAPERWORK: Fees will be assessed. A fee of \$ 15 will be assessed if late by 15 minutes and \$ 2 / minute thereafter. Fees will double with subsequent late picks. Three late pick-ups per school year can result in the termination of enrollment. Terminating enrollment is at the director's discretion.

Fees may also be assessed for repeated missed snack, and missing or late paperwork.

Late fees, missed snack fees etc., will be added to following month's tuition and withdrawn using ACH.

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

If tuition payments cause significant financial stress, please speak with the Preschool's director, as Scholarship funds may be available.

SNACK, BIRTHDAYS & WHAT TO BRING TO SCHOOL

PEACE PRESCHOOL IS A NUT AND PEANUT-FREE SCHOOL!!

Every year, the Preschool cares for children with severe food allergies, some of which can be life-threatening. Please be diligent in checking labels to ensure that the crackers sent as snacks or in your child's lunch **DO NOT** contain nuts or peanuts.

SNACK

Each family will be responsible for purchasing and providing snack for their child's class on a rotating basis. The Preschool will provide a choice of milk or water.

On your assigned snack day please bring:

1. Two boxes of NUT & PEANUT Free crackers. The crackers need to remain in their original packaging so teachers can easily review the ingredient list and ensure the crackers are safe for children with allergies beyond nuts and peanuts.

2. In addition to crackers, please bring a fruit or vegetable - ideally fresh fruit or vegetable. Please wash, prepare the fruit/vegetable and ready to serve.

Per licensing requirements, foods prepared at home cannot be served. All snack foods must be prepared commercially or prepared in a kitchen inspected by the local health department.

BIRTHDAY TREATS

Families are welcome to bring a treat to celebrate your child's birthday. Prior to bringing in a special treat, please check with your child's teacher to make sure the date you wish to bring the snack is available.

As with all other food, treats must be NUT and PEANUT-free and must be store-bought and enclosed in the original packaging.

Please do NOT bring in toys, trinkets or gift bags.

WHAT TO BRING TO SCHOOL

Please provide a full change of clothes, including socks and underwear, in a zip-lock bag, and labeled with your child's name. The clothes will be kept at school. Soiled clothes will be sent home to be washed.

We love to spend time outside!! Please send rain boots, a rain jacket and full winter gear every day your child attends preschool. No umbrellas. We have a wonderful supply of "EXTRA" clothes, including outdoor gear. If your child forgets a clothing item, check under the bench or on hooks right outside Sandra's office.

Please label outerwear – jackets, coats, rain and snow boots, snow pants, hat, mittens ☺

Dress your child not only for the weather, but also to get MESSY! We have a lot of fun jumping in the mud and baking mud pies.

DIAPERS & WIPES

Not yet potty trained – no problem. Please provide diapers/pull-ups and wipes. If your child has transitioned to underwear but may have frequent accidents, send SEVERAL SETS OF extra clothes.

If your child requires any type of cream or powder, whether prescription or over the counter, you must complete the "Authorization to Administer Medication" form.

WHAT NOT TO BRING TO SCHOOL

We want your child to feel comfortable at school. If sending in a small lovie helps, please send it in. Other than lovies, please don't have your child bring toys to school.

BUILDING INDEPENDENCE WITH DRESSING & UNDESSING

A popular goal teachers identify each year is helping children build independence with putting on and taking off winter gear. You will do your child and teacher a big favor by avoiding clothes that have lots of buttons, a belt, suspenders or overalls.

A WORD ABOUT WINTER GEAR

We have found that **WATERPROOF MITTENS** are the best protection for little fingers. Avoid gloves.

Please label your child's clothes – especially outerwear.

BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE/WITHDRAWAL & TERMINATION POLICY

POSITIVE GUIDANCE

The first step to positive behavior guidance is to limit the number of rules and focus on safety and respect. Communicating the rules in clear and simple terms helps children understand expectations. Instead of focusing on what not to do, children usually respond better when they know what we do want to see. For example, explaining behavior expectations clearly, like "use your walking feet," makes the rules easy to understand. To promote desired behavior, teachers acknowledge and praise the behaviors they want to see, like saying, "Emily – you're doing a great job hanging your coat up in your cubby." The verbal praise is specific and brief. At the start of each school year, children help create "The Classroom Agreements" and are encouraged to participate actively.

