



# **Tree of Life Learning Center Parent Handbook**

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# 1. Mission Statement

Tree of Life Learning Center is a ministry of Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church. The center's mission is to assist families in nurturing God's children for time and eternity. Tree of Life Learning Center serves families of our church and community by providing quality, Christian education programs in our early childhood and Extended Care programs.

# 2. This We Believe

The following is a summary statement of the teachings, based on the Word of God, of Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Tree of Life Learning Center, and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of which Holy Trinity is a member congregation:

## **God**

We believe that the only true God is the Triune God, revealed in Scripture as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

## **Jesus Christ**

We believe that Jesus Christ is true God and true man in one Person, conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary. He is the world's only Savior from sin, death, and hell.

## **Humanity**

We believe that all humans have inherited a sinful and corrupt nature from Adam and Eve, called "original sin." No person is able, even partially, to earn favor with God or avoid eternal condemnation by means of his or her own efforts.

## **Salvation**

We believe that Jesus lived a holy life for us, died on the cross in our place, and rose again three days later to forgive the sins of all people. We are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ as our only Savior. This "good news" of sins forgiven in Jesus is called the Gospel and is revealed to us in the Bible.

## **Means of Grace**

We believe that God has instituted certain Means of Grace through which He announces and bestows the forgiveness of sins and the blessings of life and salvation. Through the Gospel in His Word and Holy Baptism, the Holy Spirit works faith in the individual sinner to receive these blessings.

## **Baptism**

We believe the Holy Spirit, through water and the Word, applies the Gospel to sinners through Holy Baptism, by creating and strengthening faith, forgiving sins, and giving new life and salvation. We believe that the blessings of Baptism are meant for all people, including infants.

### **Lord's Supper**

We believe that the body and blood of Jesus Christ are truly present in the Lord's Supper and received for the forgiveness of sins and the strengthening of faith.

### **Last Things**

We believe that at the time of death a believer's soul goes to heaven and an unbeliever's soul goes to hell. On the Last Day, Christ will return visibly to the world and judge both the living and the dead.

## **3. Teaching Philosophy**

Each child is a special creation of God, loved and cared for by Him and the parents and family members to whom He has entrusted this miraculous blessing and primary responsibility. Our staff is committed to supporting families in this task by providing exceptional education and care for each child enrolled in our programs.

We recognize the significance of positive experiences early in a child's life that encourage optimum development of God-given potential. Our developmentally appropriate programs are designed to supplement a child's home experience in a caring, nurturing environment under the guidance of a well-trained staff.

Our educational programs are designed to provide developmentally appropriate opportunities and activities to develop the spiritual, social, emotional, intellectual, and physical characteristics of each child and support them as they learn, grow and achieve success in education. The importance of early education experiences cannot be over-emphasized. It is our joyful mission to assist families in the Christian education of children.

## **4. Purpose**

Tree of Life Learning Center exists for the purpose of assisting parents and families in their God-given responsibilities to "Bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4) and for aiding the Christian Church in sharing God's Word, "making disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Matt. 28:19-20). This means each day, children attending our Center will hear and learn the unchanging truths of God's inspired Word, the Bible.

Tree of Life Learning Center offers Early Childhood Classrooms, Extended Care and Summer programs for children of our church and community. It is our mission that all who enter our facilities encounter positive, loving and caring experiences.

## **5. Licensure**

Tree of Life Learning Center will be licensed by the State of Wisconsin to operate from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm, Monday through Friday, twelve months a year. We will be licensed to care for children ages 2 through 12 years old.

Our license and any non-compliance notices will be kept in plain view on the parent information board located as you enter the Learning Center.

## 6. Administrative Structure

Tree of Life Learning Center complies with all laws governing the facility and its operation. The Ministry Council, on behalf of Holy Trinity Lutheran Congregation, oversees the Learning Center and provides support and guidance for the director and the entire staff, children and families. The director provides support and guidance to the staff, children, and families of Tree of Life Learning Center. If the director has a situation which is not outlined in her job description or covered in Tree of Life's policies, she will take that situation to the Ministry Council who will make the necessary decisions.

## 7. Admission and Enrollment

Tree of Life Learning Center follows the teachings of the Bible as confessed by the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS). All programs, activities, and educational philosophies strive to display and communicate the love of God as seen in His only Son, Jesus Christ. No child shall, by reason of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of services, programs, or activities of our center, or be subjected to discrimination by Tree of Life. While the center does not discriminate against anyone because of race, color, national, or ethnic origin, it is both logical and necessary to require all children to participate in Christian devotional activities, Bible stories, prayers and songs as practiced and taught by Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church.

### A. Admission Process

Current children of Tree of Life Learning Center and Holy Trinity Lutheran School will have priority to fill open spaces in the various rooms of our center. New families are enrolled on a first-come, first-served basis. If there is a waiting list, children will be enrolled as an appropriate age opening occurs.

Families will receive a parent handbook and meet with the Director prior to the admission of the child.

A non-refundable registration fee of \$50 (\$75 per family) is charged to secure a place for your child.

Families will apply using registration and enrollment forms provided by the Director.

The Director will approve enrollment for each child.

If possible, parents are strongly encouraged to bring their child for a short visit before the first day. This will help the child ease into the program by giving him/her an opportunity to get acquainted with the center.

