

St. John's Lutheran Preschool



Frequently Asked Questions

St. John's Lutheran Church and School
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(262) 363 – 4999
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Thank you for considering St. John's Lutheran Preschool for your child. It is truly a blessing to have the opportunity to share the Good News of Jesus with you and your family. St. John's Lutheran Preschool is a loving, Christ-centered, play-oriented learning environment. In the following document, you will find information about our preschool.

If, after reading this document, you find that you would like more information about our school or would like to schedule a tour, please call the school office at (262) 363 – 4999. We can arrange a meeting with our preschool director, Miss Catherine St. John, to tour our facilities and answer your more detailed questions.

God's blessings to you as you plan the beginning of your child's education,

Miss Catherine St. John
Preschool Director
St. John's Lutheran School
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Mr. James Schneck
Principal
St. John's Lutheran School
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1. Preschool Sessions

- a. St. John's Lutheran Preschool operates September through the end of May. Classes for three-year old children are held on Tuesday and Thursday with a choice of either AM or PM sessions. Classes for four year olds are held on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday with the choice of either AM or PM sessions. All morning sessions are from 8:30 to 11:15. Afternoon sessions are from 12:30 to 3:15.

2. Tuition and Fees

- a. A \$50.00 fee is due upon registration to hold a place for your child in the program. A classroom supply fee of \$35.00 is due by Orientation Night. This fee covers the cost of school supplies for the school year.
- b. Preschool fees are \$1050.00 per year for three year olds and \$1310.00 per year for four year olds. These fees are broken down into four payments. All school fees are expected on or before the 1st day of each of the four quarters.
- c. The St. John's Christian Education Board does not want school fees to interfere with anyone's intent of obtaining Christian education for their child. Scholarships and tuition assistance programs are available. If anyone needs special arrangements or consideration, please do not hesitate to contact the principal or a board member.

3. Registration

- a. Registrations will be accepted in the following order: Families who are members of St. John's Lutheran congregation and other Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) congregations will have the first opportunity to register. Families who currently have their children in our preschool program and are not members of St. John's or other WELS congregations will have opportunity to register next, and then registration will be open to the community at large.

- b. Registration for the 2015-2016 school year begins February 2nd for members, February 9th for currently enrolled families, and February 17th for the community.

4. The Curriculum

- a. The preschool curriculum that St. John's Preschool uses is the HighScope Curriculum. HighScope advocates that children learn best through hands-on experiences and by doing – or active learning. Specifically the HighScope Curriculum focuses on “adult-child interaction, a carefully designed learning environment, and a plan-do-review process that strengthens initiative and self-reliance in children and young people. Teachers and students are active partners in shaping the educational experience” (taken from <http://highscope.org/Content.asp?ContentId=1>).

5. Kindergarten Readiness

- a. Our preschool teacher works closely with the Kindergarten teacher here at St. John's in order ensure that the preschoolers are ready for kindergarten. Our preschool program's expectations are also periodically compared and evaluated to other school's kindergarten readiness tests, enabling us to meet or exceed requirements.
- b. When planning and preparing the preschool curriculum, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)'s standards was consulted, as well as various other states' Common Core Standards, the National Council of the Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), and the Wisconsin Early Learning Standards. See links below.

<http://www.naeyc.org/files/academy/file/OverviewStandards.pdf>

<http://www.nctm.org>

http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/documents/WMELSUPDATEELfinal_000.pdf

6. How Children Learn at St. John's Preschool

- a. In preschool, children will play. However, they are not just playing, they are learning and exploring. Children learn through play; expressing thoughts, practicing 'adult vocabulary,' re-enacting experiences, and exploring the adult world in which they live. Through play, children's imagination, creativity, love of learning, and communication skills are strengthened. Children work together in their play - collaboratively solving problems, and referring to one another for solutions and ideas. Through communication with others, children develop self-esteem, self-regulation, empathy, and compassion.
- b. Generally, the word 'academics' has come to mean direct, formal instruction. However, if the word 'academics' is taken to mean something that increases learning and thinking, play is definitely academic. Play fosters an environment where children can express and share their ideas and knowledge.