Mistakes, unwanted, challenging, and/or negative behaviors are to be expected and are a normal part of every child's development. When unwanted behavior occurs, teachers view it from a developmental perspective. Negative behavior often serves as a form of communication. Addressing the behavior involves figuring out what the child wants to communicate. Once the motive is clear, it becomes easier to replace negative behavior with more effective, kinder approaches.

"Time Out" is not used. However, staff will remove children from a situation, especially if safety is a concern. This removal provides time for the child to calm down and then discuss what happened and what better choices they can make next time. Each classroom has multiple spaces designed for one or two children. Children often use these cozy spots to rest, read a book, cuddle, share a book with a friend, or take a quiet moment alone until they feel ready to rejoin the group. If the behavior continues to be disruptive or poses a risk to any child's safety, classroom teachers may ask for support from one of the directors or have the child briefly leave the classroom with adult supervision.

Preschool staff typically don't share information about misbehavior because not following the rules, pushing boundaries, acting out etc. is all a normal part of child development and should be expected. Misbehavior is addressed in the moment by the teacher. By the time parents pick the child up, the behavior has been long forgotten and details become foggy in most children's memories. For those reasons, teachers typically don't share details of misbehavior.

If behavior poses a safety risk to the child, others or property, or continues, then we will reach out and set up a time to talk to see if we can collaborate to address the behavior.

TERMINATING ENROLLMENT

Peace Preschool is fortunate to have a staff of early childhood professionals with decades of experience and the educational expertise necessary to support children with a wide range of needs, including those with challenging behaviors. However, as a staff, we reserve the right to terminate enrollment if the child's needs require excessive teacher attention that significantly impacts their ability to perform, if their needs compromise the quality of programming for other children, if their behavior poses a safety risk to themselves or others, or if their family refuses to work with preschool staff to address concerns. These situations are some examples of behaviors that could lead to termination. Terminating enrollment follows a policy with specific steps and timelines, with every effort being made to collaborate with the family.

ENROLLMENT OPTIONS

EARLY DROP OFF

Early Drop -off is an option for kids enrolled in the Bluebird and Dragonfly Class. Morning 4K begins at 7:40 a.m. with drop off starting at 7:35 a. m. Early Drop off is available daily, Monday through Friday from 7:30 until 8.

FAITH FORMATION FOR CHILDREN ENROLLED IN 4K

Because 4K is funded through state and federal tax dollars, faith-based instruction cannot be included during 4K programming. As a Christian preschool, we offer an optional enrichment opportunity for families who would like their child to participate in faith-based learning.

Faith class is offered Monday through Friday from 10:20 until 11 a.m. Friday enrollment is reserved for children attending full-time and children attending Faith Formation and lunch bunch daily. If Friday openings remain, families will be contacted and offered the opportunity to enroll.

Children enrolled in Morning 4K may join faith class immediately after 4K. Afternoon 4K students can begin their day with FF starting at 10:20 a.m., followed by Lunch Bunch from 11 until 11:50 a.m., after which teachers walk children to their Afternoon 4K class. Children from Morning and Afternoon 4K attend the same class.

Faith Formation class focuses on strong, positive character traits found throughout the Bible. Examples include compassion, sharing, giving, kindness and forgiveness. These concepts are taught by reading Bible stories, visual art, drama and music. Making positive character traits relevant, our Faith class spearheads an annual food drive for our local food pantry.

LUNCH BUNCH FOR CHILDREN IN PRESCHOOL & 4K

Lunch Bunch is available Monday through Friday from 11 until 12 p.m. Shortly after 11, children wash hands, grab their lunch box and eat a leisurely lunch with peers and their teacher. Children who are finished eating lunch may leave the table to play until everyone has finished eating. If time and weather permit, children head outside for some fresh air and fun.

