

FIRST LUTHERAN CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS
Toddler, Preschool, School Age Care and Day Camp Programs
A Ministry of First Lutheran Church
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Dear Parents:

This handbook is designed specifically to give our parents a resource for understanding our program policies and procedures.

It is very important that you take time to read the handbook. We are trying to make our policies well known and comprehensive so that everyone involved in our program is informed.

Our website, www.flcp-childcare.org, has a wealth of information about our programs. It has information about each program, our staff, calendars, and necessary forms. Please take a moment to visit our website.

Throughout the year there will be newsletters, notices and other forms of communication sent home which will update you on our programs. Please take time to read these, as they are a vital source of communication between staff, parents and children.

Once you have read through this handbook, please sign the attached sheet indicating that you have read and understand the policies and procedures of the program.

We look forward to serving your child and family in the next year.

Sincerely,

Sherryl Eastman
Director
First Lutheran Children's Programs

FIRST LUTHERAN CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS [FLCP] PROGRAM HANDBOOK

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MISSION & PHILOSOPHY

WELCOME

Welcome to the First Lutheran Children's Programs. The following information is intended to help you answer questions pertinent to our programs.

HISTORY OF FIRST LUTHERAN CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

The First Lutheran Church has a history of serving the needs of the community around us. The church's mission statement states that "we are called to respond to God's love by freely and actively serving the needs around us, in our families, our congregation, our community and our world."

- 1970 The congregation made a major commitment to community outreach by establishing the First Lutheran Preschool. Gloria DePalma was named the first preschool director.
- 1982 The church started to discuss the idea of expanding its ministry to children through a before/after school program.
- 1983 Under the leadership of Rev. Gregory Pagh, plans were made to build a community playground on church property. This was a community endeavor with support (financial and labor) coming from the church, area businesses and residents.
- 1988 The congregation developed a 5-year plan for ministry. The third goal of this plan was community outreach. Part of this goal called for the creation of a Before and After School Care Program and a Summer Day Camp during 1989.
- 1989 After prayerful consideration, a proposal was made to raise funds for a Before and After School Care Program and a Summer Day Camp. Funds were raised from the church, areas businesses and the state government. The First Lutheran Preschool donated \$3,000 and the state of Maine awarded a \$10,000 Child Development Block Grant to the program. The program got underway with the enrollment of 18 families.
- 1989 Miriam Englund was hired on May 1, 1989 to develop the Before and After School Care Program and the Summer Day Camp.
- 1999 The First Lutheran School Age Care Program is considered one of the best in the state. It is exemplary in terms of its relationships with the children and their families. The program has more than tripled since 1989 and has over 60 families enrolled at the time.
- 2001 The Kid's Club is created to provide full time child care for children ages 3 ½ to 5 years old. This child care is offered during the school year.
- 2002 The First Lutheran Children's Program was created by consolidating the Preschool, Kid's Club and School Age Care Programs into one program with a single director and Advisory Board. Cindy Greenlie was the first director for the combined programs.

- 2004 The Kid's Club's calendar is expanded to provide year-round child care. The calendar does include a 1-week vacation at Christmas and in April and a 7 days program shutdown at the end of the summer.
 - 2005 The Toddler Class is created to provide full time child care for children ages 1½ to 3 ½ years old. This child care is offered on a year-round basis.
 - 2007 The School Age Care program became nationally accredited by the National Afterschool Association.
 - 2008 Jackie Nelson was named the second director for the combined programs.
- The First Lutheran Children's Program earns the highest Quality Rating (Step 4 -- Certificate of Quality) from the State of Maine, Department of Health & Human Services.
- 2011 The First Lutheran Children's Program is recertified at the highest Quality Rating (Step 4 --Certificate of Quality) from the State of Maine, Department of Health & Human Services.
 - 2012 & 2016 The School Age Care program renews its accreditation through the Council on Accreditation.
 - 2017 First Lutheran Preschool (toddlers & preschool) achieves national accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
 - 2022 Sherryl Eastman was named the third director for the Children's Programs.
 - 2022 FLCP is re-accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
 - 2024 FLCP is recertified at the highest Quality Rating (5 Stars --Certificate of Quality) from the State of Maine, Department of Health & Human Services.

MISSION STATEMENT

As Christian ministries of First Lutheran Church, The First Lutheran Children's Programs (including the Toddlers, Preschool, Pre-K, School Age Care and Day Camp programs) promote a safe, secure, and enriching experience for both children and staff.

Our programs provide an environment in which children can explore, experience, and enrich their lives. Children will be heard, listened to, valued and appreciated as unique individuals.

The programs will strive to meet the community, family, staff and children's needs.

PURPOSE AND PHILOSOPHY

First Lutheran Children's Programs provides a safe, creative environment for children, ages 12 months to 12 years. Through a diverse program and provided by trained staff, First Lutheran Children's Programs seeks to help each child achieve his/her potential in terms of emotional development, physical well-being, social and spiritual growth. We are serious about First Lutheran's educational ministry, but our intent is to provide a fun-filled experience. We believe that children learn best when they are involved, experiencing and having fun. To this end, the program provides many fun, varied experiences that are developmentally appropriate for their ages.

First Lutheran seeks to provide:

1. An environment for each child that is safe and secure.
2. An opportunity for each child to develop a sense of responsibility as a member of his/her family, the community and the world.
3. The opportunities for each child to explore and experience new activities.
4. The opportunities for each child to develop a respect for the natural environment.
5. A fun and caring atmosphere that allows for individual self-expression and personal growth.
6. An opportunity for each child to develop his/her capacities for leadership.

TODDLER & PRESCHOOL PURPOSE AND GOALS

First Lutheran Preschool presents the preschool child with a program conducive to creative exploration and play. This initial experience away from home is an important step in life's journey. A loving atmosphere of acceptance enhanced by dedicated, caring teachers provides the best possible means for a smooth transition from home to school for the toddler and preschool child. Our program is concerned with each child's physical, cognitive, emotional, social, creative, and spiritual growth and development.

TODDLER

Adapted from Maine's Infant & Toddler Guidelines for Learning and Development: Ages Birth to 36 months. Our goals emphasize the development of:

1. **Development into Social Beings:** Self –awareness, Self –Regulation, Self –concept, adult interaction, peer interaction, and social intelligence.
2. **Development of strong and healthy bodies:** Perceptual Development, Gross motor skills, Fine motor skills, self-help/adaptive skill development
3. **Development of the ability to communicate:** language comprehension: receptive language, receptive language, language expression (expressive/productive language) Emotional understanding, Emotional expression
4. **Development of curious minds:** Exploration and Discovery, Concept Development and memory, problem solving, symbolic thought and creative expression.

