

Parent Handbook 2025-2026

Grace Lutheran Church and School

Early Childhood Program



404 E. Glenlord Road, St. Joseph, MI 49085

Phone: 269.429.4951 Fax: 269.429.4797

e-mail: school@gracestjoseph.org or muellerh@gracestjoseph.org

Web site: <https://www.gracestjoseph.org/early-childhood>

Connecting people to God's Grace

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Welcome!

We're so happy you're here! We know you have many choices when it comes to educating your child and we are grateful you have selected our early childhood program to set the foundation of your child's education. We are excited to work with you as partners this school year and beyond.

About Us

Children are a gift from God to parents. It is first, the primary duty of the parents, to provide loving care for their children. This would include care in the physical, social, emotional, mental, and spiritual sense. To aid in this process, Grace Lutheran Church and School has established an Early Childhood Education Program (preschool). The preschool offers a program of Christian love and support to children and parents in fulfilling their duty while enriching the whole child.

As part of Grace Lutheran School, children will be in a Christian environment which provides opportunities to explore, participate, and experience success. Activities will be developmentally appropriate and structured so the children have ample opportunity to interact socially in groups and through individual play.

Mission Statement

Grace Lutheran Preschool exists to guide and help parents with their young child's complete well-being in order to connect people to God's grace.

Vision Statement

Grace Lutheran Preschool will provide a quality learning experience in a Christian environment in order to provide opportunities to explore, participate, and experience success.

Affiliation

Grace Lutheran Preschool is affiliated with Grace Lutheran Church and School. We are also a member of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

Staff of the Program

Mrs. Hannah Mueller, Director & Teacher
920-242-0407
Email: muellerh@gracestjoseph.org

Mrs. Nancy Daylo, Aide
Email: daylon@gracestjoseph.org

Rev. Joshua Bishop, Pastor
Phone: 765-431-1292
Email: bishopj@gracestjoseph.org

Rev. Paul Jenkins, Pastor
Phone: 309-433-5807
Email: jenkinsp@gracestjoseph.org

Church Phone Number: 269-429-4941

Mr. Chris Avila, Principal
Phone: 608-769-1979
Email: avilac@gracestjoseph.org

Mrs. Sandy Sempert, School Secretary
Office Phone: 269-429-4951
Email: school@gracestjoseph.org

Questions and concerns about Preschool may be referred to Mrs. Hannah Mueller at 920-242-0407 (home) or the ***school office at 269-429-4951***, Email: muellerh@gracestjoseph.org

Licensing

Grace Lutheran Preschool is licensed through the state of Michigan's Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) for Child Care Centers to serve a max capacity of 50 children.

Per licensing requirements, a licensing binder containing information on the status of our license, Corrective Action Plans, and any pertinent information is available for parents to look through at any time. The licensing binder is located on the counter in the school office or found online.

Philosophy of Education

We believe that it is our duty to provide a wholesome environment to promote optimal physical, cognitive, spiritual, and social development in a Christ-centered atmosphere.

Philosophy of Education: Areas of Development

Spiritual Development We will provide a Christian learning environment through group concern and caring, Bible stories, simple prayers, and through experiencing God's love in our work and play area.

Social Development We will provide an environment in which children develop healthy attitudes toward themselves. It is important that they learn to understand, respect, and cooperate with others. Our program provides important opportunities for children to make new friends, work with one another, and learn to appreciate

and respect the work and play area of others.

Emotional Development: We will provide positive guidance to enhance each child's understanding of self-worth. Through problem solving, the children will learn to be responsible and work both in groups and independent of others.

Physical Development We will provide opportunities for each child to develop large motor coordination through activities in the gym and outside play equipment. The children will also be encouraged to develop their fine motor skills through various activities like sorting, doing puzzles, rubbings, printing letters, and art.

Cognitive Development We will provide an environment in which each child will experience a hands-on approach and play-based curriculum that provides the most conducive environment for learning. Through play we are able to enhance and teach pre-reading skills and concepts, foundations for math and science, writing skills, creative art, dramatic play, and social and emotional activities. All these factors will be essential in each child's future educational success.

Program Information

Programs Offered

Morning 3K-4K Program: Children will have experiences in sharing, language development, creative expression, movement, music, and God's Word. Activities used will be at the developmental stage of each child to build on their social, emotional, and intellectual areas of growth, as well as opportunities for the development of large and fine motor skills. After completing the session, children in the 4K group, upon recommendation, based on readiness, could go directly into Kindergarten.

Requirements

- Three years old by September 1st of the current school year. These children will be considered 3K students.
- Four years old by September 1st of the current school year. These children will be considered 4K students.
- Fully toilet trained without the use of a pull-up.
- A full physical examination from a licensed physician prior to the first day of school.
- An updated immunization record.
- All documents required by Michigan LARA and Grace Lutheran School.

