

**GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM**  
**Parent's Handbook**  
**2009-2010**

“Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.” Mark 10:14

**3000 W. Golf Course Road  
Midland, Texas 79701**

**ECP Office 694-3063  
Church Office 697-3221  
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[grace-ecp@sbcglobal.net](mailto:grace-ecp@sbcglobal.net)**

Dear Families,

We are pleased to welcome both you and your child to Grace Lutheran Church's Early Childhood Program. We sincerely believe that each child is created to be unique and precious. Therefore, our staff's goal is to provide each child with experiences that will enhance his/her God-given potential in the areas of social, emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual development. This handbook is intended to serve as a brief overview of the guidelines and procedures developed by the ECP staff and Board. As you have questions or comments about the program or if you are interested in seeing our complete handbook of guidelines and procedures, please contact the ECP Director or any of the Board members.

## **NLSA ACCREDITATION**

In 1997 Grace Lutheran Church Early Childhood Program attained National Lutheran School Accreditation through the Texas District, Lutheran Church Missouri Synod in conjunction with the Texas Private School Accreditation Commission. Grace maintains NLSA status through annual reports to the Lutheran School Accreditation Commission.

## **TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES**

In addition to being an accredited preschool, Grace ECP is a licensed childcare facility. We follow all health and safety guidelines of the TDFPS and report to and are audited by this agency annually.

## **STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY**

Through God's Word and the power of the Holy Spirit, the goal of Grace Lutheran Church Early Childhood Program is to provide each child with a Christian environment in which to grow spiritually, physically, emotionally, socially and intellectually. Teachers who are personally motivated by the love of Christ will encourage this growth.

## **GOALS FOR EACH CHILD**

The child will begin to:

- A. **Spiritually**
  - Build a personal, trusting, relationship with God through the use of Bible stories, prayer, and songs of praise.
  - Sense an assurance that God cares for him, even though we do wrong, and forgives us through Christ, even as we forgive others.
  - Develop a feeling of thankfulness for our physical and spiritual blessings.
  
- B. **Physically**
  - Develop large and small muscles.
  - Become more self-reliant in personal habits.
  - Engage in active and quiet play.
  
- C. **Emotionally**
  - Become more independent.
  - Develop self-confidence, self-control, and a positive self-image.

D. **Socially**

- Use words to communicate and solve problems with others.
- Reflect upon how others feel.
- Participate in group situations.

E. **Intellectually**

- Extend the use of language.
- Explore, experiment, and question.
- Build an academic knowledge base through hands-on activities.

The ECP believes that young children learn best by doing. Thus, our staff will facilitate the development of these goals through the use of play. Play provides the foundation for academic or “school” learning. It is the preparation children need for learning highly abstract symbols such as letters and numbers.

### **CHAPEL**

Children go to chapel with the Pastor of Grace Lutheran Church on Wednesday and Thursday of each week. This is a wonderful opportunity to share the Word of God with the children and reinforce proper etiquette in the sanctuary. **Parents are invited to attend chapel on the second Wednesday and Thursday of each month.** Jesus Time is the daily devotional time in the classroom. Children may not be exempt from chapel or Jesus Time activities for any reason.

### **MUSIC /CREATIVE MOVEMENT**

In addition to regular classroom activities all children will have the opportunity each week to participate in a large group class focusing on gross motor development through music and movement.

### **PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Parents of 2, 3, and 4-year-old ECP students will be given the opportunity to schedule parent/teacher conferences once or twice a year. The kindergarten teacher will invite parents to schedule two conferences each year—one the first semester and one the second semester. Parents are encouraged at any time to initiate other conferences.

### **TUITION**

Annual tuition set by the ECP Board is broken into 9.5 monthly payments. **August tuition is one-half of the regular monthly fee with nine equal payments for September through May.**

An invoice for tuition will be placed in your child's cubby at the beginning of each month. **Tuition is due in full on the first of each month.** A late fee of \$20.00 will be added if payment is not received by the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month. Non-payment of tuition by the end of the month will result in dismissal from the ECP Program.

Deductions in tuition are not made in holiday months (i.e.: Thanksgiving, Christmas and Spring Break). Parents are responsible for each month's total tuition, regardless of the days of attendance in that month. **There will be no reduction of payments due to illness, holidays, vacations, absences or injury.**

Extended care students will be billed on the monthly invoice. Drop-in children will be billed on an hourly rate on the next months invoice.

A fee schedule has been included in this handbook. More copies are available in the ECP office. Tuition payments should not be combined with other payments such as field trips, book orders, T-shirts, pictures, etc.

### **DROP IN AND MAKE UP DAYS**

Students who miss their regularly scheduled days may not make up those days. Grace ECP does not allow students to "drop in" (attend a class in which they are not enrolled) at any time.

### **ADMISSION**

Grace Lutheran ECP admits children of any race, color, religion and ethnic or national origin and makes available to them all the programs and activities provided by the facility. Students will be placed in class according to their age as of September 1.