PRESCHOOL & Pre-K

Adapted from Maine Early Learning Development Standards (MELDS) for Ages 3-5

Our goals emphasize the development of:

1. **Social / Emotional Development:** Create and provide a supportive environment where children's unique needs, skills and individual talents are respected. Also provide an environment that encourages participation, cooperation and positive interactions with others. Help children develop a positive self-image, to be respectful of others and learn appropriate conflict resolution skills.
2. **Approaches to Learning:** Create a learning environment that contributes to children's feelings of safety and trust. Supports children's play and build upon their strengths, interests, knowledge and ability to explore and learn about the world around them. Helps children develop positive self-esteem, build positive relationships with others and learn to understand and regulate their emotions.
3. **Physical Skills:** Provide safe and appropriate physical activities adapted to children's abilities, needs and individual patterns of growth. Promote healthy eating and food choices.
4. **Language/Literacy Skills:** Responsive conversation that uses rich vocabulary, daily interaction with high-quality books and engaging interactions with print and sounds of language and letters.
5. **Math:** Offer hands-on and active experience that focus on the key concept of early math; numeracy, geometry, measurement and problem-solving skills
6. **Science:** Offer a science enriched environment where children explore, invent, investigate, question and discover.
7. **Social Studies:** Create a safe and inclusive environment where children can learn about similarities and differences between each other, are exposed to various cultures, ages, abilities, languages and family structure that can be equally honored and valued.

SCHOOL AGE CARE PURPOSE AND GOALS

Caring Staff with Diversity in Programming: Our students look forward to beginning and ending their day with us. Our School Age Care programs provide opportunities for structured activity, outside playtime or quiet indoor choices. Outdoor play is a key component of this program. Our center offers a fully equipped playground and play area where the children can meet up with their friends and get fresh air. The children are provided with choices of activities and encouraged to try new things in a loving and supportive environment. The program structure allows for long term projects, such as a cook book and dramatic plays, as well as child-driven activities, such as gardening.

Flexibility and Consistency: This program can be made year-round for this age group as FLCP offers a summer camp option. Many families choose this option so children continue their care with their friends during the summer months. Experience our School Age Care program by scheduling a visit. Please call 207.797.2260 to arrange a convenient day and time.

PROGRAMS AVAILABLE

The First Lutheran Children's Programs consist of **five different programs**:

1. Toddler Program (Ages 1-3 years)

✓ Full Day Toddler Classes: Monday – Friday

2. Preschool Programs (Ages 3-4 years)

✓ Full Day Preschool Classes: Monday – Friday

3. Pre-Kindergarten Programs (Ages 4-5 years)

Full Day Pre-K class: Monday – Friday

4. School Age Care Programs (for children in kindergarten – 5th grade)

✓ Before School: Monday – Friday

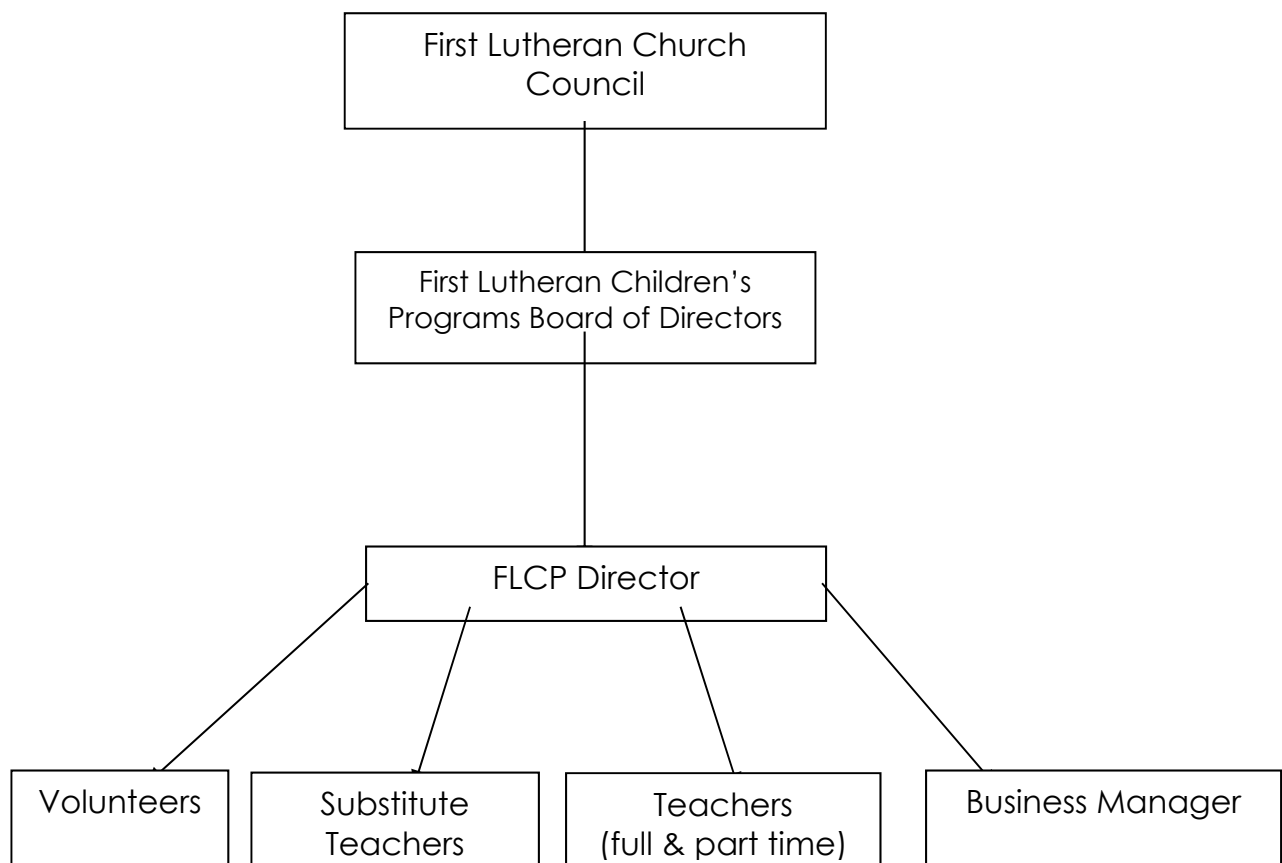
✓ After School: Monday – Friday

5. Summer Camp (for children entering grades 1-8)

✓ Monday – Friday

✓ **Note:** This is our only summer program for school age children

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



ADVISORY BOARD

The First Lutheran Children's Programs' Advisory Board consists of the following:

<u># of Members</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	Director	Non-Voting
1	Assistant Director	Non-Voting
1	President	Voting
1	Vice President	Voting
1	Secretary	Varies (**)
2	Teachers' Representatives	Non-Voting
1	Church Council Liaison	Non-Voting
1	Church Representative	Voting (&&)
1-3	Parent Representatives	Voting (##)

(**) – If the incumbent is a staff member then the position is non-voting.

(&&) – A church member.