Young Five Program: Provides a year of more structured schooling at an elevated Preschool level, but less demanding than Kindergarten. The program is also for the child who is of Kindergarten age, but needs a growth year. Children in this group will also be introduced to more academic learning at a developmentally appropriate level based on the individual needs of the child.

Requirements

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- Four and a half by September 1st of the current school year.
 - Fully toilet trained without the use of a pull-up.
 - A full physical examination from a licensed physician prior to the first day of school.
 - An updated immunization record.
 - All documents required by Michigan LARA and Grace Lutheran School.

Both programs are designed to prepare students for Kindergarten when they are eligible. Through active learning, students will interact in a classroom setting to prepare themselves for Kindergarten. Grace's Early Childhood Program teaches language, literacy, and communication; social and emotional development; physical development, health, and well-being; and arts and sciences. God's Word is also taught daily and is integrated in everything we do!

Curriculum Policy

At Grace Lutheran Preschool, we believe that it is our duty to provide a wholesome environment to promote optimal physical, cognitive, spiritual, and social development in a Christ-centered atmosphere. Young children's development and learning is highly dependent on their relationships and environments. Staff members of Grace Lutheran Preschool are required to provide and implement meaningful developmentally appropriate experiences for the young children in our care. Curriculums and strategies are to be research-based and align with Michigan's Quality Program Standards for Preschool and Prekindergarten Programs from the Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Prekindergarten (ECSQ-PK).

Curriculums Used

High/Scope Preschool Curriculum: "The High/Scope Preschool Curriculum is a comprehensive, research-based curriculum carefully designed to provide a rich academic foundation and foster child creativity, confidence, and independence." (highscope.org) Through active learning children will receive an encompassing education through eight content areas of learning that include Approaches to Learning, Social and Emotional Development, Physical Development and Health, Language, Literacy and Communication, Mathematics, Creative Arts, Science and Technology, and Social Studies.

UFLI and Heggerty Phonemic Awareness: A combination of two explicit and systematic phonics programs designed to support developing readers. They are both research and evidence-based. Through the science of reading, children learn upper and lower case letter identification and sounds in addition to early literacy skills.

Christ Light Curriculum: Is designed to teach our students a weekly Bible lesson in a developmentally appropriate way. The Bible stories themselves and the supplemental materials are developed to allow students to easily apply the lesson to their everyday lives.

Class Schedules

3K-4K

8:15-8:45am	Story Time/Phonics (Fridays: Chapel)
8:45-8:55am	Planning
8:55-9:30am	Work Time (Snack)
9:30-9:40am	Clean Up
9:40-9:50am	Recall
9:50-10:05am	Group Time (KDI)
10:05-10:20am	Music/Movement/Bathrooms
10:20-10:35am	Bible Story
10:35-11:05am	Outdoor/Gym Time
11:05-11:15am	Pack Up & Head Home

Young 5s

12:15-12:45pm	Story Time/Phonics
12:45-12:55pm	Planning
12:55-1:30pm	Work Time (Snack)
1:30-1:40pm	Clean Up
1:40-1:50pm	Recall
1:50-2:05pm	Group Time (KDI)
2:05-2:20pm	Music/Movement*/Bathrooms
*2:00-2:25pm (Tuesdays and Thursdays): P.E. with Mrs. Avila	
2:20-2:35pm	Bible Story
2:35-3:05pm	Outdoor/Gym Time
3:05-3:10pm	Pack Up & Head Home

Preschool is in session from August through May, from 8:15am-11:15am and 12:15pm-3:15pm Monday-Friday and follows the school calendar of Grace Lutheran School. **Please note:** Young Fives will ***not*** meet when the elementary school has a half day of school. ****Our schedule may be subject to change at any time.***

Tuition and Fees

The Preschool program will operate as an education agency of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church. It will be financed by tuition receipts. The 2025-2026 school term rates are:

3K-4K Program

2 days a week at \$1,900 year
3 days a week at \$2,400 year
4 days a week at \$2,900 year
5 days a week at \$3,300 year

Young Fives Program

5 days a week at \$3,300 year

A \$100.00 **non-refundable** registration fee is required at the time of registration to hold a place for the child. This will be refunded only if the class is not available due

to the number of children enrolled. A *Tuition Agreement* will be provided and must be signed by the parent.

To complete your enrollment in Procare an email will be sent to you giving you all the instructions to complete your account.

We chose Procare for tuition invoicing and payment service. We chose Procare for their features, options, and overall convenience for families. ****Please note the monthly billing cycle runs from August 15-July 15.** Additional payments can be made at any time.**

Payment Processing Methods

You will be able to pay by check, credit card, or by debiting your checking or savings account.

You will be able to submit payment in person to the school office.

You will be able to set-up auto-bill options for checking/saving account.