## **B. Child Enrollment Forms**

The following records should be on file for each child:

- Child Care Enrollment Form
- Health History and Emergency Care Plan Form
- Health Report - Required once we are licensed - (Except for school-agers, each child 2 years of age and older shall have an initial health examination not more than one year prior to nor later than 3 months after being admitted to the center, and a follow-up health examination at least once every 2 years after admission. Children 5 years of age and older are not required to have a health exam.)
- Child Care Immunization Record (within 30 days of first day)
- Key Fob Form
- Diaper Cream Form (children in diapers)
- Consent Form (all children)
- Contract (all children)

## **C. Consent for Photographs and Sharing Personal Information**

The staff takes pictures of the children during school activities, birthdays, and special events. Occasionally we post these photos on Facebook or use them in church, school, or promotional publications. Parents may give their consent for taking photos using the permission form as part of enrollment.

Class rosters are prepared for each room. The class roster contains information like parent names, addresses, phone numbers, and emails. If you are willing, this information can be shared with other families in your child's class. By signing the consent form, you give consent to sharing this personal information.

## **D. Updating Information**

Parents must notify the center in writing of any changes in their home/cell/work phone numbers or address, as well as those for anyone authorized to pick up their child from the center. Please also keep information in the Brightwheel app current, especially allergy information, phone numbers and authorized people who can pick up your child. For children above the age of 2, the Child Health Report must be updated every 2 years. You will receive a new form prior to the date when the Health Report on file will expire.

## **E. Waiting List**

If there are no openings currently available, your name can be added to the waiting list. There is no charge to be put on the waiting list.

## **F. Confidentiality**

All children's records are kept strictly confidential but are available to parents upon request. Every staff member who is employed at Tree of Life Learning Center is expected to keep all information regarding a child and his/her family confidential. A breach in confidentiality is taken very seriously and may be grounds for dismissal.

This does not apply to:

- The parents or persons authorized in writing by the parent/guardian to receive such information.

- An agency assisting in planning for the child when informed written consent has been given.
- Licensing Agency

## 8. Schedule of Operation

### A. Hours of Operation

Tree of Life Learning Center is open from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm Monday through Friday. Full-time children may not exceed 10 hours of care per day.

Occasionally parents may need to have their child come earlier or depart later than scheduled. Whenever possible, we will do our best to accommodate these requests. We ask that the parents call the center first to clear these requests.

### B. Days of Operation

Tree of Life Learning Center gives praise and thanks to our almighty God for the gifts of family and time to spend with family. Holidays and celebrations throughout the year are established times to share in the joy and love of family. Tree of Life Learning Center is closed in recognition of the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Good Friday & Easter Monday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day (and the week containing the 4th of July)
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day (and the day after)
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day
- Days between Christmas and New Year's
- New Year's Eve Day

If the holiday listed above falls on a Monday through Friday when your child is normally scheduled, tuition will be paid for that day. The three months of summer and the week between Christmas and New Year's are excluded from this.

## 9. Fee and Payment Information

### A. Enrollment Fee

Tree of Life Learning Center has an annual registration fee and a separate summer registration fee.

### B. Tuition Rates

Families may choose the number of days their child will be attending the center and they can choose between half and full day options. There is a minimum requirement of 1 full day, 2 half days or 2 preschool days per week (3 preschool days for 4K).

## Tuition Rate Chart

Number of Days	Weekly Rate for Half Days	Weekly Rate for Full Days	Preschool Weekly Rates (8-11am)
2	\$50	\$110	\$30
3	\$75	\$165	\$45
4	\$100	\$220	\$60
5	\$125	\$275	\$75

### Enrollment Definitions:

- Full Day = 4 to 9 hours
- Half Day = up to 4 hours
- Preschool (ages 2-5) = 8-11am
- Minimum of 1 full day, 2 half days or 2 Preschool days per week.
- Rates based on a 9-hour day or less. Any child staying longer than 9 hours will be billed an additional \$10 per day, per child
- Extended Care Program (Before and After-School for school agers): Families choose set days of the week, with charges being \$5/day for any before school care and then \$5/hour for 3 hours after school (ex. Pick-up before 4 - \$5, before 5:00 - \$10; before 6:00 - \$15).
- Summer Rates- \$6.25/hour, schedules due by noon on the Tuesday of the week prior
- Discount Rates - 20% discount applied to 2<sup>nd</sup> child, and Holy Trinity Church and School Families (\$20/half-day; \$44/full-day). This discount is applicable to half-day, full-day and summer rates only.
- Any ACH or credit card fees associated with payments will be paid by the families

### Billing

All tuition will be billed Friday for the upcoming week. Families with multiple children attending Tree of Life will find all billing is done under the name of the youngest child. A \$10 late fee may be added to your account if payment is not made before midnight Friday. Enrollment may be suspended and late fees assessed on accounts that are more than two weeks past due, if no payment arrangements have been made. If there is a change to the weekly schedule, a \$20 change in schedule fee may be assessed with less than 24 hours notice of the change, and a \$10 change in schedule fee for more than 24 hours notice.

### C. Payment

Payments can be made with cash, check or through the Brightwheel app. If paying by check, please make checks payable to Tree of Life Learning Center. A \$35 fee for NSF



returned checks will be charged. This fee must be a cash payment made along with a cash payment of the original check amount.