(##) – The number of these representatives will vary based upon the parents in officer positions. In addition, there will be a balance between parent reps. from each program.

The board meets monthly during the program year. Typically, meetings are the first Wednesday of the month. The date is determined at the prior board meeting and emailed to the attendees a week in advance of the meeting. All parents are invited to become a member of our board of directors. If interested please contact the director or business manager.

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

As a part of the First Lutheran Church, the First Lutheran Children's Program is a non-profit organization.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

First Lutheran Children's Programs does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, age, color, national origin, handicapping condition, religion, marital status or veteran status in the employment of staff or the enrollment of children.

We welcome children and staff with disabilities into our program when they are able to function within our ratios and/or facility constraints.

Admission into our program is on a first-come, first-served basis. Participation in the program is based on initial and ongoing assessment of each child in order to evaluate the appropriateness of the program in meeting the child's needs. Children may enter the program at any time of the year, if space is available.

PROGRAM OPERATIONS

HOURS OF OPERATION

Program	Program Hours	Calendar	Public School Snow Days	Public School In-Service Days	Public School Vacations	Holidays
Toddler Classes	7:30 AM to 5:30 PM	Year-round	Open most snow days	Open	Closed some vacations	Closed most holidays
Preschool Class	7:30 AM to 5:30 PM	Year-round	Open most snow days	Open	Closed some vacations	Closed most holidays
Pre-K Class	7:30 AM to 5:30 PM	Year-round	Open most snow days	Open	Closed some vacations	Closed most holidays
School Age Care (Grades K—5th)	7:00 AM to 5:30 PM	Public School Year (*)	Open most snow days	Open	Open Feb. vacation if enough demand	Closed most holidays
Summer Day Camp (*) (entering Grades 1-8)	7:00 AM to 5:30 PM	8 weeks in Summer	NA	NA	Open Summer	Juneteenth July 4th

- ✓ Public School refers to the Portland Public School System
- ✓ Our program is closed on all legal school holidays, Winter Vacation (Christmas), April Vacation and 1-1½ weeks in late August. Our School Age Care program is open during the February Vacation if a minimum number of children register for care. The toddler, preschool and pre-K classes are also open during February Vacation. Our program is also closed for one FLCP professional staff day per program year.
- ✓ The hours of operation for our School Age Care Program are as follows:
 - Before School portion is open 7:00 – 8:45 AM
 - After School is open 3:30 – 5:30 PM

- Winter Camp (February Vacation) is open 7:00 AM – 5:30 PM
- ✓ The SAC program follows the Portland Public Schools calendar. Our opening days varies year to year coordinating with Portland Public Schools. Please refer to the current year calendar for the exact days. The SAC program offers coverage on Early Release Days (for both Teacher In-Service Days and Parent Conferences), Full Release Days, Delayed Snow Days and Snow Days (except in severe weather situations).
- ✓ (*) Children in School Age Care are eligible to enroll in our Summer Day Camp, which provides care from late June through mid-August. Camp offers full time care Monday through Friday. A separate enrollment is required. These combined programs provide year-round care.

STORM CLOSING POLICY

Weather/Storm Policy

The children's programs will strive to stay open during inclement weather. The Director, in consultation with Advisory Board members, **may close or have delayed opening or close early** under extreme weather conditions. Storm closings or delay openings will be listed under **First Lutheran Children's Programs** and will be posted by **6:00 AM** via

- ❖ Via a message thru brightwheel, our childcare administration platform
- ❖ WCSH Channel 6 and WGME Channel 13
- ❖ Phone Answering Machine Message **(207-797-2260)**

EARLY Emergency Closing Policy:

The Director, in consultation with Advisory Board members, may close the Programs **early** under extreme weather or safety conditions. The following steps will be followed when this occurs:

- Director, assistant director and Board members concur on early closing time
- Director, assistant director contacts staff members regarding closing time
- If a decision is made before opening, parents will be notified upon arrival.
- If decision is made later in the day, the Director, assistant Director, and Business Manager, will notify parents/guardians regarding early closing time by email and phone calls
- If parent/guardian cannot be reached, the next emergency contact person is called
- Director, assistant director or a staff member will stay until all children are picked up.

STAFF-TO-CHILD RATIOS AND GROUP SIZE

The staff-to-child ratios and group sizes are determined in compliance with our license with the state of Maine. In addition, children are supervised at all times and we have a system in place to know where children are at all times. The guidelines are as follows:

Staff-to-Child Ratios

1-to-4 for toddlers (ages 1-2 ½ years)	Maximum group size 12
1-to-5 for toddlers (ages 1-2 ½ years)	Maximum group size 10

1-to-7 for preschoolers (ages 2 ½ -3 ½ years)	Maximum group size 21
1-to-8 for preschoolers (3 years to not yet school age 5 years)	Maximum group size 24
1-to-10 for preschoolers (3years to not yet school age 5 years)	Maximum group size 20
1-to-10 for kindergarten – 5 th grade	

Group Size Our group sizes will be governed by the type and complexity of the activity and the size of the space. For example, more complex activities such as wood working with the school age care children or outside water play with preschoolers will have a smaller group size due to safety constraints. Outdoor games, such as kickball, will have a larger group size to facilitate teams.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT & COMMUNICATION

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Open Door Policy: The First Lutheran Children’s Programs operates an “open door policy” where parents/guardians are encouraged to stop by at any time during our program day.

Volunteering: We welcome participation from all families. There are many opportunities for parents/guardians to volunteer in the program:

- For the Toddler/PS/Pre-K classes we welcome a parent to volunteer as the “Classroom Parent”. This role helps to coordinate special classroom events such as teacher appreciation.
- Families are always welcomed into the program to visit, participate in a special activity, share a talent, or read a book.
- Volunteers are welcome to help at our fall and spring family events, our Mother’s Day Breakfast and our Father’s Day Breakfast or Cook-out.

Please contact the director or your child’s teacher if you would like to volunteer.

Program Orientation/Open House: An orientation for parents/guardians is held prior to the start of the program year. The date is published on our website and in our enrollment communications. The orientation is led by the director and staff members and enables families to get an understanding of how the program works and activities/schedules of a typical day in your child’s classroom. It is also a time to get to know other families in the program and/ or in your child’s room. During the admission process, facility tours are given by the director.

Family Events: First Lutheran offers two family events during the year which enables families to get to know one another. In the fall we host a “Trunk or Treat” on a Saturday in October. In the spring we have a “Spring Carnival” on a Saturday, where friends and family are all invited to attend and enjoy the festivities.

We also have various classroom events, skits, concerts etc. where families are invited to attend. The Mother’s Day Breakfast and Father’s Day Breakfast or Cook-out are two other events held annually. Families are invited to attend various performances given by the children throughout the year.

Families of the Children's Programs are always invited to attend any church events such as Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, Christmas Fair, Soup Kitchen, Sunday services to name a few. Notices of all events are posted on the bulletin boards and on the church website.