Online Account Management

You will be able to edit your profile online, including payment options.

You will be able to access and print monthly billing details and payment history.

You will be able to review your payment history, including when your last was received.

Flexible Billing and Reminder Options

You will be able, with auto-bill, to choose to receive a reminder via email or text of your upcoming payment 15 days before your due date.

If hardship should occur, and you are unable to meet the financial obligations of tuition, please contact the Director as soon as possible to discuss options. *All fees must be paid from the previous year for children to re-enroll into the program.

Admission and Withdrawal

The Early Childhood Education Program is open to all children ages 3-5. Parents interested in a Christ-centered education may enroll their child/children on a first-come, first-served basis. A child must be three years of age on or before September 1 and must be completely toilet trained and able to attend to their own personal needs.

Registration for returning students and members of Grace Lutheran Church have priority enrollment beginning January 1st. Registration for new students for the fall program will be accepted after February 1st of each year. Students will be accepted during the year according to the *Program Enrollment Cutoff Policy*. Withdrawal from the program should be made by notifying the Director two weeks in advance.

Withdrawal will also occur, as directed by the program, if proper payment has

not been made. (*See Tuition and Fees*) We assume that when you register your child, it is for the full school year.

Enrollment forms and paperwork can be turned in to the school office upon completion. **All forms required for licensing must be turned in prior to the first day of school to attend.** Failure to do so may result in the delay of the child's enrollment or the spot given to another child.

Program Enrollment Cutoff Policy

To ensure cohesion and stability in the preschool classroom, the director will review enrollment inquiries after the first day of school. The director and the Board of Education will review enrollment inquiries after October 1st of the current school year. Children intending to enroll in the preschool program after October 1st may need to supply a letter of recommendation from their previous preschool of enrollment to be considered for enrollment at Grace Lutheran Early Childhood Program.

**Grace Lutheran Preschool reserves the right to refuse service to anyone at any time for any reason.*

Non-Discrimination Policy

At Grace Lutheran Preschool everyone is a special child of God. Educational opportunities and programs will be open to all children on an equal basis. Children of any race, color, gender, and national or ethnic origin can be admitted to the program provided we can meet the needs of that child.

Social Adjustment

Grace Lutheran Preschool reserves the right to drop a child after consultation with parents/guardians, when the welfare of the child, group, and/or staff would make this advisable with little to no warning.

Confidentiality & Privacy Policy

Grace Lutheran Early Childhood Program respects the right to privacy and assures the confidentiality of all student information and records. We will abide by the state of Michigan's privacy laws and will release records or information about your family only when required by law. This includes releasing information to the child care licensing department, child protection agency, police, and health care professionals. Other than these legal requirements, any specific information shared, written or otherwise, concerning your child or family will only be shared with certain individuals or agencies with your written consent.

The director of Grace Lutheran Early Childhood Program will decide which staff may have access to confidential information about your child. The following records of your child are available for your inspection at any time: enrollment forms, medical records, immunization records, attendance records, assessment records, and student reports. Contact the director to set up a time to view these records.

Parental Responsibilities

We forbid the taking of any pictures or videos (in whatever format) by parents (or anyone else) of the children in our program.

Common Practices

Below is a list of common practices we follow that may raise an issue for you about privacy. (***See Photo Release Form***)

- We may post photographs of your child in the classroom or elsewhere.
- We may post the name of your child on his/her cubby.
- We may post the name of your child or your name on classroom bulletin boards.
- We may post artwork or other craft activities in the classroom that identify your child by name.

Grace Lutheran Preschool Internet Privacy Policy

In addition to our general policy on privacy, Grace Lutheran Preschool has adopted this Internet Privacy Policy to protect the privacy of the children in our program. We will not share any information on the Internet about the current or past children and families enrolled in our program without the written permission of the parents.

This includes the posting of names, contact information, photographs, videos, audio, or other likeness of children or family members on our website, Facebook page, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, or any other location that could be distributed through the Internet. This includes the sharing of information through texting on cell phones and information shared on Procure. We have also adopted a confidentiality policy with the staff of our program that prohibits them from sharing any information about children or family members on the Internet.

Attendance Policy

To provide optimal learning progress, it is our expectation that children attend school regularly and on time with as few absences or tardies as possible with the exception of illness. Parents are to communicate in a timely fashion with the classroom teacher when their child will be absent or tardy with information on the reason for the absence and an expected return date. Children who are excessively absent may be referred to the Board of Education for review. Depending on the reason for absence, communication from the parent to the teacher, if tuition is current, the amount of absences accrued, and the number of children on a waiting list, the child may be removed from the program.

Health Regulations

Health and Safety Policy

Health appraisal forms, front and back, signed by a licensed physician, and up-to-date immunization records will be required at the beginning of the school year. No medications will be administered by school personnel unless it is under a doctor's prescription and written authorization and instructions are presented to

the teacher.