#### **D. Extended Care**

Extended care is available at 7:00 am until 6:00 pm. for children attending school at Holy Trinity, LCCA or Meadowview. Students coming from Meadowview can only receive bussing if they live on the same bus route as Holy Trinity. Families who utilize the Oconomowoc Area Transport public school bus system are responsible for making transportation arrangements with Oconomowoc Area Transport. The fee is \$5 for one hour of extended care. The rates for scheduled days off and ½ days are the same as the summer rates. Schedules should be made when enrolling your child. If that schedule needs to change, please contact the director to make these arrangements.

#### **E. Field Trips**

Field trips are handled on an individual basis. Parents are responsible for any field trip fees that may apply. When a parent receives a permission form for their child to participate on a field trip, they will also receive notification of any fees owed pertaining to that field trip. Families are responsible for transportation of their child to and from any field trips.

#### **F. Late Pick-up**

Under the state of Wisconsin, Tree of Life will be licensed to care for children until 6:00 pm. Any child left in the building after 6:00 pm does not qualify for care under our license and therefore the situation is unacceptable. In order to discourage this, a late pick-up fee will be assessed. This additional fee of \$1 per minute, until the child is picked up from the center, will be applied and due with the next week's tuition.

#### **H. Vouchers**

Weekly payments will be required from Labor Day until Memorial Day. Each child is allowed vouchers to be used throughout these nine months. These vouchers can be used for sick days or holidays. Sick days should be called in by 8 am. Vouchers do not need to be used, nor will payments be assessed, during the week surrounding the Christmas and New Year's holidays.

Families are given vouchers based on the following schedule:

- Child attends 5 days per week – 10 vouchers per nine months
- Child attends 4 days per week – 8 vouchers per nine months
- Child attends 3 days per week – 6 vouchers per nine months
- Child attends 2 days per week – 4 vouchers per nine months

## **10. Arrival and Departure**

### **A. Security**

As an added measure of security, automatic locks are installed on the doors to our facility. Key fobs are required to enter the building during our regular business hours. Fobs are available for rent through the Learning Center office. A separate fob is advised for each person who will drop off or pick up a child from Tree of Life Learning Center on

a regular basis. Because the fobs are part of the building's security, **please do not give access to the building to anyone else as you enter or leave the building.**

## **B. Drop-off**

To ensure the safety of each child upon arrival, an adult must accompany the child to the classroom. It is the responsibility of the adult to ensure that the teacher knows that the child has arrived before the adult departs. Children must also be logged in and out each day using the Brightwheel app.

**PLEASE do not leave without saying good-bye to your child, even if he or she is occupied in an activity.** Tell your child you are leaving and when you will return.

Although your child may show strong emotions when you leave, the staff helps your child acclimate to the classroom and engage in activities.

## **C. Attendance**

Daily attendance is tracked by parents logging their child in and out each day using the Brightwheel app and by the teachers in the child's classroom. No child is allowed to be left in our care without first signing them in to document the time of arrival for the child that day. This is our legal record that the child is in our care for the day and an acknowledgement that a parent or guardian has regained responsibility for the child at the scheduled pick-up time at the end of the day.

## **D. Children Not Reported Absent**

If your child will not attend as scheduled, please call the Center and leave a detailed message. We are also required to have a written note, Brightwheel message or email if your child will not attend as scheduled. The Director's office voicemail, Brightwheel messages and email are checked regularly. To keep our records current, please notify the Director's office of any change in your contact information including addresses (residential or employment), telephone numbers, e-mail addresses, emergency contacts, and the names of persons authorized to pick up your child. Please also update this information on the Brightwheel app.

## **E. Pick Up of Children**

When leaving for the day, please encourage your child to clean up toys or put away items he or she is using. If you are delayed in picking up your child, **please send a message through Brightwheel or call the center at 262-567-2737 x712** so we can notify your child and arrange for additional staff coverage.

For safety reasons, a child will only be released to parents with legal custody, legal guardians or persons named in writing on the enrollment forms. A written note or electronic notification is **required** if someone other than those named in writing on the emergency health form will be picking up the child. A note or phone call is **appreciated** if someone other than the routine pick-up person will be picking up the child.

Staff members must verify the identity of the adult before releasing the child from the Center. In custody/child placement cases, a court order stating who is or is not authorized to pick up the child must be submitted to our office before any changes are made to pick-up authorizations. Law enforcement officials will be called immediately

should custody/placement issues arise at the Center. If a parent or other authorized person arrives to pick up a child, and that person appears to be intoxicated or under the influence of drugs, all reasonable steps will be taken to prevent the person from leaving with the child, including offering to call a cab or another contact person. While staff cannot legally withhold a child from the legal guardian, we will not hesitate to call the local authorities if we feel the child is in danger.

## **F. First Day at the Center**

The first day of activities at a new center is an exciting yet anxious time for your child. It is important that you take special steps to prepare your child for this part of his/her life. Talk with your child ahead of time about coming to the center. Let him/her know what is happening... "you are going to play at the center today while I go to work." When you arrive at the center on that first day try to involve your child in a fun activity. The staff will help you with this process. Assure your child that you will return after work to pick him/her up. Once you are ready to leave, be sure to say good-bye, then leave, and don't stop. It is important that you follow through with your departure even though your child may cry. Always feel free to message (through Brightwheel) later to see how your child is doing. Many children adapt quickly to this routine, while others may take several days or even weeks to adjust to daily separation.