PARENT COMMUNICATION

Program Website: Our program website (www.flcp-childcare.org) provides many facets of information.

Parent Handbook: A parent handbook has been supplied in an effort to answer many of the questions that parents may have. Parents are encouraged to speak with the staff or director if they have further questions. It is also available under the Forms Section of our website "Quick Links".

Brightwheel App: We use Brightwheel, our childcare administration platform, for both child-specific and classroom/program communication. For example: photos of daily activities, daily schedules, etc.

Newsletters/Notices/Emails: Parents are informed of program and classroom activities through newsletters and other notices. These are typically distributed via email and may be weekly or monthly based upon the class/program.

Toddler/PS/Pre-K Folders: We use a clear plastic folder/envelope to send papers home with children. Examples include: artwork, accident reports, etc.

Resource Table: We have a resource table in the preschool wing of the Ministry Center. It contains pamphlets from the state DHHS, the NAEYC and additional resources on raising young children.

Daily Communication: Our daily communication will be done through emails, the Brightwheel app and phone calls. Teacher's email addresses were given to families during open house. Staff members play a vital role in the daily communication with parents. They can "touch base" with parents regarding their children during drop-off and pick-up. It is this vital role which enables parents to know about their children's experiences at the program. Parents may contact their child's teacher through the Brightwheel app or email. Parents can also call the office a 207-797-2260 or e-mail the office at flcpinfo@firstluthranportland.org

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES & ASSESSMENTS

School Age Care: Staff and families conference on an "as needed basis". These conferences can be requested by the families or the staff.

Preschool Conferences: Parent/Teacher conferences will be held in late fall and late summer. Written progress reports will be given to families in mid- winter and late spring. The program strives to have conferences scheduled at the convenience of the parents.

If a conference is desired at any other time, the parent may make an appointment with the individual teacher. Teachers are always willing to discuss the child's adjustment and progress

during drop off and pick up if time allows.

First Lutheran Children's program uses portfolios to document your child's/children's growth and development. The portfolio is designed to address all areas of development as stated in the Maine Early Learning Developments and the Infant and Toddler Learning Guidelines. The documentation provided in this type of portfolio can be used by teachers for two primary purposes:

1. To share information about children's growth and development with families.
2. To guide in planning a curriculum that is individualized for each child.

If needed, families may bring a translator to their child's conference.

If necessary, every effort will be made to have the conference materials in the parent's native language.

Preschool Assessment

All preschool parents will be given a copy of the Program Assessment Plan at orientation or upon enrollment or at their request. Staff will provide families with information at the beginning of the year or upon enrollment regarding the assessment purpose, informal methods used, conditions under which children are assessed, interpreting assessments results and how results are used to provide learning opportunities for their child. Families will have the opportunity to discuss the assessment plan and give input to what methods will work for their child at the fall parent teacher conferences or parents may make an appointment at any time to discuss the assessment process. Our doors are always open.

ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS

First Lutheran Children's Programs offers enrichment programs in addition to the regular curriculum and activities for the toddler, preschool, and School Age Care programs.

- Music & Movement activities for the preschool and Pre-K classes
- The program also utilizes the enrichment programs from The Children's Museum of Maine, Maine Audubon Society, etc. 2-3 times per year.
- Our Pre-K class goes on exploration walks throughout our greater neighborhood

The School Age Care program offers:

- Periodic events, such as during Winter Camp
- Yearly special events such as: Sparks Ark

ENROLLMENT & TUITION

ENROLLMENT OF CHILDREN

The director, assistant director or business manager typically enrolls new children into the program. All inquiries should be directed toward them. Our website, program brochure and registration form provide initial overall information for the parent. Our admission policy and procedures (listed below) outline our enrollment process.

Admission Policy: First Lutheran Children's Program admits children of any race, color, gender, and national or ethnic origin. Admission is on a first-come, first-served basis. Participation in the program is based on initial and ongoing assessment of each child in order to evaluate the appropriateness of the program in meeting the child's needs. When maximum enrollment is reached, a waiting list will be established. Children ages 1 - 5 and in grades K - 5 may enter the program at any time of the year, if space is available.

Admission Procedure:

1. A registration form is completed and returned along with a \$100.00 (per family) registration fee
2. The parents and child (children) tour the program with our director.
3. The Enrollment Process will be handled electronically through brightwheel, our childcare administration platform. These forms and a copy of the immunization record must be completed and returned prior to your child's start in our program. **THESE FORMS MUST BE COMPLETED AND SIGNED ANNUALLY. RECORD OF IMMUNIZATIONS MUST BE ON FILE AND UPDATED WHEN NECESSARY.**
4. For toddlers, preschoolers and pre-K children, a non-refundable deposit equivalent to one week's tuition is required prior to enrollment. Once enrolled, this will be applied to the last week that your child is in our program. If you decline your enrollment prior to your child's start date, this deposit is forfeited.
5. The 1st week of tuition is due prior to attending the program.

Non-Attendance/Vacating a Spot: If a child does not attend our program for 2 weeks or more and the family has not notified us of an absence, we will assume the family has withdrawn from our program and we will release the spot/terminate the family.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The First Lutheran Children's Programs accepts payment from the following State of Maine, Dept. of Health & Human Services programs: ASPIRE, Child Care Affordability Program (CCAP) and Transitional Child Care. Due to the low "market rate" paid by these state programs, we have a cap on the number of children that we can accept. In addition, we have **limited** self-funded scholarships available. These scholarships pay a **portion** of the tuition and are only available to families who do not qualify for a State of Maine program. Proof of ineligibility must be provided.

The ASPIRE, CCAP and Transitional Child Care programs provide either partial or full tuition coverage. We accept the terms of these agency contracts regarding parent tuition rates. These programs target families that need child care while the parents are employed or in school and meet income guidelines.

The First Lutheran Children's Programs' scholarships provide child care at reduced rates to qualified families. The scholarships typically target families that fall outside the state programs, but still need assistance. Financial aid applications must be submitted to the director or business manager on a semi-annual basis for review, determination and re-determination. The amount of funding may vary based upon availability of funding.

TUITION SCHEDULE

Toddler & Preschool Program (Ages 1 to 5)

Toddler Class
Full Day Preschool Class

Daily Tuition

*see below

Weekly Tuition

SAC Programs

Before & After School Program (Grades K – 5)

Before School
After School
Before & After School
Full Day or Snow Day (%)
Half Day

Daily Tuition

*see below

Weekly Tuition

(%) If it is not a regular scheduled day for your child and there is room in our program that day.

* Tuition rate increases are reviewed and approved by the Advisory Board during the late spring/early summer. These rate increases become effective for the following September. Please refer to our Registration Packet for the most recent rates.

BILLING AT THE START OF THE PROGRAM YEAR

The start of our program varies year to year coordinating with Portland Public Schools. Please refer to the current year calendar posted on our web-site for the exact opening date.