Illness

Parents are asked to protect their own children and others by keeping a child home that is carrying an infectious illness. We will provide for you a chart of illnesses in which we ask you to keep your child home.

You may NOT bring your child to school if they are exhibiting any of the following:

- Fever – A child has a temperature of 100.4 degrees F or greater AND behavioral changes or other signs or symptoms.
 - The child should not return until 24 hours of no fever, without using fever reducing medications.
- Diarrhea – If a child has two loose or watery stools, even if there are no signs of illness. The child should have no loose or watery stools for 24 hours prior to returning to school.
 - Exception: This may occasionally be caused by antibiotics or new foods a child has eaten. Parents must disclose this information to the Director prior to drop-off.
- Vomiting
 - Exception: A healthcare provider may also rule out an infectious cause.
- Rash – If the child develops a rash and has a fever or a change in behavior.
 - Exception: A physician has determined it is not a communicable disease.
 - Note: Rapidly spreading bruising or small blood spots under the skin needs immediate medical attention.
- Sore or discharging eyes, ears, or open sores.
- A new chronic cough.
- Profuse colored nasal discharge.
- Crying and Complaining – Any time a child is not his/herself, is lethargic, is complaining about discomfort or is cranky and crying more than usual for that child. The child should not return until he/she is acting normally.
- A communicable disease.
- Evidence of head lice and/or live nits.

Parents are asked to notify the school office in the AM of that day's session in case of illness or absence. Michigan law requires that schools report the possible occurrence of communicable disease to the local health department. To assist in this reporting, please include the illness (if known) and who diagnosed it OR a detailed description of symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhea, fever, rash, or sore throat when reporting your child's absence.

The staff of Grace Lutheran Preschool reserves the right to send a child home due to suspected illness and/or require a doctor's note before a child may return to school. **The School Secretary or Director will notify parents of suspected illness and the child should be promptly picked up within the hour.**

In case of an emergency, every effort will be made to contact the parent or authorized guardian for whatever measures are necessary.

All staff will be encouraged to stay at home when signs of illness appear to avoid exposure to the group.

Abuse and Neglect Policy

Abuse and neglect of children is against the law. All staff and volunteers of Grace Lutheran Preschool are mandated reporters. All staff and volunteers are required by law to immediately report suspected abuse and neglect to children's protective services. If a case of abuse or neglect is suspected, the following steps will be taken: The individual (director, lead teacher, aide, volunteer) who suspects the abuse or neglect will make an immediate verbal report to Centralized Intake by calling (855) 444-3911.

The individual will then submit a written report within 72 hours.

Report of Suspected or Actual Child Abuse or Neglect (DHS-3200)

The written report may be faxed to (616) 977-1154 or (616) 977-1158 or emailed to DHS-CPS-CIGroup@michigan.gov. The immediate online report eliminates the requirement to fill out a DHS-3200 form.

The individual may choose to notify the Principal or Pastor.

For cases which require an emergency response, the individual will call 911 and then the Centralized Intake Hotline at 855-444-3911 instead of using the Michigan Online Reporting System to submit a complaint.

Find more information regarding the Michigan Online Reporting System at www.michigan.gov/mandatedreporter

Recording and Reporting Accidents

Unfortunately, accidents are a part of life, especially for young children playing hard. However, all staff at Grace Lutheran Preschool respond quickly to accidents, administer the appropriate first aid, and record any and all accidents that occur on our property. For small injuries (i.e. a scratch, bruise), staff will wash the affected area with soap and water, apply a bandage and/or ice pack as needed. The staff will take measures to prevent the accident from happening again. An accident/injury form will be completed via Procare. A paper copy may be sent home with the child upon request. All staff are CPR and First Aid trained and certified and have annual blood-borne pathogen training. Any injury that occurs on campus and requires medical attention will be reported to our state licensing agent.

Natural or Man-Made Disasters

It may become necessary in the case of an emergency, and/or to protect the students, staff and visitors, to evacuate the school building during a crisis. If this

occurs there are two out-buildings that the students, staff, and visitors will be directed to.

There may also be times when emergency response personnel may order an evacuation of the school building because of emergencies related to or in close proximity to the area of the school.

The following will be the designated evacuation sites to be used for gathering students and school personnel if an evacuation is ordered:

Relocation Sites

Natural flood:

Will be determined based on flood area

Man-made flood, power outage, gas leak, water outage, bomb threat:

Parsonage, EP Clarke parking lot, or Roger's parking lot depending on problem

Nuclear evacuation:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Coloma High School
300 W. Saint Joseph St
Coloma, MI 49038 | 2. Watervliet High School
450 E. Saint Joseph St.
Watervliet, MI 49098 |
| 3. Brandywine High School
1441 Eagle St.
Niles, MI 49120 | 4. New Buffalo High School
222 S. Whittaker St
New Buffalo, MI 49117 |

Parents will be notified through Grace Lutheran Schools Procure Alert Message System.