Lunch Bunch offers an excellent opportunity for children to practice independence, social and emotional skills. Since teachers are not pressured to present lessons or manage play activities, they sit down with children and facilitate conversations, assist with self-help skills, and practice conversation skills. Lunch Bunch is a wonderful time for children to socialize and interact with their peers while under the watchful eyes of trained teachers who are ready to facilitate and support where needed.

Children enrolled in "Lunch Bunch" bring a **NUT & PEANUT-FREE** lunch from home, including a drink and any needed utensils. Please pack a healthy and well-balanced lunch. For some fun and nutritious lunch ideas, please refer to the USDA website at: <https://www.myplate.gov/life-stages/preschoolers>

Please pay close attention to the ingredients in granola bars to make sure they are peanut-free. If your child loves peanut butter, consider Sun Butter as a great alternative. If sending sun butter, please include a note in your child's lunch stating lunch includes Sun Butter. Peanut and Sun Butter look and smell alike. By providing a note, you have saved our staff from having to investigate 😊

Refrigerator space is limited. If your child's lunch needs to remain cold, please use an ice pack, knowing lunches will not be refrigerated. If you would like to send warm food, please do so using a thermos. Please avoid storing food in plastic containers unless labeled BPA-free. Many plastic containers that have been washed in a dishwasher were used to store hot food or to heat food in the microwave, and leak toxic chemicals.

AFTERNOON WRAP AROUND CARE FOR CHILDREN IN PRESCHOOL & 4K

Afternoon Wrap Around Care is available Monday through Thursday from noon until 3:30 p.m. Children enrolled in the Bluebird, Dragonfly and Morning 4K combine for the Afternoon. Children often continue their play until 12:30 ish, when teachers turn down lights, pull down blinds and begin to slow down the pace by reading a book or telling a story. By 1 p.m. most kids are laying down on their cot while soothing music plays.

As required by Wisconsin's Department of Children and Families, Child Care licensing, every child is required to take a 30-minute rest. Children who do not fall asleep within 30 minutes may get up to play. Around 2, or 2:30, varies based on the children's needs, teachers turn the lights back and the mellow play that enabled naps, ramps back up and becomes joyfully loud and fun! Children sit together for a nutritious snack and get back to their work – play. Teachers may read more books, lead board games, offer puzzles and again – weather and time permitting, end the day with fresh air and outdoor fun.

Peace Preschool provides every child with a cot assigned to the child for the duration of the school year, a fitted sheet and a quilt. Our child-sized quilts were lovingly made and gifted by the ladies in our quilting group.

Sheets and quilts are laundered at school weekly. Families are welcome to send a small pillow and lovie. Both are sent home weekly to be washed.

IMPORTANT: Enrolling in a full-day or full-time schedule, children must be placed in MORNING 4K

4K families interested in full-day or full-time programming must request a Morning 4K spot when registering for 4K with the Waunakee Community School District. Be sure to include a note to the district sharing your enrollment as full-day or full-time.

CURRICULUM

Building on our team's extensive experience with young children in early care and learning settings, as well as decades of professional development, we have created a play-based curriculum designed to foster the holistic development of each child. Having worked with research-supported curricula such as Creative and Emergent Curriculum, High Scope, and Montessori, and aligning with child development standards like the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards, our program focuses on cognitive, gross motor, fine motor, language, social, and emotional development. Recognizing that social and emotional skills are foundational not only for academic success but also for lifelong health and well-being, we prioritize direct teaching and support of these skills in children.

Keeping social and emotional skills at the core of our curriculum's focus, it is not surprising that each teacher's first goal is to build trust. Building a community of trust, ensuring that children have trust in their teachers' ability and commitment to keep them safe, to meet their needs and provide care in nurturing and supportive ways, as well as building trust among children, is the first step to creating a classroom environment where children have fun and learn.