If you have enrolled your child for the start of our program year, tuition is due on the Friday before this date. If you enroll your child for the start of our program year, but choose to not have your child attend that first partial week of care, tuition is still due for that week. Please note that we have full-day care for kindergarteners during the first week of Portland Public Schools (*)

If your child begins at a different time of the year, tuition payments are due on the Friday before your first week of care.

(*) – If you have extenuating circumstances where you have registered your child for the start of our program year, but are going to delay their start (e.g. kindergarten), you need to notify the director or business manager by August 15 of your request to not pay tuition. Individual requests will be reviewed and a determination will be made.

TUITION POLICIES

1. Payment will be due no later than the Friday before each week of care. If tuition has not been paid by the close of business on Friday, a late fee of \$25.00 per week will be added to

- your weekly tuition amount until paid.
2. When a family falls behind in tuition payments by 3 or more weeks, the child/children will not be permitted to attend the program. Any and all current and past due tuition amounts must be paid before the child/children can return to the program. The slot will be held open for 2 weeks after suspension due to non-payment.
 3. The non-refundable registration fee of \$100.00 (per family) is an administrative fee and does not apply to weekly tuition.
 4. For toddlers, preschoolers and pre-K children, a non-refundable deposit equivalent to one week's tuition is required prior to enrollment. This reflects your decision to enroll your child in our program. Once enrolled, this will be applied to the last week that your child is in our program. If you decline your enrollment prior to your child's start date, this deposit is forfeited.
 5. ***Tuition is based on enrollment, a reserved space, and not attendance. To maintain a reserved space, tuition must be paid during the absence of a child due to illness, suspension of child from the program, parent vacations, holidays and other listed days off.***
 6. Any schedule changes (e.g. adding, dropping or changing days from your child's schedule) must be in writing and given to the director or business manager **two weeks in advance**. Adding and changing days will be based upon available spots in our program. Please send your request through an email or brightwheel message.
 7. Because tuition rates are based on averaged costs over the school year, tuition must also be paid during times that the program may be closed: holidays, some storm days or program in-service days. PLEASE NOTE THAT TUITION IS NOT DUE FOR THE VACATION WEEK AT CHRISTMAS, APRIL VACATION AND APPROXIMATELY 1-1 ½ WEEKS AT THE END OF AUGUST (The exact timing may change slightly each year based upon the Portland Public Schools calendar. Please refer to your FLCP calendar for exact timing).
 8. In the event that a child leaves the program and tuition is still past due, the parent/guardian is responsible for paying the total tuition. First Lutheran reserves the right to pursue any and all legal remedies it may have with respect to non-payment of tuition.
 9. A two-week written notice to the Director is required for withdrawal from the program or tuition will be due **in full** for these two weeks. Any unused tuition payments will be refunded.
 10. An additional cost will be charged for the extension of a child's schedule to additional hours or days or on Public School In-Service Days. Extension arrangements must be made, **in writing**, at least one week prior to the day of attendance.
 11. Tuition is reviewed each year in late spring/early summer. The new tuition schedule is effective at the start of the next public school year (September).
 12. A Service Fee of \$50 will be charged for returned checks.

Late Pick Up Policy All children picked up after 5:30 p.m. will be assessed a late fee of \$1 per minute. The late fee amount due will be listed on your next Tuition Statement. Payment is due when your next tuition is due.

If a family is late more than 3 times within the year, the family will be asked to leave the program. The only exceptions are severe snow storms, heavy traffic due to car accidents, or medical emergencies.

If you will be arriving late you **must** call the office 207-797-2260 and leave a message or contact us via the Brightwheel app.

Other Tuition Related Information –Toddler, Preschool, Pre-K and SAC

1. There is a two-day per week minimum enrollment in any part of the First Lutheran Children's Programs.
2. We work with families to access financial aid assistance through the Department of Health & Human Services. Please call the Director or Business manager for more information.
3. Due to the low "Market Rate" paid by the state, we have a cap on the number of state-subsidize slots that are available.
4. For SAC, there are times during our program year when additional tuition may be necessary:
 - If your child attends on a part-time basis and would like to attend on a day that they are not normally scheduled to attend. We then charge a daily rate for the extra day. Please note that we cannot accommodate swapping of days without advance notice and an additional daily charge.
 - If you **elect** to have your child attend "Winter Camp" during February vacation, please note that enrollment must meet a break-even level to run the program.

IDENTIFICATION AT CHILD PICK UP

Our program will ask individuals to identify themselves via driver's license, passport, etc. at pick up time for your child. We realize that many parents/guardians and emergency contacts will become familiar to us, but we still ask that you are prepared, if necessary. This procedure is in place to protect your child. We request that the parents/guardians notify us in advance if someone else is picking up your child.

DROP OFF AND PICK UP POLICY

Toddlers, Preschool and SAC:

1. All families are issued an entry code or key fob at enrollment to gain entrance into our locked facility.
2. Children must not be dropped off before or picked up after their scheduled arrival time.
3. When arriving to pick up or drop off your child please do not leave vehicles idling.
4. The time reference standard is the clock in our brightwheel app
5. The SAC program opens at 7:00 a.m.
6. The toddler/preschool/pre-K wing opens at 7:30 a.m.
7. The Toddler/preschool program closes at 5:30 p.m.
8. The SAC program is open 7:00-8:45am and 3:30-5:30pm
9. Child Sign In/Out is through the brightwheel app. There is a tablet near the entrance door for signing in/out. We are required by state licensing regulations to have parents sign their child both in and out.
10. Drop off/pick up time allows for the opportunity for teachers and parents to connect with one another about their child's day. During that time the lead teacher will have the time to tell parents any pertinent information about their child's day.
11. Please do not allow your child/children to run ahead of you through the building at pick up time. Children are not allowed to exit the building at dismissal time without an adult. Keep your children close by in the parking lot, especially at busy drop off and pick-up times.

- 12. Late Pick Up Policy:** All children picked up after 5:30 p.m. will be assessed a late fee of \$5 per minute. The late fee amount due will be listed on your next Tuition Statement. Payment is due when your next tuition is due. **If a family is late more than 3 times within the year, the family will be asked to leave the program.**
13. Please notify us if there will be any variation in your child's daily schedule or if another person will be picking up your child. Please leave a message on the program's answering machine or email us at flcpinfo@firstlutheranportland.org or send a message thru brightwheel.
14. If a person arrives to pick up a child and the program does **NOT** have this information from the parent/guardian, the child **CAN NOT** leave with that person until the program has permission from the parent/guardian. Available staff will make every effort to contact the parent/guardian before the child is released. If the parent/guardian is unavailable, the director/acting director will make the decision about releasing the child.
15. Please notify us if you are expecting to be late in picking up your child. It is important that we work together. We are trying hard to meet our program obligations, and we appreciate your cooperation in making sure you as a parent meet your obligations to your child and their programs. If you are going to be late, please call to avoid further complications. **(Late fees are still applicable.)**
16. If a child remains in our care longer than forty-five minutes after closing and we have not heard from the parent, the staff have been instructed to:
- Do everything possible to try and contact by phone either parent or a person on the emergency list.
 - If parents and emergency persons cannot be reached, we will assume the child is abandoned. The staff must call the Police.
 - Staff will then release the child over to the Police for further care until the Police Department and the Department of Human Services can contact the parents.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES – CHILDREN

Emergency Response Plan:

Emergency Shelter: Our Emergency Shelter is Emmanuel Assembly of God Church located at 1575 Washington Ave Extension. The church is located next to our upper hardtop. Please refer to the Evacuation Section in our Crisis Plan which immediately precedes this section of the handbook.