# 11. What Should Families Bring for Their Child?

## **A. All Children**

- Backpack
- Forms (see Child Enrollment Forms)
- Complete change of seasonally appropriate and size appropriate clothing (**labeled**)
- Weather appropriate outer-wear (**labeled**)
- Water bottle (**labeled**)
- Sunscreen for summer (or a note stating that your child does not require sunscreen)

## **B. Full Day Students**

- Lunch in an insulated lunch box with a cold pack.
- Blanket for naptime, **travel-size** pillow and case, and a security item (Cot and cover are provided). All nap things should fit in a bag provided by the Center. All bedding is sent home regularly to be laundered (every 5 uses or less).

## **C. Children Who are Not Potty-Trained**

- Disposable Diapers or Pull-ups
- Diaper Wipes
- Diaper ointment (if using)

## **D. Extended Care Students (Grades 5K-6th)**

- Afternoon Snack (if wanted) Individually marked storage boxes are available.

## **E. Clothing**

Dress your child for fun and activity in comfortable clothing. Children will be learning through hands-on activities, playing outside, and using dramatic play areas each day. During the winter months, please dress your child appropriately with a coat, mittens, hat, boots, and snow pants (as necessary). Having a second set of mittens available is a great idea too. Please label everything you bring to the center with your child's name.

Families are asked to provide an extra set (or more) of clothing to keep at the center. Check the supply regularly to be sure the clothes still fit and are appropriate for the current season. Also check that a full set (underwear, socks, pants and shirt) is available here.

## **F. Personal Belongings**

At the classroom's teacher's discretion, personal belongings may be brought from home (i.e. show and tell items). The item must fit into your child's backpack and be labeled with your child's name. Tree of Life Learning Center is not responsible for personal items that are lost or damaged. Please leave all other items at home.

# 12. Education Policies

## **A. Curriculum**

All subjects are taught in the light of God's Word. Activities to encourage development are planned in alignment with the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards. These standards, developed by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, state what skills and abilities are appropriate for teaching to early learners. The following five domains are represented in the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards: Health and Physical Development, Social and Emotional Development, Language Development and Communication, Approaches to Learning, and Cognition and General Knowledge. All of these aspects of development for each child are promoted in addition to spiritual development.

Because children are active learners, each day's activities allow the children to choose and implement their own play. Adults support children's learning by participating in play with the children. The daily schedule, learning centers, outside play, and time spent in God's Word are all developed with the whole child in mind. Some of the learning centers that are present in the classroom include an art area, a block area, a classroom library, a dramatic play area, a science area, a manipulative area and more. Our curriculum includes a variety of large group, small group, and individual activities to meet the needs of each child in our care. Each day also includes time devoted to God's Word, as well as the integration of Christian attitudes and behaviors in all that we do. All activities and experiences throughout the day flow from a love of our Savior and the blessings He has given us.

Teachers develop weekly lesson plans. Lesson plans are posted in each classroom for parents to view. Lesson plans for all age groups are planned based on goals for each individual child in the class, as well as whole-group goals. Activities are planned and materials are provided that promote cultural diversity, meet the varying developmental levels of all children in the classroom, and relate to the current interests of the children.

Weather-permitting, the children have the opportunity to play outside. A variety of teacher-led and free choice activities will be provided for children on the playground. When children are not able to play outdoors due to the weather, they have the opportunity to have large motor time inside the classrooms or in the gym area in the basement.

## **B. Chapel**

Chapel services are held every Wednesday at 8:15 in the church. The children will hear the wonderful message of salvation through Jesus. Families are welcome to attend these chapel services. A mission offering is collected each week, to support local, regional and world missions. Offering envelopes will be sent home each week. Please place your child's offering in the envelope and return it to school. If you prefer, you may send a small ziploc bag or container of coins in your child's backpack, from which they may choose a few coins for offering each week.

## **C. Field Trips**

Age-appropriate field trips and speakers are occasionally scheduled at the center or in the community. A field trip information form/slip must be given to parents/guardians prior to each field trip or at the beginning of the school year. Tree of Life Learning Center will not be responsible for transportation to and from field trips, rather parents/guardians are responsible for the transportation for their child(ren).

## **D. Rest Period/Nap Time**

Quiet Time is from 12:30-2:30 each day. Children not yet in Kindergarten (5K) will be required to rest for thirty minutes. Families are asked to provide a travel-size pillow, blanket, and a security item (blanket or stuffed animal), if desired. Please specify if the security item can remain at the Center or should be sent home each day. Cots and cot covers are provided by the Center. All bedding is sent home regularly to be laundered. Children who do not fall asleep after thirty minutes of rest will have supervised quiet activities for the remainder of the rest period. Children who fall asleep at nap time will be allowed to wake on their own, unless the staff is otherwise instructed (example: wake a child after 30 minutes or 1 hour).

## **E. Classroom Schedules**

The schedule for each classroom is posted in the classroom.

## **F. Ratios**

All staff must know the state required classroom ratios regarding the number of staff needed to the number of children in each classroom and the maximum group size.

During the first and last couple of hours of the day, the enrollment may be low within the center. Groups of children may be combined as State teacher-to-child ratios allow. Teachers will remain with children as they move from one room to another.