### **CHILD ABUSE**

In compliance with TDFPS standards, employees of Grace ECP are required by law to report any and all suspected cases of child abuse to the proper authorities.

### **OPEN DOOR POLICY**

Parents are encouraged to visit the school anytime during operating hours. For security reasons, doors are locked between 3:00 and 5:30 but parents will be provided the key code.

## **CLOTHING AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

Children should wear washable clothing appropriate for indoor and outdoor play. A **COMPLETE CHANGE OF CLOTHES SHOULD BE PROVIDED** and kept in the classroom to be used as needed. Please include socks and underwear and place the clothing in a large zipper bag clearly marked with the child's name. Parents must provide diapers and wipes for one and two year old children not yet trained.

## **TOILET TRAINING**

Please provide diapers and baby wipes for your child. The two-year-old children routinely go to the restroom, consistently encouraging training. The staff will assist the family with the process, please tell us how we can best help.

It is expected that all 3 & 4 year olds are toilet trained. The pre-school classrooms do not have changing facilities. All the child's personal items should be marked with the child's name.

## **GUM, CANDY, TOYS, AND MONEY**

Children are asked not to bring gum, candy, toys, or money to school unless asked to do so for a class "show and tell" or other project. Toys brought to the classroom will be stored until time to go home. Exceptions to this are pillows, stuffed toys, etc. brought for naptime.

## **OUTSIDE PLAY POLICY**

The ECP considers outside time an integral part of the daily schedule for all age groups. Children who are well enough to attend school will be expected to participate in outdoor play. Children will go outside if the temperature is above 40 degrees including the wind chill factor. Please make sure your child has appropriate outerwear (jacket, hat, etc.) for outdoor play.

## **BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS**

Birthdays may be celebrated at school. To provide refreshments, please make arrangements with your child's teacher in advance. Invitations, birthday or other, will **only** be distributed at school if an invitation is provided for every child in the class.

## **ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL**

Parents must accompany all children to their classrooms. Teachers meet in the kitchen for morning devotional and announcements until 8:55 daily. Please do not bring your child into class before 8:55. **Never leave a child in the classroom unattended.** Teachers are in their rooms from 8:55 – 2:05. Any child dropped off before **8:55** or picked up after **2:05** will be charged **\$3.50 an hour**. Please notify us if you will be late picking up your child. A late fee of \$1.00 per minute for pick up after 5:35 will be strictly enforced.

There is a sign in sheet on each teacher's bulletin board. Texas Department of Family and Protective Services requires that each child be signed in and signed out with the time noted. Parents must leave phone numbers where they can be reached and indicate who will pick up the child. Extended care students should sign in on the extended care clipboard as well as the regular classroom teacher's bulletin board and should sign out at the end of the day.

## **DISCIPLINE**

Discipline will be based on an understanding of appropriate child development and of the individual needs of the child. It will be directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior in a loving, Christian manner. Teachers will seek to redirect inappropriate behavior and teach the child to respect him/herself, the rights of others, and the school's authority. The following procedures will be followed if a child's behavior is deemed inappropriate:

- Step 1: The teacher and the child will seek to resolve the matter immediately. Speaking to the child or time out may be used. Time out shall not be longer than one minute times the child's age.
- Step 2: If Step 1 has repeatedly proven ineffective, the child will meet with the program director. Parents will be notified.
- Step 3: If the situation persists, the teacher will contact the parent(s), and a parent-teacher conference will be arranged.
- Step 4: If no changes occur as a result of Step 3, a parent-teacher-director conference will be held.
- Step 5: If all efforts have proven ineffective, the child may be asked to leave the program.

Appeals may be directed to the ECP School Board.

## **HEALTH REQUIREMENTS**

All registration forms must be in the school office by the first day of school. The student's immunization record shall be brought up to date to meet state requirements. This school reports to the State Health Department.

Within **7 days** of starting school, each child must provide in the office:

1. A health form signed by his/her own physician stating that the child has been examined within the past year and is physically capable of participating in school activities.
2. A **current** record of immunizations.

**Any child who does not have all of the proper forms filed in the ECP office will be excluded from school until forms are provided to the director.**

## **MEDICATION**

All medication will be stored in the director's office and administered only by the office staff. Any medication brought to school **must be in its original container and labeled with the child's name**. Medication and special procedures will be administered to a child in the school only after a **Medication Release Form** (available in the office) has been filled out and signed by the parent. **Do not put medication of any kind in a child's backpack, lunch box or cubby.**

## **ACCIDENTS**

In case of minor-accidents, first aid will be rendered. For more serious accidents, the child's parents (or other designated adults) will be called. If necessary and no adult can be reached, the director will assume the authority to treat/hospitalize the child at the parents' expense.

## **ILLNESSES/MEDICAL CONDITIONS**

If your child develops a communicable condition, please notify the school office. In turn, the school will notify the parents of other children with whom your child has been in contact. Following the diagnosis a child can be readmitted according to the guidelines provided by the state licensing board.