Fire Drills

Fire drills are conducted monthly.

Medical Emergency

A medical emergency is an urgent situation that requires immediate medical attention by Emergency Medical Services (EMS). Call 911.

The staff responsible for the child will employ first aid techniques as trained. This should only be done if the staff can do so safely. The director should also be notified of any major illness or injury and 911 will be called.

A medical emergency is an urgent situation that requires immediate medical attention by Emergency medical Service (EMS). When a medical emergency arises, every effort will be made to contact parents, guardians, or an emergency contact. In the event that parents or emergency contacts cannot be reached, the director and/or lead teacher will decide the next step and a call to 911 will be placed. We will administer and procure treatment at one of the local hospitals (as directed by parent/guardian on enrollment forms) or doctor if deemed necessary.

An authorized staff member from FLCP will accompany the child and remain with him/her until parents arrive. Our emergency information form, filled out at the time of enrollment, serves as consent for your child to be transported by ambulance to a local medical facility to receive emergency care. First Lutheran Children's Center assumes no responsibility for the costs associated with emergency care.

IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT WE HAVE PHONE NUMBERS FOR EMERGENCY PURPOSES

PLEASE REMEMBER TO KEEP US UPDATED ON CHANGES IN PHONE NUMBERS AND EMAIL ADDRESSES

ACCIDENT/ILLNESS REPORTS

All classrooms are equipped with first aid kits that are carried by the teachers when going outside or into another part of the building. All non-emergency accidents will be documented on an accident report. If your child has an accident you will be given a report to review and sign. It is then given to the director to sign, after which time the parent can take a copy home. The original will be kept in the child's file. Teachers will typically speak with parents about minor accidents at pick-up time; program staff or office personnel will call parents immediately regarding bumps to the head or other injuries which might require a visit to the doctor.

ALLERGIES

If your child has allergies, please discuss them in detail with the teacher and director. For food allergies, a written description signed by parent and doctor must be on file and updated every year. The staff of the center will take appropriate precautions. If at any time your child develops an allergy, please let us know immediately. Staff receive training on the proper way to dispense medicines, the use of an epi-pen, completing medication request forms, and dispensing medication.

PEANUTS AND TREE NUT FREE POLICY

Due to life threatening allergies, the First Lutheran Children's Program is a peanut free and tree nut free program. **NO** food that contains peanuts/tree nuts or that has been **manufactured** in a

facility that processes nuts/peanuts will be allowed. Please keep this in mind when packing a lunch for your child, or providing snacks for the classroom during special occasions. This includes peanuts as well as tree nuts such as almonds, cashews, walnuts, pine nuts (pinoli), etc. Please make sure to read the label of all pre-packaged/processed food and snacks to ensure it is nut free. Dunkin food is manufactured in a facility that processes nuts/peanuts. Donuts, breakfast sandwiches, etc. from Dunkin will not be allowed at First Lutheran.

CHRONIC HEALTH CONDITIONS

Staff is trained to respond to symptoms arising from chronic health conditions such as anaphylactic shock/allergic reactions, convulsions/seizure/epilepsy and diabetes. Epi-pens and inhalers are located in the classroom first aid box. In addition, older children in the SAC program are allowed to keep their inhalers with them. Epi-pens are always maintained by a staff member. At the beginning of each program year, the staff is trained on inhaler and epi-pen administration and updated on the children with allergies in our program.

ILLNESS

Our goal is to provide child care for well children. Having ill children at the center presents the very real possibility that others can be infected. While we understand that parents need to be at work or in class, we need to enforce this policy to protect all children and staff from unnecessary exposure to **communicable** disease. We follow the guidelines developed by the *American Academy of Pediatrics* and the *American Public*.

DAILY HEALTH INSPECTIONS

For the safety and protection of the children, each classroom will follow the recommendation of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) by providing each child with a health check prior to his/her entering the group. Each child will be checked for the following:

- Severe coughing
- Breathing difficulties
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Pinkeye (tears, redness of eyelid lining, irritation, swelling, discharge, etc.)
- Infected skin patches or a rash accompanied by a fever
- Feverish appearance
- Unusual behavior - crying more than usual, lethargy, generally feeling unwell

Parents are expected to have an alternative child care arrangement in place when children are ill.

Illness:

When a child becomes ill or has an accident (warrant enough to call the parent) while at First Lutheran we make every effort to keep the child as comfortable as possible. The child will be brought to the director's office where there is a cot and blanket to lay down on. The director, assistant director, business manager, or staff member will remain with the child until a parent/guardian picks them up. A phone call will be made to the parents notifying them that their child is ill and needs to go home. **Parents are also expected to promptly (within one hour) pick up their children from the center when any of the conditions above exist.**

If after **10** minutes we have not been able to contact a parent, we will call the emergency contact listed in the child's file. Parents will be given a Sent Home Sick Report when their child goes home from the program due to illness

Injury:

If the child has an injury, bumped head, splinter, abrasion, every effort will be made to keep the child as comfortable as possible. Children will be given the appropriate first aid and the parents will be called to inform them of the injury. With information from the teacher or director the parent will decide if they need to pick up their child.

INFECTION CONTROL AND PERSONAL HYGIENE

Children are encouraged to develop desirable habits of personal hygiene, including washing hands after toileting, and before and after meals. Eating a variety of nutritious foods is also encouraged. In addition to instructing children in these habits, teachers model the behaviors. Upon arrival at First Lutheran, parents of toddler/preschool children will help their children wash their hands.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES - Reference: Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools

When a communicable disease has been introduced into the center, parents will be notified. The center also will report these occurrences to the state and local health departments when required. Parents are urged to notify the center when their child is known to have been exposed to a communicable disease outside the center.

The director may determine that a child who does not appear to be fully recovered from an illness cannot be readmitted to the center without a statement from a physician stating that the child is able to return and participate in the activities of the center, or is no longer infectious.

We reserve the right to refuse care due to contagious illness.

In the case of impetigo, lice, ringworm, pinworms, rashes, chicken pox, thrush, etc. your child must be NON-CONTAGIOUS before returning to the center.