# 13. Child Guidance Policies

Effective discipline stems from careful planning and consistency. Caregivers strive to develop a positive relationship with each child and continually redirect unacceptable behavior. Proper Christian discipline at Tree of Life is maintained and exercised in a loving manner and based on Law and Gospel. Therefore, our form of discipline will not be physical or demeaning in any way. Our staff seeks to keep the wonderful example of our loving Savior before the children.

If a child is crying, fussing, or distraught, the caregiver attempts to ensure that the child's physical and emotional needs have been met. Children are comforted with kind words spoken in a soothing and loving tone.

We provide positive Christian guidance, set clear limits and redirect unacceptable behavior. When these techniques are not effective, a conference will be held between the caregiver, parent, and Director to discuss further intervention. The center staff aims to communicate sincerely with parents regarding any behavior problems.

We believe by using the following techniques we will minimize inappropriate behavior while maintaining a positive Christian environment:

- Use transitioning techniques such as sing-alongs, stories, games, music, extra staff, etc. to minimize and ease the waiting time in large groups and lines.
- Redirect negative behavior by changing activities.
- Give specific, alternative choices.
- Model and reinforce appropriate Christian behavior.
- Praise and promote behaviors that enhance positive self-esteem, respect and self-control.
- Provide clear guidelines and promote positive behavior through classroom arrangement and by toys, equipment and materials used.
- Explain consequences of behavior to children.
- Set reasonable expectations for children's age.
- Providing interesting, challenging activities.

If one of these techniques does not work, staff may give the child a time out. Occasionally, a time out can help a child to relax and regain control of his/her actions and feelings. A time out involves separating a child from the group for a period of one to five minutes. Teachers then help them get re-involved in the group's activity. Time outs are used only with children three years and older.

No child will be spanked, pinched, hit, shaken or verbally abused. They will not be subjected to punishment that is frightening or humiliating. No child will be punished for lapses in toilet training nor will staff withhold or force meals, snacks or naps. These techniques are prohibited even if requested by a parent.

# 14. Parent Involvement

Tree of Life Learning Center has an open visitation policy for parents. Parents are welcome to visit at any time. As parents and guardians, it is important to stay current on matters at the Learning Center. Please work closely with the staff in order to make your child's experiences as enjoyable as possible. Here are a few things you can do:

- Check your child's cubby daily.
- Check your child in and out using the Brightwheel app each day.
- Make contact with a staff member at drop-off and pick-up. Share any information that may affect your child's behavior during the day. Staff members will provide an update on your child's day at Tree of Life.
- Call or send a written note, Brightwheel message or email to the Learning Center office if your child will not attend as scheduled.
- Submit schedules and payments in a timely fashion.
- Keep all information in your child's records up to date.

## **A. Communication**

All parents are encouraged to check your child's cubby or folder for current communication. Each child is provided with a space for communication to be sent home such as newsletters, book orders, etc. We rely greatly on the day-to-day communication between the director, the staff, and the parents. If you have questions or would like to share your concerns, please feel free to speak with or schedule an appointment with the director. Your opinions are of great value to us as we continue to grow in the quality of child care that we offer to your children.

Monthly newsletters are sent home and sent through Brightwheel.

Tree of Life Learning Center will be using Brightwheel to communicate with families. This app is the best way to communicate with teachers, staff and the director. Please contact the director if you are unable to download this app to receive communication from our staff.

## **B. Conferences**

Parents can request a private conference with the teacher at any time to discuss their child. Conferences are offered twice a year for all parents: in winter and late spring. Teachers can also request conferences with parents at their discretion. Conferences are an opportunity for you to have the teacher's undivided attention to address any questions or concerns you may have concerning your child's care and education, and a chance to offer ideas and suggestions. It's also an opportunity for the teacher to share their concerns and suggestions.

### **C. Grievance Procedure**

At times, families may disagree with a policy or practice, especially as it pertains to their child. Such concerns should not be allowed to fester, nor should it become the subject of public conversation. God has a better plan. Discuss the problem with the person involved. Approach the discussion with prayerful humility. Know that any problem, when prayerfully presented before our almighty all-knowing God, can certainly be resolved.

Parents/guardians should schedule a meeting in advance with the staff member or director to resolve any concerns. In all cases, as Christians, out of love for our God and for one another, we will follow the Scriptural principle laid out in Matthew 18:15-18. Any question, concern or complaint should:

- Be directed first privately to the person (staff member, family member, teacher, etc.) involved.
- If no consensus of understanding is reached after such a discussion, only then can the matter be taken to the director. The director will meet with those involved to discuss and resolve the matter.
- Still, if no satisfactory resolution is obtained, the matter will be brought before the Church Ministry Council at a regularly scheduled meeting. The Council, director, and persons involved shall discuss the matter and attempt to arrive at a God-pleasing solution.

## **15. Termination of Enrollment**

Tree of Life Learning Center has a desire to unify parents, staff, and children as a family under Christ. Our goal is to consistently provide complete care to each child. Working together in the guidance of Christ's love is a must.