7. Learning Colors/Shapes/Numbers/Letters at St. John's Preschool

- a. In a play-based curriculum, each day provides opportunities to learn about reading, writing, and math through real, meaningful situations.
 - i. Color, shape, and size are discussed as children use hands-on experiences and explore objects. As an example, when children string beads to match the pattern or count the number of children at school, many opportunities for learning arise – children can count the beads, discuss the shape and color of the beads, compare sizes of necklaces, collaboratively come up with a solution for how to tie the necklaces together, etc. Through these meaningful and hands-on experiences, children begin to understand number, quantity, size, and other mathematical concepts.
 - ii. Through play, children explore the meaning of reading and writing as they create signs for animal cages, labels for medicine bottles, notes from doctors, tickets from police, and invitations for parties. Letters and words have meaning when children explore them in a real-world context, rather than on a sheet of paper.

8. Writing Skills

- a. Before writing can be mastered, children need to have fine-motor skills. To develop these fine motor skills, children will use various objects (such as scissors, hole punches, glue bottles, eye droppers, tweezers, etc.) that require grasping, holding, pinching, and squeezing. Fine-motor skills also develop through the use of puzzles and other manipulatives (stringing beads, playing Legos, Unifex cubes, Geoboards, etc.)
- b. Writing needs to have meaning. Writing letters for practice conveys little or no meaning for preschoolers. However, children see the meaning of writing as they see a teacher write the Daily Message, find their name on their hooks or cubbies, connect other children's names with faces, use written words in play, and sign their names on their art creations.
- c. Throughout the course of the school year, children will follow this course of writing instruction. First, children will be introduced to writing and the importance of writing – exploring and creating – through play, through the Daily Message, and through the signs and symbols within the classroom. Then, children will practice writing as they write their names to sign in to the classroom (Children will be provided with a sample of their name and space for them to write. At this stage, children may create letters or letter like symbols.) After the children have mastered this, they will sign in without the sample of their name. Finally, children will practice writing their last name, as well as identifying other classmates' names.

9. Introduction to Reading

- a. Children read every day in preschool, though this reading may occur differently than adults expect. Children must read the symbols to determine where to hang their coat and backpack and where to place their shoes. During the Daily Message, children decode symbols and decipher the meaning of the words. Children also 'read' one another's symbols to determine attendance.
- b. Children read and listen to stories every day. After repeated exposure to stories, children begin to realize and recognize that reading goes from left to right, which way pages turn, that words are divided by spaces, specific

words sound different than other words. These are huge components of early reading. Through reading, children build and strengthen their vocabulary and imagination. Predicting and anticipating story events are also key reading strategies.

- i. Songs and rhyming words also develop reading skills as these draw children's attention to the specific sounds of letters. The children's symbols (the pictures by their hooks and cubbies) help draw attention to the first sound of the names. Daily exposure to these symbols leads to discussions on letter sounds. For example, when a child wants to switch symbols, we discuss why Bob is the basket (drawing attention to the beginning sound) and why Bob's symbol cannot be Ironman – even if that would be 'so cool,' and discuss other symbol possibilities for Bob.

10. Demonstrating Evidence of Learning/Assessments

- a. Each child has a portfolio, which is a collection of their work. Throughout the year, the teacher will collect samples of the children's work and place the work in the portfolio. Items that may be included in the portfolio include activities done in Small Group, photographs, and samples of children's writing (specifically taken from their play experiences and from the children's Sign-In sheets.)
- b. Children's growth and learning will also be documented through written records and observations, called Child Observation Records (COR). These records will be compared with HighScope's standards, called Key Developmental Indicators, KDI's. Through repeated observations and careful documentation, adults can accurately assess where a child is at currently, according to HighScope KDI's. These written records will also help reflect on what a child has learned and how to promote learning for the future.
- c. These items will be specifically shared with you during Parent-Teacher Conferences. At the end of the second quarter (towards the end of January), these COR assessments will be sent home. However, if you have questions, comments, concerns about your child's learning, please ask. The

teacher would be more than happy to show your child's portfolio and observation records to you. Also, you are welcome to visit our classroom to observe how it runs and operates. This visit can be on a day when your child attends preschool or a different day. Please speak with your child's teacher to set up a time to visit.