If a child has been exposed to a contagious disease, it must be reported to the Director. Strep throat, impetigo, viral infections, infected ears and/or glands, measles, mumps, chicken pox, scarlet fever, conjunctivitis etc. are among those conditions categorized as "highly contagious." ***Symptoms of fever, vomiting and diarrhea must be gone for 24 hours before a child can return to the program.*** Any child who has a communicable disease or condition may return to the program only after the following procedure has been met:

COVID 19	Per the CDC, the updated Respiratory Virus Guidance recommends that people stay home and away from others until at least 24 hours after both their symptoms are getting better overall, and they have not had a fever (and are not using fever-reducing medication).
STREP THROAT	May return after child has been on prescribed medication for 24 hours .
RING WORM	Note from doctor.
IMPETIGO	Note from doctor.
MEASLES, MUMPS & RUBELLA	Note from doctor.
CHICKEN POX	Minimum of one-week absence and when all lesions are dry.
SCARLET FEVER	Note from doctor.

INFECTIOUS HEPATITIS	Note from doctor. Children in families where infectious hepatitis has been diagnosed. Need a GAMMA Globulin shot to protect against it. It is important to call First Lutheran when anyone in the family has been diagnosed.
HEAD LICE	After using head lice shampoo and director has checked for any nits.
CONJUNCTIVITIS	If eyes are weeping pus, the child must stay home until weeping stops. The child may return after 24 hours on medication or with a note from the doctor.
FIFTHS DISEASE	Child does not have to stay home, but please notify the Director if your child has been diagnosed.
MEDICAL PROCEDURES	If your child had a medical procedure and was put under anesthesia, he/she must wait 24 hours after recovery to return to the program.

WHEN A CHILD NEEDS TO STAY HOME:

Parents should exercise every caution and keep their child home should unusual symptoms occur. For the protection of all children and staff, children should be kept at home if he/she shows any of the following signs:

- Temperature of **100.4** or higher .A child's temperature should be normal without medication for 24-hours before the child is brought to the center. If your child has a fever in the evening, he/she should not be brought to the center in the morning, even if his/her temperature is normal. Fever is defined as **100.4°** F or higher.
- Vomiting your child may return to the program 24 hours after his/hers last bout of vomiting
- Diarrhea, as defined by the CDC, consists of more than one abnormally loose stool. Symptoms of diarrhea must be gone for 24 hours before they can return to the program. A child should not return to the center until his/her bowel movements have returned to a normal consistency.
- Conjunctivitis (Pinkeye): a child with pinkeye must be on medication for 24 hours before returning to the program
- Unexplained Rash: body rash, not associated with diapering, heat or allergic reactions, especially with fever or itching.
- Sore throat coupled with a fever or swollen neck glands.
- Lice, Scabies: Children must not return to childcare until they are free of lice and nits (eggs). Children with scabies can be admitted after treatment.
- If your child is unusually tired, pale, shows a lack of appetite, is difficult to wake, confused, or irritable. This is sufficient reason to exclude a child from preschool.

Please note: Classroom teachers will use their best judgment, as well as these guidelines, to determine when to send children home.

PERMISSION TO ADMINISTER MEDICATION

Medications will be administered to a child only when the parent have completed and signed the "Permission to Administer Medication" form. This form must accompany the medication or we will not be able to administer the medication to your child. Parents will be asked to complete and sign a medication permission slip for each prescription given, noting time, amount, and number of days to be given. A teacher trained to administer medication will do so and note time, date, and amount given on a medication log.

Medication prescribed for an individual child must be kept in the **original container** bearing the original pharmacy label, which shows the prescription number, date filled, doctor's name, directions for use, and child's name. Medication will be kept in a locked medicine box (refrigerated if necessary) and out of the reach of children. Parents need to check expiration dates on medications. We reserve the right to dispose of expired medications.

The program does not administer over the counter medication, such as pain relievers, cough syrup, allergy medicine etc.

The program will apply non-prescription skin protectants and cosmetics such as sunscreen, insect repellent, diaper cream, lotion, and lip balm with written parental consent. All containers MUST be labeled with your child's name.

SUN SAFETY

First Lutheran Children's Program wants to provide a safer environment for our children by reducing sun exposure during outdoor activities. By adopting this policy, we aim to reduce sun exposure by practicing appropriate strategies for sun protection. This policy will be implemented throughout the year, but with particular emphasis from March through October when the sun's UVB rays are known to be stronger.

Sunscreen

Parents/guardians are **required** to provide a water resistant / broad spectrum (sunscreen with an SPF 30 or higher for staff to apply to their child's exposed skin, except eyelids, 30 minutes before exposure to the sun and every two hours while in the sun. Parents/guardians will sign and complete a sunscreen permission form giving staff permission to apply sunscreen to his/her child. The form will remain on file at the program. Sunscreen bottles are to be labeled with your child's name. Sunscreen will not be shared among children. **Parents will apply the first application of sunscreen to their child before they arrive at the program.**

Hats

Parents/guardians will be encouraged to provide hats with wide brims (at least 2- to 3-inches all around) that protect the face, neck and ears, for their child to wear whenever they are outside. Baseball hats are not recommended because they do not shield the neck, ears or cheeks.

Sunglasses

Parents/guardian's will be encouraged to provide sunglasses that block 100 percent of UVA and UVB rays to protect their child's eyes from UV rays whenever they are outside.

Outdoor Activities/Shade Options

First Lutheran Children's Program will provide sufficient areas of shelter and/or trees providing shade on the lower hardtop and playground. Children will be encouraged to see and use available areas of shade for outdoor play activities.

HANDWASHING

In order to help control the spread of germs, all staff and children are required to wash their hands when arriving at First Lutheran Children's Programs. Hands need to be washed by all staff & children after using the bathroom and before eating snacks/meals or cooking projects. It is important to wash your hands often throughout the day. ***See Health and Safety Handbook for more details on handwashing.***

Water Safety

All staff will be a trained water safety attendant. A water safety attendant for wading pools must hold a valid CPR certificates and a valid First Aid certificate

Procedure:

- All children will have written permission from their parents/guardians to participate in water activities, wading pools and sprinklers.
- Children will be supervised at all times by a water safety attendant.
- There will always be 2 staff present during pool time.
- All children not potty trained are required to wear swim diapers.
- Children will NEVER be left alone.
- Wading pools will be filled in the presence of an adult and never left unattended.
- Wading pools will be emptied after each class is finished. They will be cleaned and disinfected and stored to prevent collection of water.
- Pool/sprinkler area will be checked of debris on a daily basis.

If a child gets ill or has an accident while in the wading pool (vomit, bleeding, urinates, bowel movement)

- Staff will immediately remove all children from the wading pool
- Staff will call for assistant from any available staff member
- Children in the pool will be washed off with soap & water
- Pool water will be disposed of properly.
- Pool will be disinfected with bleach & water

NUTRITION

Reminder: We are a peanut and tree nut free facility.