A variety of steps will be taken to retain all parents and children within our child care family. However, Tree of Life Learning Center reserves all rights to terminate any enrollment based on the following reasons:

- If families fail to observe parent policies and procedures as outlined in this handbook or as presented by the director
- If our center cannot accommodate the high needs of a special needs child
- If a parent or child physically or verbally abuses another child, parent or staff member
- If a child shows consistent defiant behavior
- If families regularly abuses scheduled pick up times
- If a parent fails to submit forms required by the child care and the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services Licensing Regulations
- If a parent defies, mocks or consistently discourages the Word of God and His truths in daily activities or any other form



## **Discharge Policy**

The staff of Tree of Life Learning Center works with families to provide the best possible care for their children. Discharge of an enrolled child will occur under the following conditions:

- **Mutual Decision between Parent and Center:** A mutual decision may be reached between the parent and the center whereby both parties agree that placement of the child is inappropriate, and the child would better profit from another placement. Written notice of two weeks must be given or parents will be responsible for payment of fees for those two weeks. If the parent has paid fees in excess of those two weeks, a refund will be given.
- **Parent Initiated-Voluntary Discharge:** Circumstances may arise when parents voluntarily choose to withdraw their child from the center. A two week written notice must be given to the director stating the child's last date of attendance at the center. Parents are responsible for payment of fees for those two weeks. If the parent has paid fees in the excess of those two weeks, a refund will be given.
- **Center Initiated-Involuntary Discharge:** Under the guidance of Holy Trinity's Ministry Council, the director may initiate discharge or immediately discharge a child for the following reasons: 1) Failure to pay fees. If payment of fees is delinquent for two weeks or more, a child may be discharged. 2) Failure to observe or cooperate with the policies of the center. The policies of Tree of Life Learning Center have been established to provide quality care for the children. Any parent or child who fails to follow the policies may put the children in jeopardy. Center policies will be kept at the parent information area, where parents have access to review. 3) Inappropriate verbal/physical behavior toward staff or children at the center. Immediate discharge may be granted by the director for inappropriate physical or verbal behavior or consistent defiant behavior.

## **Right to Appeal**

Any family who feels they have been unfairly discharged may submit a written appeal to the director or the Ministry Council. The appeal should state the reason for the dismissal, what actions were done on the part of the parents to resolve the problem, and why they feel the discharge was unfair. The child who was discharged will not be readmitted during the appeal process.

The director will respond to the appeal in writing within seven working days. The appeal will be discussed with members of the Ministry Council, and parents will be notified of the Ministry Council's decision regarding the appeal.

# 16. Emergency Policies

## A. Emergency Closing Procedures

Families will be notified through Brightwheel if Tree of Life Learning Center is forced to close for any emergency reasons (e.g. power failures, evacuations, lack of heat, air-conditioning, water, electricity, telephone, plumbing problems, or severe weather).. If the event occurs during regular business hours, children will remain at the Center until a family member or authorized person arrives or transportation arrangements can be made. In the event of evacuation, the children will be taken to a safe place and families will be advised of this location.

Please note: Tree of Life Learning Center will close when Holy Trinity Lutheran School and the Oconomowoc Area School District close due to inclement weather.

## B. Emergency Training and Equipment

Staff members at TLLC are trained in emergency evacuation procedures and in the use of fire extinguishers. The emergency evacuation procedure is practiced on a regular basis. AED, fire extinguishers, smoke alarms and smoke detectors are checked annually.

First-Aid kits are kept in all classrooms and are taken along when groups leave the classroom. Staff members are trained in CPR/AED and basic first aid. Training is reviewed and renewed as required.

## C. Emergency and Evacuation Procedures

**FIRE:** Fire evacuation diagrams are posted in each classroom. In the event that evacuation due to fire is necessary, staff members with emergency contact information and attendance sheets will lead children from the building, account for children at a designated meeting spot and take them to a safe place until arrangements are made to contact families and send children home.

**TORNADO:** In the event of a tornado when there is NO time to evacuate the building, children will be gathered in designated areas according to the evacuation diagrams in each classroom. Children will be seated and positioned with their heads down and their arms covering their heads.

Tornado kits are prepared and stored in gathering areas for use in severe weather, which may confine children to our facility for a period of time.

**LOST CHILD:** All staff members are responsible for knowing which children are in their care and where they are at all times. However, in the unlikely event that a child becomes lost, the following will be done:

- All available staff will search the premises
- If the child is not found within fifteen (15) minutes, the Okauchee/Town of Oconomowoc law enforcement will be notified

- Families will be contacted immediately after law enforcement personnel have been contacted

## 17. Health and Safety Policies

### A. Health Guidelines

Illness of children in childcare can be a challenge for staff and families. It is inconvenient for both the parents who may have to leave work or school and for staff trying to care for a child who is ill. Parents need to have alternate plans for an ill child.

In order to facilitate a healthy environment, children who have the following symptoms will be excluded from the child care setting until a physician has seen the ill child and certified that the symptoms are not associated with an infectious disease agent or the child is no longer a threat to the health of other children at the center, or 24 hours have passed with no sign of symptoms:

- Temperature of 100 degrees or higher
- Recurring diarrhea
- Vomiting within the last 24 hours
- Difficult or rapid breathing or severe coughing
- Severe nasal and/or chest congestion
- Contagious stage of any communicable disease
- Behavior indicating pain
- Head lice, nits or scabies
- Any unexplained rash other than diaper rash
- Discharge of green or yellow mucus from the nose
- Eye redness and drainage
- Inability to participate in the program (If your child is well enough to be at the center he/she is well enough to participate in all aspects of the program, including going outside).