Caring for Children with Special Needs Policy

Reason this policy is important: Early Childhood programs provide public accommodation and therefore must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Early Childhood programs should be committed to meeting the needs of all children, regardless of special health care needs or disabilities. As the number of children with chronic health conditions such as asthma, allergies, and diabetes increases, as well as the number of children with emotional or behavior issues, the ability of programs to plan for and include all children is critical. Inclusion of children with special needs has been shown to enrich the child care experience for all staff, and children and families of enrolled children.

Procedure and Practices, including responsible person(s):

- Children with special needs will be accepted into our program under the guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- All families will be treated with dignity and with respect for their individual needs and/or differences.

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- The Director will be responsible for ensuring that confidentiality about special needs is maintained for all families and staff in the program.
 - The Director will ensure that when a child with a special need is identified on the Child Care Application Form, the family will be given a Special Health Care Plan and Emergency Information for Children with Special Needs Form to be filled out by the family and health care provider collaboratively with a member of the child care program staff.
 - Children with special needs will be given the opportunity to participate in the program to the fullest extent possible. To accomplish this, the Early Childhood program may consult with agencies/organizations as needed, provided parental permission is granted (*Authorization for Release of Information* form).
 - All staff will receive general training on the benefits of inclusion of children with special needs and training on specific accommodations that any child in their classrooms may need. The knowledge of parents and health care professionals involved in the care of the child with special needs will be consulted to determine accommodations and or therapy requirements.
 - The individual written plan of care for children with special care needs will be followed in all emergency situations. The Director is responsible for making sure the plan shall be updated annually, at a minimum.

Food Service Policy

It is required by the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs that all children in our care for four hours or less be provided with one snack time each day.

Snacks: We will have one snack time in the middle of each class session each day. A nutritious snack will be furnished by the parents each day. All snacks must be prepackaged or in a sealed container and labeled with the child's first and last name and the day's date. Any leftover food will be sent home in its original container or thrown out at the end of the day. If a parent does not send a snack with their child, an alternative will be provided. All parents **must** sign a form acknowledging that they will provide a snack each day and if not, one will be provided.

What to Bring

We encourage nutritional eating habits and ask parents to consider items with low sugar content.

Suggested snacks include: Apples, grapes, oranges, fresh vegetables, Goldfish, graham crackers and other crackers, pudding, yogurt, pretzels or popcorn, homemade muffins, or breads, dried or fresh fruit, Jell-O, or cheese. Beverages may include milk or 100% juice. *Water will always be provided.*

Snacks shall consist of at least two of the following: milk or milk product, fruit, 100% fruit juice, vegetables, or other protein, whole grain or enriched bread or cereal.

The staff will model and encourage proper table manners, such as “please” and “thank you”, waiting to be served, not talking with food in the mouth, etc.

Special Occasions: Consideration will be given to birthdays or other special occasions. There may also be other learning experiences that require food to be used as well. All food items for special occasions must be stated to the Director at least ***one week prior*** to the date of expected consumption so all families can be notified of the contents.

Food Allergies: Please notify the teacher immediately if there are any specific allergies that your child may have. The child’s name, photo, and allergy will be posted in a discreet area in the classroom for the staff to utilize for safety. ***If an allergy is severe or life threatening, all parents will be required to send a snack that does not contain that food item.***

Integrated Pest Management Policy

Steps that will be taken when pesticide/insecticide applications are made on school property:

- Notices will be posted on the entrance door to the school classroom.
- A call will be made through the school instant alert system.
- All parents/guardians will receive a letter containing information about the pesticide, which will include the targeted pest or purpose, location of treatment, contact information of the center and a toll-free number for a national pesticide center. This letter will be postmarked at least three days prior to any application.
- All parents will be notified in September of each year – in advance – of any and all pesticides being used.

Program Procedures

Arrival and Departure

Children are not to arrive more than ten minutes before school is to begin. Parents are to be prompt in picking children up at the end of the session, unless other arrangements have been made with the teacher.

Children are to be brought to the classroom door at the beginning of the session, and picked up at the classroom door at the end of the session by a parent or authorized guardian. Parent’s are required to sign their child in each day using Procure. A sign in station will be located outside the classroom or use the Procure app. Directions for use are posted above the sign-in kiosk.

It is in the child’s best interest for the parent to leave promptly to allow the child and teacher to become acclimated to the day.

Parking Lot and Departure Rules

Cooperation in following the rules below will save time, and possibly save the children or others needless injury:

PLEASE DO NOT STOP YOUR CAR, STAND, OR PARK YOUR VEHICLE BY THE SCHOOL/CHURCH SIDEWALK WHEN DROPPING OFF YOUR CHILDREN. Use the east driveway (in front of the parsonage) and park in the east lot by the church. Do not park in the spaces by the north parsonage grass area.