Having created a trusting class community and environment allows teachers to really get to know the children in her class and after having taken notes of children's behaviors, their activities, the interactions with her and classmates, teachers use that information along with children's work samples to determine children's development in language and communication, cognition and general knowledge and gross and fine motor development. Based on the child's development and parent input, teachers identify at least two developmental goals for each child.

Using children's individualized goals, teachers develop a weekly lesson plan, which leads to the final and most time-consuming step, staging the classroom environment. Staging a classroom that inspires meaningful, play-based learning requires teachers to be intentional in selecting learning materials, props and toys that support development with the targeted goal. Learning materials must meet children at just the right development – challenging enough to promote growth without causing frustration.

For example, the developmental goal teachers identified for Leo is to manage frustration when things don't go his way. Knowing Leo loves superheroes and has been known to knock down block towers, destroy Lego creations, and tear up his paper when frustrated, teachers select several superhero puzzles, books and stage a Spiderman board game on the activity table and invites Leo and two peers to join her to play the board game. While playing the game, the teacher can support and scaffold each child's needs. When Leo doesn't get to play with the character he wanted, the teacher prevents Leo from escalating his disappointment by using exaggerated facial expression, matching body language, and narrating, "What a bummer Leo. You didn't get to be the Hulk this time! Boy, that's frustrating". After repeated modeling, direct teaching of vocabulary that correctly identifies feelings/emotions/ideas, Leo is learning that words, facial and body language helps others understand how Leo is feeling. Being validated helps him know that it's ok to be disappointed and frustrated when not getting the game board character he really wanted. Making sure Leo is able to use the Hulk during the next game, Leo is learning to delay gratification. When interactions such as this example are repeated over and over, children learn essential life skills in natural settings, organically and hopefully, while playing in having fun.

What you want children to learn, needs to be available in their environment. If we want children to learn preliteracy and pre-math skills, we have to include numbers, letters, words in the classroom. We do this by providing math and number related props, learning materials and toys and use math and number vocabulary throughout the day when doing so is meaningful and relevant to the children. Teaching preliteracy in a preschool classroom is accomplished by providing a variety of print throughout the room. Books, newspapers, magazines, labeling specific items such as door, chair, block center, providing name cards for each child along with the child's picture, posting a daily schedule that includes pictures of the various activities, group photo for group meeting, a picture of the playground, of handwashing etc. Seeing "block center" every day children begin to recognize not only that letters form words and words have meaning but also learn the sound letters make and that B for block is the same as the B in my name Ben.

When numbers are used in a meaningful way such as learning 1:1 correspondence when counting out five crackers while self-serving at snack, pour water into different shaped three-ounce containers, learning concepts such as tall/short, bigger/smaller, full/empty etc. Puzzles offer tons of valuable learning such as recognizing patterns, sorting, matching as well as critical thinking, problem solving, spatial reasoning etc.

It is important to point out that developmental milestones are achieved by mastering a series of subskills or prerequisite skills. A common skill parents of three- and four-year-olds ask teachers to focus on, is teaching their child to write their name. However, before a child is developmentally ready to write letters, that child needs to master pre-writing lines, strokes, and shapes. Holding a pencil or other similar writing tool, the child should develop the proper tripod grip, develop the strength and dexterity to manipulate a pencil, and hand-eye coordination that integrates visual information with hand movement. In other words, writing letters without the prerequisite skills is building a house without the foundation.

By engaging in play-based activities that target fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination, spatial awareness, creativity, social skills, and cognitive development, children can develop the foundational skills necessary for successful pre-writing abilities and school readiness. Play provides a holistic and enjoyable way for children to learn and grow in preparation for later academic challenges.

Any concept or skill can be taught and learned through play. As children master a goal, teachers begin the "Teaching Cycle" with step one, using observations and samples of the child's work to reassess the child's development, identify a new goal and the cycle of learning continues.