If an antibiotic is prescribed the child may not return to the center until they are on the prescribed antibiotic for 24 hours. When determining the 24 hour period for being fever-free the child needs to be fever-free for 24 hours without the aid of fever-reducers (Tylenol, ibuprofen).

Families must notify the center within 24 hours if their child has been diagnosed with a communicable disease. Examples are, but not limited to: strep throat, roseola, chickenpox, impetigo, scabies, ringworm, lice, etc. When a child is suspected of having or is diagnosed with RSV, rotavirus, chickenpox, German measles, infectious hepatitis, measles, mumps, scarlet fever, whooping cough, diphtheria, meningitis, or other

reportable communicable disease under ch. DHS145, the director will notify the local public health office. If there are exposed children, they will be watched for symptoms. Families will be notified of the exposure through Brightwheel. The ill child's name will be kept confidential.

COVID-19 - Please refer to Wisconsin Department of Health Services guidelines for exclusion and returning to school after COVID-19 found at <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p02767.pdf>.

In the event that your child is not well enough to participate in all activities at the center such as outdoor play, we ask that you keep him/her at home. State guidelines require outdoor play whenever possible. We are not staffed or licensed to provide care for sick children.

If your child becomes ill while at the center, he/she will be isolated from the other children in the classroom under the supervision of a staff member or the director until he/she is picked up. We are not licensed for sick child care, and, therefore, an ill child must be picked up within one hour of the first contact of a parent or emergency contact by the center. If the child is not picked up within this hour, late fees apply.

## **B. Medication Policy**

Prescription and non-prescription medication is administered only after a "Medication Authorization" form has been completed, dated and signed by the child's parent/guardian. These forms are available in each classroom. Prescription medication must be in its original labeled container. The child's name, physician's name, name of medication, and the dosage must be on the label.

Staff may give non-prescription medication, such as Tylenol, cough medicine, or cold medicine to a child or apply parent-provided and labeled sunscreen or insect repellent to a child only under the following conditions:

- A written authorization dated and signed by the parent is on file
- The medication is in the original container and labeled with the child's name and the label includes the dosage and directions for administration.
- An age range is specified on the medication. If the child is under the age specified on the label, the parent is required to contact the child's physician.

Non-prescription medication for chronic issues, such as Tylenol for teething, requires a beginning and an end date.

Medication is stored so that it is not accessible to the children, and should never be left in a child's cubby or backpack.

Medication requiring refrigeration is kept in the refrigerator in a separate, covered container clearly labeled "Medications."

### **C. Medical and Incident Logs**

Each classroom has a medical log book. The log is used to record the administration of medicine. Staff members make entries in the Medical Log at the time medication is given. All entries are written in ink.

Instructions are posted on the inside cover of the Medical Log. Medicine administration logs include:

- Child's first and last name
- Name of medication
- Dosage
- Time
- Date
- Name of person administering medication

Each classroom also has a separate incident log. This log is used to record:

- Any incident or injury received during child care hours
- Observation of injury child received outside the center
- Any other unusual occurrence regarding the child

Logs for accidents and injuries obtained at the center or outside of the center include the following:

- Child's first and last name
- Date
- Time
- Name of person documenting injury
- Description of injury
- Treatment administered

### **D. Child Abuse/Neglect Reporting**

Our staff is trained to recognize conditions that indicate the incidence of abuse or neglect. In the event a condition is noted which causes suspicion of possible abuse or neglect, the observation will be recorded in the incident log. We are required to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect including visible observations and verbal disclosures to the Department of Human Services and/or local law enforcement.

An employee or volunteer at a child care center who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected as defined in ss.48.02 (1), and 48.981 (1) Stat., shall immediately contact the department of social services or human services or a local law enforcement agency, as required by s.48.981, Stats.

Every employee or volunteer who comes into contact with children at the child care center has received training every two years in the following: Child abuse and neglect law, how to identify children who have been abused or neglected, and the procedure for ensuring that known or suspected cases of child abuse or neglect are immediately reported to the proper authorities.

### **E. Allergy Policy**

To ensure your child's safety and security, please discuss any allergies or health concerns with the staff prior to enrollment. Allergy listings are posted in all classrooms. All meals, snacks, beverages and/or medication, must be labeled with your child's name. Medication may be given to your child provided the signed consent forms are on file. Please contact the director or a staff member with any questions or concerns.

### **F. Special Treats**

At times, families may bring in "treats" for the class. Families must provide food with an ingredients label or notify staff of all ingredients in the food. Family supplied treats may not be a substitution for the center provided snacks. However, they may be offered in addition to what is on the menu.

### **G. Injury Policies**

All children will have a consent form signed by a parent or guardian on file giving Tree of Life Learning Center staff permission to contact a child's physician or emergency personnel for medical care in cases of injury or emergency.

In the event of minor injuries, the following will be done:

- The injury will be washed with soap and water and covered with a Band-Aid or gauze and tape.
- Other minor injuries will be treated as appropriate and according to basic first aid practices
- Any incident to the head, even minor, requires a phone call or Brightwheel message to the parent/guardian.
- The staff person witnessing or aware of the injury will complete an injury report form to be signed by a parent or guardian and returned to the office.
- Accident/Injury incidents will be written in the room's incident log and injury book and signed by the caregiver.