During the school day, if you are coming in for a period of time, or when bringing your preschooler(s) into school, please park in the east lot by the church.

PLEASE BE MINDFUL OF YOUR CHILD AT ALL TIMES. Do not let them run into the parking lot or play in the grassy/landscaped area in front of the school or church steps area. We love that you want to visit after school! If you would like to socialize with other parents or allow your child some time to play after school, please walk your child back to the playground area to avoid an accident or injury.

The parsonage lawn is not a playground. It is someone's home. Please do not allow children to play on the parsonage lawn, climb the trees or light posts in the front.
Please respect this space as someone's home.

Dropping off Preschoolers

Monday – Friday Mornings

Doors will be locked at all times.

- The Principal, Pastor, or other faculty member will greet children at the door.
- Anyone entering the school building after 8:15 a.m. will then have to use the call button to enter.

Monday – Friday Afternoons

Doors will be locked at all times.

- Caregivers and children are to wait in the school entrance until 12:00 pm.
- The Director will open the door at 12:00pm.
- Anyone entering the school building after 12:00 pm will then have to use the call button to enter.

Picking up Preschoolers

Monday – Friday Mornings & Afternoon

The preschool teacher will take the preschool children to their parents who will be waiting in the school entrance or outside for them.

Doors will be locked at all times.

Pickup Procedure:

Morning Class

- Enter the driveway in front of the parsonage.
- Park your car in the east parking lot closest to the church.

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- Come out of your vehicle to meet your child in the school entrance or just outside the doors.
 - The Preschoolers will assemble into the school entrance. Once all students are assembled, they will be dismissed through the front door by the teacher to their parents who will be waiting in the school entrance or outside for them.
 - Exit out the driveway you entered closest to the church.

Young Fives

- Enter the driveway in front of the parsonage.
- Park your car in the east parking lot closest to the church. ***As this is a safety issue, please do not park in the spots by the pick-up line! Please notify anyone else picking up your child not to park there.***
- Come out of your vehicle to meet your child in the school entrance or just outside the doors.
 - The Preschoolers will assemble inside and will be dismissed individually to their parents waiting for them. Any child left after 3:30 pm will be taken to After School Care.
- Exit out the driveway closest to the church.

Additional Procedures

All preschoolers must be signed in daily at the Procure kiosk outside of the preschool room. This is a requirement of the state, and must be adhered to. The director will sign them out at departure. Parents or caregivers must buzz into the building when there are any preschool activities (parties, parent volunteers, song days, etc.) and sign-in in the office as the doors will be locked at all times for security purposes. ****Please do not let children touch or play with the iPad outside of the classroom.***

Custody Rights Policy

Both parents of an enrolled child at Grace Lutheran Early Childhood Program may have the right to pick up their child. The Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs for the State of Michigan states, "A child shall be released to either parent or the child's guardian, unless a court order prohibits release to a particular parent. A copy of the order prohibiting release must be kept on file at the center."

(R 400.8110A)

The enrolling parent who chooses to not include the other parent's name on the enrollment forms or authorized pick up list must file an official court document such as the following:

- **Current restraining order**
- **Sole-custody decree**
- **Divorce decree stating sole custody**
- **Judgment of adoption**
- **Poster parent documentation**

Without this documentation, the program may release the child to either parent,

provided that parent documents biological or adoptive parenthood of that child. The parent must provide Grace Lutheran Early Childhood Program with updated legal documents when any changes occur.

Failure to comply with this policy will result in immediate termination from the program.

Discipline Policy

The procedure for discipline will follow that of Christ, our Savior's example. Positive methods which encourage self-control, self-direction, self-esteem and cooperation will be used by the staff. The classroom rules will be clear and concise, and the children will be expected to follow them. When the situation demands, the following procedures will be used:

- Non-verbal disapproval of the child's actions.
- Positive verbal reminders of rules
- Removal from the group to a time-out chair or corner of the room followed by or connected with a discussion with the teacher.
- Persistent behavior, resulting in removal from the room to the program director or principal for discussion and parental contact. (*see Difficult Behavior Policy*)
- Exhausting of step 4 could result in contacting the parent to come and remove the child from school for the day.
- All disciplinary action will be on the basis of God's Word and commandments, leading the child to God's forgiveness through Jesus Christ. The teacher will convey to the child the disapproval of his/her actions, not the child himself.