A child may not attend school if one or more of the following exists:

1. An illness which prevents the child from comfortably participating in class;
2. An illness that necessitates greater care than the staff can provide without compromising the care of other children;

3. The child has any of the following:
  - a. Symptoms of possible severe illness, including:
    - Fever
    - Runny nose with discoloration
    - Diarrhea
    - Uncontrolled breathing
    - Lethargy
    - Wheezing
    - Rash with fever
    - Mouth sores with drooling
    - Behavioral changes
    - Vomiting
    - Other unusual symptoms or until medical evaluation indicates that the child can be included in the facility's activities
  - b. Communicable conditions such as, but not limited to:
    - Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)
    - Head lice
    - Scabies
    - Impetigo
    - Strep throat
  - c. Chicken pox, for 7 days after the onset of rash or until all sores have scabbed over.

**\*\*\* A child will not be readmitted until they are free of these symptoms for 24 hours. This is for the protection of all children and staff at the center.**

### **EMERGENCY RELOCATION SITE**

In case of an emergency that would necessitate evacuating the premises, all ECP students will be relocated one block north to Midland Christian School's gym.

### **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

In the case of bad weather, ECP classes will be delayed or cancelled in conjunction with decisions made by MISD. The teacher will contact her students if this situation occurs.

In the event MISD **cancels school**, ECP will be closed. In the event MISD **delays school**, ECP will open at the time designated by MISD and classes will begin one-half hour later. Extended care will start one-half hour **before** MISD classes begin. Extended care classes will be open to regularly attending extended care students only.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Preschool and kindergarten students can take field trips. Annual permission slips must be on file in the ECP office prior to participation. Notification of each event will be distributed at least 48 hours prior to the trip. Parents must provide a booster or car seat for children 4 years of age and under and children who are less than 36 inches tall.

## **FOOD**

All children must provide a lunch that includes a drink. All parts of the lunch kit must be labeled with the child's name. Please use a thermos and/or ice pack in lunches to keep them hot and/or cold. Children's lunches will be stored in their cubbies in the classrooms. **No provision for keeping food cold or heating food is available in the ECP kitchen.** Please cut all food into age appropriate bite sized pieces. Please send food that children are able to feed themselves.

## **QUIET/NAP TIME**

Children in the one and two-year-old classes will nap every day. Three and four-year-olds and kindergarteners that stay in care past 2:00 p.m. will have a time for resting and/or napping. The ECP will provide a napping mat for each child. Children should bring a blanket and pillow marked with their name to cover the mat and themselves. Children may bring a stuffed toy or other item from home for naptime.

## **SCHOLARSHIPS**

Limited scholarships are available for 3 and 4 year old pre-school and kindergarten students only. Applications may be obtained in the ECP office. Scholarships are based on financial need and are reviewed and approved by the School Board.

## **CONGREGATIONAL SUPPORT**

The Grace Lutheran congregation views the Early Childhood Program as an integral element of its total ministry. Under the auspices of its elected representatives, the ECP Board, the congregation pledges itself to support this ministry by:

1. Providing and maintaining facilities.
2. Providing the ministry of the Pastor, Director of Christian Education, and church secretary to the children and families of the ECP.
3. Encouraging its members to support the program through prayer, by offering their time and talent, and through monetary means.

## **GRIEVANCE GUIDELINES**

Matthew 18:15 “If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault.  
But do it privately, just between yourselves.”

If anyone has a complaint about one of the teachers, it is properly handled by going to the teacher first. Should this not be successful, the next step is the Director and ultimately the Board.

If anyone has a complaint about the administration, it is properly handled by going to the Director first. Should this not be successful, the next step is to invite an ECP Board member to accompany the complainant for a subsequent meeting with the Director. Further action would involve the entire ECP Board.

For a complete copy of the ECP Grievance Policy, please see the director.

## **PESTICIDE NOTIFICATION**

The Texas Structural Pest Control Board requires the school to notify parents that Grace Lutheran ECP periodically applies pesticides inside the building and on the grounds. A pest control sign will be posted 48 hours prior to each planned treatment including information on the times and types of application. A Consumer Information Sheet will be provided upon request to any individual entering or working in the building. Information concerning these applications may be obtained from the director, Mary Wood.

## **ECP SCHOOL BOARD**

The ECP School Board was created for the support and assistance of all constituents of the Early Childhood Program. The Board has put into place guidelines and procedures to help ensure the smooth operation of all areas of the program. Copies of the guidelines are available for review by any interested individual. The Board welcomes comments and may be contacted through the ECP office at 694-3063, the church office at 697-3221, or in writing at 3000 W. Golf Course Road, Midland, 79701

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Please sign and date this form and return (form only) to the ECP office.

I have received a copy of the Grace Lutheran Early Childhood Program Parent Handbook.

I will make the ECP's staff aware of my child's arrival and departure by recording the time I **sign in** and **sign out**. I will list the person who will pick up my child and leave a phone number where I can be reached on the teacher's sign-in sheet located beside my child's classroom door.

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Date

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Signature of Parent/Guardian

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Child's Name