In the event of major injuries requiring emergency care, the following will be done:

- Contact 911 and comfort the injured child
- Apply emergency first aid if there is indication of a serious injury
- The child's parent or guardian will receive notification of transportation to a local hospital and an explanation of the injury

- Notify all staff members and add additional staff coverage, if necessary
- A staff member with the child's file, which includes emergency medical authorization form, will accompany the child and emergency personnel to the hospital.
- The staff member who witnessed or was first aware of the injury will complete an incident report to be signed by a parent or guardian and returned to the office.
- The center is also required to report any incident requiring medical treatment to the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families.

An injury that occurs to a child off site of the center will be handled with the first aid kit that is brought along on any trip away from the center. The child's parents will be immediately notified.

## **H. Health Care Philosophy**

Tree of Life understands that families have the primary responsibility for the health and well-being of a child. To that end, TLLC maintains an ongoing interest in the health and well-being of all children enrolled in our programs to ensure the health of all is served.

## **I. Immunization, Physical Exams, and Health History**

A record of immunizations for each child is required by the state. This must be on file within 30 school days of enrollment. The immunization history must include the dates on which each of the following vaccines was received: DPT/DTaP, Polio, Hib, PCV, Hepatitis B, MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella), Varicella (chickenpox).

Immunization requirements may be waived upon the signature of the parent stating that the child may not be immunized for personal or religious reasons or upon receipt of a signed physician's statement explaining that the child may not be immunized for health reasons.

When the child receives an additional immunization, please submit an updated immunization report to the center Director.

### **Immunization Non-Compliance**

As required by Wisconsin law and administrative rule, the District Attorney will be notified that a child has failed to comply with immunizations requirements. Staff will notify families of the need for compliance and if families still do not reply, the District Attorney will be notified or the child will be discharged. Non-compliance will be defined as:

- Children who do not submit an immunization record within 30 school days of enrollment.
- Children's whole record at 30 days after admission indicates they do not have at least the first dose of each required vaccine.
- Children who fall behind the schedule of required vaccines.

## **J. Handwashing and Cleanliness**

Each child will wash or have their hands washed with soap and water upon entering a classroom, prior to eating, after toileting, after diapering and after wiping bodily excretions (runny nose, etc.). Hands and faces will be washed after meals.

Staff will wash their hands with soap and water before and after the following:

- Upon entering a classroom
- Handling or preparing food
- Diapering
- Assisting children with toileting
- Using the bathroom

## **K. Sanitation of Toys and Equipment**

Eating surfaces are washed and sanitized before and after each use. Toys and equipment are washed and sanitized on a weekly basis with disinfectant approved by the Department of Health.

## **L. Universal Precautions**

Any person exposed to blood or blood containing bodily fluids and tissue discharge will immediately wash their hands with soap and water. Disposable gloves are worn if there is contact with blood containing body fluids or tissues. Hands are washed after gloves are removed. Gloves are discarded in a separate plastic bag. Staff cleans all spills of vomit, urine, feces, blood and other bodily fluids using gloves. All staff members receive training in these procedures.

## **M. Diapering and Toilet Training**

All diapers must be disposable and supplied by parents. Diapering is done in designated diapering areas only. Teachers' and children's hands are washed before and after each diapering. Diapers are checked and changed at regular intervals or immediately upon discovering the diaper has been soiled. Diapers are changed with the child lying down, unless the child is toilet training. The diaper changing area is cleaned and disinfected before and after each use. Soiled diapers are stored in covered garbage containers that are emptied and disposed of at least daily. Wet and soiled clothing and bedding is changed immediately and sent home with the child.

Toilet training is done in conjunction with the child's parent's wishes so that a consistent routine is followed, except that no routine attempts may be made to toilet train a child under 24 months of age.

## **N. Building Temperature**

A comfortable temperature of no less than 67 degrees and no more than 80 degrees is maintained in the Learning Center during hours of operation.



## **O. Emergency Contact Person**

All families are required to provide a prioritized list of people available to serve as emergency contacts in the event the parent can't be reached.

## **P. Loss of Building Services**

Loss of building services (including, but not limited to: insufficient heat, insufficient air conditioning, loss of water, loss of electricity, or plumbing problems) will be dealt with on an individual basis. Whenever possible the problem will be taken care of in a timely manner as not to interrupt the daily routine for the children. If the loss of service affects the daily routine for the children and cannot be remedied in a timely manner we may close the center for the day and resume as soon as we have the service operating as needed.

## **Q. Firearms**

According to Wisconsin Acts 35, all firearms must be kept inaccessible to children. In group licensed child care centers this means that firearms, ammunition and other potentially dangerous items may not be kept on the premises.

## **Summary**

In closing, we want you to know how very pleased and excited we are to have you and your family involved with our center. We hope that all the information presented in this manual has not been too overwhelming. Keep in mind that you are never alone, we are here to help and assist you in any way possible, and we know that our Lord God will never leave us or forsake us.

Rest assured that we will do all that we can for you and your family: we hope to be able to fill a definite need in your lives. Know also, that while we do all we can to meet the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual needs of your child, our main concern is always for you and your family's eternal welfare. May God bless the time we are given together!

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