Difficult Behavior Policy

If a parent and/or child is exhibiting behaviors and/or actions that are not in line with the stated policies and practices of Grace Lutheran Preschool, disciplinary action or termination of enrollment may be possible. The administration and staff of Grace Lutheran Preschool will work proactively with each family to ensure that all avenues have been exhausted. Written notification of negative behaviors will be given to the child's parents and placed in the child's file at the discretion of the Director. If necessary, a meeting with the Director will be held to discuss options to prevent future incidents. Further incidents may require a meeting with the Principal or referred to the Board of Education. If necessary, a two-week notice will be given notifying of termination of enrollment and a written notice will be provided as well.

Immediate Dismissal:

Grace Lutheran Preschool reserves the right to refuse service to anyone at any time. If it is determined, by Grace Lutheran Preschool's staff, that a child is being disruptive, destructive, disrespectful, has repeated discipline problems, or is endangering themselves or others, we may ask that you come pick up your child and possibly find another program. If a child exhibits this behavior, a meeting will be held with the Director, parents, and classroom aide to discuss ways to help

prevent and improve behavior. If a child is sent home three times, enrollment will automatically be terminated immediately after the third time. In severe cases where a child intentionally causes great harm or destruction you will be asked to come pick up your child and enrollment will be terminated without being given another chance.

Lack of parental cooperation: In addition, there will be no cursing, smoking, vaping, swearing, threatening behavior, confrontation, or violation of Grace Lutheran Preschool's confidentiality policy allowed inside or outside of Grace Lutheran Preschool's premises. Appropriate actions will be taken if these rules are not followed.

Library

Per volunteer availability, our preschool classes will visit our school's library to check out books. Please return your child's library books in your child's bag to be retrieved by a teacher. New books will be sent home in your child's bag.

Chapel

Students who attend the morning class on Fridays will attend chapel. On occasion, chapel will be moved to a Thursday if there is no school on Friday. Each year our school chooses a mission to give our offerings to. Offerings are voluntary and do not require a large sum. A few cents to a dollar are more than sufficient.

Materials Used in the Program

Supplies

A tote bag with the school logo will be provided at the beginning of the school year. Please label your child's bag. All other materials will be provided by the school unless specified throughout the year by the teacher.

Equipment

Students of Grace Lutheran Preschool have access to the fenced-in outdoor playground equipment, the school library, gym and equipment, chapel, and activities of our elementary school students.

Furnishings in the classroom are durable, safe and arranged for the children's use.

Child's Attire

Dress your child in comfortable, washable play clothes that you are comfortable getting dirty. Please have your child wear clothing appropriate for the weather and for movement. Layers are a great way to allow your child to adjust to changing climates. An extra set of clothing, including underwear, should be kept in a labeled Ziplock bag to be left at school. Please do *not* let your child wear shoes that do not have a back or strap on the heel (i.e. flip flops). If your child comes to school wearing boots or dress shoes, please be sure to send along a pair of tennis shoes. Label all articles of clothing, including boots and mittens, in the winter. ***We will go***

outside, weather permitting every day!

Sharing Time

Each child will have opportunities when they may bring ***one*** item to share with the class. A monthly schedule will be provided with the child's sharing day to bring something to show the class. This is the only time, with few exceptions; children are encouraged to bring their treasures from home. (*see Items From Home*) The purpose is to develop language skills and build self-confidence.

Most items are acceptable, including stuffed animals, cars, trucks, books and handmade items.

Guns, war toys, toys that depict violence, and TV interactive toys are not allowed, since one of the purposes of the program is to provide a happy and safe environment where the children can have fun.

Parental Involvement in the Program

Conferences

Keeping open communication between parents and teachers is necessary. Formal Parent/Teacher conferences will be held in the fall as indicated on the school calendar. These are highly encouraged for those students in 4K and Young 5s. Conferences are optional for those in the 3K group, unless indicated by the teacher. Conferences are designed to discuss your child's development, progress, and any assessments that have been conducted. Another optional opportunity to meet will be in the spring as indicated on the school calendar. Any time you do have concerns about your child, please feel free to talk with the teacher. It is best, however, to arrange a time other than the beginning of the session. 4K and Young Five's who are ready for Kindergarten will be scheduled for screening following a Parent Information Meeting in the spring.

Visits

Parents are always welcome to visit our classroom. There will be many opportunities to visit throughout the school year. If you would like to visit the classroom outside of those times, please speak with the Director ***at least*** 48 hours in advance of the requested visit date. If the requested time frame for the visit does not fit with the classroom schedule, another date and/or time may be chosen. A Preschool Orientation Night will be scheduled before school begins. You will be notified in the summer of the exact date.

Communication

A newsletter will be sent home and emailed on a weekly basis. This will alert you to upcoming events and schedules which involve your child. Updates and photos will be shared on the Procare app as well. The Titan Times will be emailed weekly from the Principal as well. Other news and notes will be sent home in your child's folder.