Play-based learning is the most effective, enjoyable and rewarding way for young children to learn. In addition, research has proven that when children are empowered to learn through hands on exploration within a classroom staged by a skilled early childhood teacher, the child's learning is at a deeper level that enables the child to apply the new learning at later times and across settings. Content or skills taught or demonstrated by a teacher is typically only learning and applied in the scenario presented and not recalled at later times.

Young children empowered to explore by following their own interests learn much more than the "content of the teacher's learning goal". While exploring and playing, children practice skills across all developmental domains. While negotiating and collaborating with peers, children practice using their speech, language, social and emotional skills needed to make and keep friends and get along in social settings. Wanting to build a strong Lego bridge, children use what

they learned from the failed attempt to develop a new plan and follow the steps to create a stronger bridge. Fine and gross motor muscles are used while working with small Legos and to move cautiously so as not to damage their creation.

Taking a closer look at all the learning and development taking place, not only are children working to improve skills across all developmental domains but are developing critical executive functioning skills.

Social, Emotional Learning and Executive functioning skills develop naturally through “staged” play. Not just any play will do. In order to use play as the tool that prompts learning across all developmental domains, the following must be included:

- Children have the freedom to choose where, with whom and for how long to play in any one area.
- Significant chunks of adult uninterrupted time.
- Classroom environments intentionally staged props, games, toys and learning materials.
- Teachers with extensive knowledge and experience in knowing child development, play-based learning, play-based learning, extensive knowledge of each child's development, interests, temperament and family culture.
- Group of similar-age peers.

When a “play” environment includes the elements listed above and children are in a group setting with similar -age peers, they naturally encounter scenarios that require problem- solving, discussing/negotiating, and following rules. and “being playing each other's rules. Children who can “play nicely” by taking turns, sharing, being kind etc. are sought out as play partners. Children quickly steer away from peers who “hog toys, melt down when frustrated, don't follow rules etc. Unless the child becomes more proficient in using social and emotional skills, that child is at risk of becoming isolated and left out of peer groups.

DAILY SCHEDULES & ROUTINES

The daily schedule follows the same sequence of events most of the time. Having occasional changes in the daily routine is an important learning opportunity as they are part of life AND build essential skills such as flexibility, creative thinking, problem solving, and the ability to manage and regulate emotions and feelings, etc.

Young children thrive on consistency as it helps children feel safe in knowing what to expect next, helps reduce anxiety, and fosters confidence and independence. Predictable schedules and regular routines support self-regulation skills as children stop one activity to move to another, they learn to manage their emotions, practice impulse control, learn flexibility and coping skills. As children develop and get older, predictable schedules and regular routines help build executive functioning skills. Children able to anticipate what comes next, begin to plan, organize, problem- solve, manage time, prioritize, set goals, flexible thinking, ability to self-regulate and the ability to manage and adapt to change. It's fun to hear a group of 4K children excitedly chatting as they bundle up in snow gear, eagerly planning how they'll use the sleds when they get out to the playground.

Each day includes a balance of teacher vs child-initiated activities. Teachers provide information they want children to learn, lead group activities and group meetings. It is equally important to provide children with an hour of adult-uninterrupted play. Children require

extended periods of child-initiated play in order to become fully immersed in the type of play that results in learning.

PRIORITIZING SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL & EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS

Social and emotional skills are not just important – they are foundational life skills that profoundly shape a child's overall well-being and lifelong success. The ability to effectively apply the skill set is essential for academic achievement and social relationships far more than any amount or type of academic knowledge. By the time children begin kindergarten, academic content becomes the primary focus. In fact, research has confirmed that the strongest predictor of academic success is a child's ability to effectively use social and emotional skills when starting kindergarten. For this reason, the skill set is commonly referred to as the "prerequisite to kindergarten".