Parent Programs

Parents are welcome to join in the activities of the school and church. School events will be listed on the calendar. Bible and Information classes, church and Sunday School are available to anyone who desires them. Your involvement in these activities will not only keep you informed, but also show your child how important their total well-being is to you.

Church Services	Sundays at 8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Midweek Advent Services at 3:30 & 7:00 p.m. <i>(November to Christmas)</i> Lenten Services at 3:30 & 7:00 p.m. <i>(February to Easter)</i> <i>Mondays at 7:00pm (Memorial Day-Labor Day)</i>
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Other Special Services according to the Church Calendar – will be noted in the Titan Times.

Sunday School	Sundays at 9:15 a.m.
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Bible Classes	Sundays at 9:15 a.m.
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General Policies and Information

Volunteers

Parent volunteers are welcome. All volunteers will be supervised by the classroom teacher/director at all times and may be subject to a background check.

Transportation

The Board of Christian Education cannot assume responsibility for the transportation of students. This responsibility must rest with individual parents with the understanding that the school will be of whatever assistance is possible within parameters of this policy.

Field Trips

Field trips will be taken where applicable to units of study. Parents will be notified with specific information prior to each field trip. Field trip permission slips must be signed by the parent and on file with the Preschool Director. *(See Preschool Calendar for dates of scheduled field trips.)*

Each child **must** be accompanied to and from the field trip by a parent/guardian. Transportation arrangements, for all preschool children, to and from field trips will be made privately by the parent/guardian of each child. Siblings are not permitted to attend.

Items From Home

Please do not let your child bring any toys or related items from home to school since they may be a distraction or get lost or broken. Electronic devices are not allowed and will be kept with the Director until the parent retrieves the item in order to prevent the potentially expensive item from being lost, stolen, or broken.

School Closings

In times of inclement weather, we will follow the policy of Grace Lutheran School. An announcement will always be made on the local radio stations in regard to such closings. Listen for ***"Grace Lutheran School of St. Joseph"***.

If school must be closed because of bad weather or for any other reason, please listen to your radio - WHFB-FM 99.9, WSJM-AM 1400, WCSY-FM 98.3, WYTZ-FM 97.5, WZTY-FM 103.7, WYKL-FM 94.9, WGMV-AM 940, WIRX-FM 107.1, or the local TV stations: WNDU/16, WSBT/22, or WSJV/28. **Listen for "Grace Lutheran School of St. Joseph"**. They will usually have it in time for their 6:30 or 7:00 a.m. news broadcast. Please do not call the teachers or the pastors to double check. If our school is not mentioned, we will be having school.

A Procure text will be made to all preschool parents letting them know of school closings. Your main phone number will be used for this program unless the school is notified otherwise.

Grace Lutheran Early Childhood Program No Babysitting Policy

In order to protect the overall well-being of Grace Lutheran Early Childhood Program and those we serve, staff members cannot babysit for families whose children are enrolled in our program during the school year.

Providing babysitting services as defined by the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs for the State of Michigan: "Caring for a child on behalf of the child's parent or guardian when the annual compensation for providing those services does not equal or exceed \$600.00 or an amount that would according to the internal revenue code of 1986 obligate the child's parent or guardian to provide a form 1099-MISC to the individual for compensation paid during the calendar year for those services."

Church Singing

All Preschool students will participate in church singing throughout the school year. A Christmas service will be held in December for both classes. The morning 3K-4K will have a separate service and the Young 5s will join students in our elementary school's children's Christmas service. A singing schedule will be provided for you.

Preschool Calendar – 2025-2026

Grace Lutheran Early Childhood Program follows the same academic calendar as Grace Lutheran School with exception of the dates below. On days when a ***half day***

is indicated, please note there will be no Young Fives that day.

August 19 – First Day – Morning class – Those signed up for Tuesdays.

August 20 – First Day - Morning Class – Those signed up for Wednesdays
First Day - Young Fives

October 1, 2, or 3(official date TBD) - Charlotte's Web Field Trip - South Bend

October 16 - Stovers Field Trip (Young 5s Only)

October (Date TBD) - Fall Field Trip (Morning Class Only)

November 7 - No Preschool Classes: Parent/Teacher Conferences

November 25 - Thanksgiving Celebration (Young 5s Only)

December 12 - Morning Class Christmas Service @ 6:30pm

December 18 - Young 5s Christmas Party - 12:30-1:30pm

December 19 - Morning Class Christmas Party - 9:30-11:00am

January 22 - Curious Kids or Power in Motion Field Trip (Young 5s Only)

February 6 - No PreK Classes - Parent/Teacher Conferences

February 13 - Valentine's Tea Party

March 6 - PreK-1st grade Play

May 1 - Potawatomi Zoo Field Trip

May 8 - No Preschool Classes: ML Track Day - PreK Fun Run

May 21 – Last Day – Young Fives

May 22 – Last Day – Morning Class

REVISED 7/2025