A lot of skills fall under the social and emotional skills umbrella. Examples include:

- The ability to focus, prioritize & shift attention.
- Ability to express ideas and thoughts clearly and concisely.
- Conflict resolution, ability to negotiate, collaborate & compromise.
- Cognitive flexibility, think creatively & solve problems.
- The ability to control one's impulses, regulate & manage one's emotions/stress/needs.
- Strategic thinking
- The ability to plan, organize, prioritize, set & achieve goals.
- The ability to manage time.
- Ability to delay gratification & resist peer pressure.
- The ability to persevere despite difficulty and challenge.
- Ability to think through words & actions & consequences without speaking or acting.
- Ability to follow directions, stick to rules, compromise, negotiate, take turns, ask for help & permission & ability to accept decisions made by an authority figure.
- The ability to apologize, take responsibility for one's actions.
- The ability to recognize, understand & manage one's emotions.
- Ability to recognize, understand & respond appropriately to the emotions/needs/ideas of others.
- Active listening
- Ability to apply socially appropriate skills – personal space, ability to read a room and adapt verbal & non-verbal communication accordingly.
- The ability to understand another's perspective & respond appropriately despite differences.

For more information about social and emotional skills, please check the Parent Resource Bulletin board.

ACADEMIC LEARNING

Teaching SE skills is our highest priority, but certainly not in place of academics. Using play as the teaching tool, teachers incorporate pre-math and pre-literacy activities in relevant, fun and meaningful ways throughout the classroom and woven throughout daily activities and play opportunities. Pre-math learned in relevant ways may include counting the number of children in class and graphing whether there are more boys or girls. The housekeeping area may include a "farmer's market" with different-sized pumpkins, scales, measuring tapes, calculators, prices, a cash register with "money", and phones and phone numbers, list of prices, price tags. The

sensory table may be filled with water, funnels, measuring cups along with a variety of containers – some short and wide, tall and narrow etc. Prompting children to work out which holds the “most/least” water. Which is the heaviest? Predict which will hold the most/least and have the children test their theories. Wanting to expose children to what we want them to learn, teachers stage the classroom with books, wall calendars, phone book, newspaper ads, posters, rules, scales, measuring tape, maps, etc.

The same play principles hold true with “pre-literacy”. Again, the classroom should include many different samples of letters and print that make sense to children. In addition to displaying a variety of books throughout the classroom, a list of phone numbers on the pretend refrigerator, newspapers, posters, labels, a variety of writing tools and paper etc. In addition to reading, storytelling, song, nursery rhymes, having a display of every child's picture with printed name available, encouraging kids to “write” a letter to a friend who is sick and stayed home, or note to parents because they miss them. Dismissing children by rhyming their name or sounding out the first letter of a child's name. While reading a book to the class, ask what do you think will happen, asking questions about the book read the previous day, pointing out the “S” in the Stop sign etc. For learning to stick, it has to be meaningful, relevant to the child and be fun! Children should leave preschool excited to learn. Teachers make it fun and meaningful for the children.

For additional information about the curriculum, child-directed, play-based learning, the Teaching Cycle etc. check out the Parent Resource Bulletin Board or feel free to speak with any member of the Preschool's team.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Children enrolled in the two preschool classes, in Faith Formation, Lunch Bunch, and Afternoon Wrap Around, have faith-based lessons interwoven throughout their day. Teachers make scripture meaningful by presenting Biblical lessons as simple, relatable concepts that are connected to children's everyday life. Lessons are based on the ELCA's Lutheran Bible.

Each month, the faith curriculum highlights positive character traits found throughout the Bible such as gratitude, kindness, compassion and community. Lessons are shared through readings from children's Bibles, through songs, art, and drama. All classes, except 4K, celebrate Christian holidays and learn about their meaning and impact on our lives.

Chapel time is scheduled twice a month in the sanctuary and is led by Pastor Karen, one of the Faith Formation or Preschool teachers. Chapel includes children from both Preschool classes and children in Faith Class. The chapel schedule is posted in the classroom newsletters and in the lesson plan posted outside each classroom. We welcome parents or caregivers to join us for Chapel.

All children enrolled in Bluebird, Dragonfly and Faith Formation classes perform an annual Christmas program.

Children do not need to be Lutheran or have any type of religious background to benefit from and enjoy the class.

PROACTIVE – EARLY INTERVENTION

As teachers continually monitor children's development, it also happens that children show minimal or no progress toward their developmental goals. In those cases, after teachers have tried changing out toys, props or learning materials and still little or no progress is evident, Preschool staff will consult the child's family to share observations. If the family agrees that seeking additional information may be helpful, the Preschool staff submits a referral to the Waunakee Community School District's Early Childhood Specialists, requesting a consultation. After spending some time interacting with and observing the child, WCSD's Early Childhood Specialists may recommend gathering additional information, may provide the family with suggestions of follow-up outside of the school system, or may conclude that no additional steps are required, as no evidence was observed that warrants early intervention.

Based on our extensive experience working with young children, we know that early intervention is key to positive outcomes. While it may feel uncomfortable to approach families when our team has concerns about a child's development, we proactively share our observations because early support can make a significant difference. Addressing potential issues promptly ensures the best possible support for the child's growth and development.

For additional information or if you have questions about your child's development, speak with your child's teachers.

DIVERSITY, INCLUSION & COMMUNITY

Wanting to expand our understanding and awareness of different faiths, cultures, and traditions, we invite families to share their traditions, practices, and beliefs. Please schedule a time to speak with your child's teachers or the director to continue the conversation. Our goal is to celebrate differences while affirming our shared identity in God's family.

USE OF TECHNOLOGY

The use of computers, iPads, and television is limited to a few special occasions each year. When used, iPads are primarily employed by teachers to play a song, tell a story, or provide additional information on a topic of interest. We believe most children have many opportunities to engage with technology outside of preschool. Preschool time is best spent exploring the environment and interacting with one another.

ADDITIONAL PRESCHOOL POLICIES

SOCIAL MEDIA

It is the policy of Peace Lutheran Church and Preschool that pictures, video, and / or audio taken by parents may not be posted on social media. *In the event that PLC or PLP wishes to promote programming through social media outlets, parents would be asked for written permission prior to using any pictures or videos that include images of the children in our classes.

PETS

Peace Preschool does not have a pet at this time. If we adopt a school pet, we will share the news.

We love having pets visit. However, before bringing a pet to school, please check with your child's teacher and director. Families will need to be notified and information regarding allergies needs to be collected. Animals brought in must be up to date on all immunizations and must be free of disease. While visiting, the pet must be on a leash and the owner must remain with the pet for the duration of the visit.

The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families forbids the following animals from visiting reptiles, amphibians, turtles, ferrets, poisonous animals, psittacine birds, exotic, and wild animals.

CONCEALED WEAPONS, DRUGS, ALCOHOL & SMOKING PROHIBITED

CONCEALED WEAPONS PROHIBITED: Although Wisconsin Act 35 allows legal gun owners to carry concealed weapons in public, weapons are forbidden on church property. Law enforcement personnel are exempt from this rule.

DRUGS, ALCOHOL & SMOKING PROHIBITED: The use of drugs, alcohol and smoking is prohibited on church property.

NOTES PER ACCREDITATION

** We are responsible for informing parents of these policies as part of our status as a nationally accredited program. Please take the time to familiarize yourself with them.*

BPA-free food storage containers: Accreditation standards require that families are provided with information about the importance of choosing food storage containers that are BPA-free. BPA, or Bisphenol A, is a man-made industrial chemical used to harden polycarbonate plastics and make epoxy resin. The chemical is found in most household products made of hard plastics, such as water bottles, baby bottles, and food containers.

This link provides additional information. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/expert-answers/bpa/faq-20058331>

ANTI-IDELLING POLICY Committed to preserving the environment, **car idling is prohibited.** Please turn vehicles off while waiting. We also ask that **children not be left alone in vehicles** while you pick up your preschooler.

RECYCLE & PRESERVE We encourage children to preserve natural resources such as paper, turning off water when done and recycling.

NO TRANSPORTATION PROVIDED BY PEACE PRESCHOOL. Please note that the preschool does not provide transportation.