Toddler & Preschool:

During snack and lunch time staff models good nutrition choices and manners. Staff will sit at the tables with the children during meal time to promote conversations, to observe children's eating habits and to give positive reinforcement and encouragement for trying new foods.

Please note that staff does not offer children younger than four years these foods: hot dogs, whole or sliced in rounds; whole grapes; popcorn; raw peas and hard pretzels; or chunks of raw carrots or meat larger than can be swallowed whole. If these foods are sent in with a child, staff will cut foods into pieces no larger than ½-inch square for toddler/twos, according to each child's chewing and swallowing capability, or send it back home with the child.

Snacks: Nutritious morning and afternoon snacks are provided by First Lutheran on a daily basis. Water is provided during snacks. Toddlers who drink milk will be served whole milk up to the age of two.

Lunches: Children's lunches, including a beverage, will be brought from home. We encourage healthy, nutritious lunches. There are microwaves in each room for heating up lunches. When using a microwave no food or beverage will be heated in a plastic container, styrofoam, plastic wrap and aluminum foil will not be used.

Due to refrigeration limits, please include an ice pack in your child's lunch box. All lunches and containers should be clearly labeled with your child's name. Candy and/or soda are not allowed for lunch.

Celebration: Young children often consider their birthday the most important day of the year! We encourage celebration, but have some guidelines for parents to follow. Birthday celebrations will consist of a special snack brought in by the child's family if they so desire. Please talk with your child's teachers about ways to celebrate their birthdays in the classroom.

School Age Care:

Breakfast

- Breakfast is prepared by the staff. Breakfast is self-serve. Staff is available to help when needed.
- The breakfast/snack menu consists of:
 - Mon./Wed./Fri. – Cereal, milk or water
 - Tue./Thur. – Bagels, French toast, Waffles and milk or water

Afternoon Snack:

- All children are served a healthy, nutritious snack. The snack is usually served "family style". Snacks include healthy choices such as: cheese & crackers, fruit, pizza, baked potatoes, etc. Milk and water are always available.
- A monthly snack menu is posted on the bulletin board and included in the monthly newsletter. Changes in the menu are noted on the bulletin board.
- Children are invited to help prepare the snack menu.
- SAC celebrates birthdays once a month.

Lunches:

On full days, ***lunches need to be brought from home.*** We highly encourage healthy lunches. Please provide a beverage (sugar free juice, milk or water) with your child's lunch. Due to limited refrigeration space please include an ice pack in your child's lunch box.

Our Program's policies do not allow soda or candy to be sent in with your child.

QUIET TIME/NAP TIME

First Lutheran Children's Program keeps in compliance with the State of Maine Rules for the Licensing of Child Care Facilities for teacher/child ratio at ALL times. (Chapter 28.2.1) for all programs. All napping items (sheet, blanket, "stuffy/lovie") must be left at FLCP during the week.

SAC/Day Camp: In the school age care program, when the children are here for a full day, they will be required to have ½ hour of "quiet time". During this time, children can read, and do

other quiet activities that have been approved by the staff. A quiet time of ½ hour is required every day during summer camp.

Preschool/ Pre-K: Teachers supervise children primarily by sight and sound and are aware of where children are at all times. The program employs “floating teachers” who are available to assist classroom teachers with any needs. The children are required to have a “quiet time” during their day at First Lutheran. Each child is assigned a 2-inch thick mat to use during this time. Your child/children may bring a small blanket or stuffed animal to sleep with. We ask that you keep it small due to storage problems. Children who do not sleep are allowed to do quiet activities on their mats after ½ hour of resting. Pillows are not allowed.

Toddlers: Teachers supervise toddlers/infants by sight and sound at all times. They are aware of where children are at all times. The program employs “floating teachers” who are available to assist classroom teachers with any needs.

For toddlers, we accommodate a morning nap/rest time based upon each child’s schedule/need. For toddlers under the age of 18 months parents must provide portable nap cribs (e.g. pack n plays) for their child. For toddlers over 18 months of age, a 2-inch thick mat is provided. Your child may bring a small blanket or stuffed animal to sleep with. Pillows are not allowed for toddlers.

CLOTHING

Active play, indoors and outdoors, is an important part of the program, it provides an extension of our learning environment. Please provide sweaters and jackets even on sunny fall and spring days. Ski pants, boots, mittens/gloves and hats are required in the winter. Our SAC children walk to and from school and our preschool children play outside. It is very important that they have the appropriate foul weather gear. We suggest that a change of clothes be kept in the child bag. PLEASE LABEL ALL CLOTHING AND BAGS.

TOYS FROM HOME

Toddler/Preschool children may bring a small comfort item, such as a stuffed animal or blanket for transitions and rest time. No other toys are allowed due to the possibility of broken or lost toys, as well as the inability to share. Toys may only be brought from home at a specific time when designated by the classroom teachers.

SAC children will be invited to bring in toys and personal items several days each month. These days will be announced in the monthly newsletter.

NO WEAPON, WAR OR VIOLENT THEME TOYS OF ANY KIND ARE ALLOWED.

BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES

Philosophy

It is our intent that each child enjoys and has a positive experience while at First Lutheran. We also let the children know we want them to succeed and that we are here to help. As in any other group activity, the inappropriate behavior of a few can spoil the experience for the entire group. Therefore, the following basic guidelines apply directly to each participant and will be used in

determining her/his eligibility to continue as a participant in the Children's Programs. An important part of the any school experience is helping children learn how to get along in the world, how to get along with one another, how to follow the directions from an adult, to develop self-control and to teach children that each person is responsible for his/her own actions. In doing this FLCP strives to create an environment in which children can be successful as they learn about appropriate behaviors.

Responsibility & Accountability

Guidelines

- Definite guidelines for behavior are established so that children know what is expected of them. This helps them feel secure.
- Limits and consequences will be clear and understandable to the child and will be reinforced and explained to the child.
- Each classroom will establish, with the children's help a set of rules and guideline to adhere by.
- Children will be given reasonable opportunity to resolve their own conflicts.
- All teachers/staff follow the State of Maine Rules for the Licensing of Child Care Facilities, section 16- Child Guidance.

Procedure

- Teachers will respond consistently and firmly to inappropriate behavior.
- Children will be encouraged and guided to use their words when having a disagreement with another child.
- Children will be guided by the teacher to find new ways to handle a situation that caused the inappropriate behavior
- Children will be given time apart from other children in order for him/her to calm down and think about their actions.
- Redirecting behavior when this seem potentially beneficial.
- Teachers will talk with children individually about their behaviors to gain some insight into the child's understanding of the situation.
- Keeping parents informed of any behavioral problems/concerns through conversation or written Incident Reports.
- At no time, however, will the staff person use physical punishment, psychological abuse, or coercion.

All staff practices the 6 Steps in Resolving Conflicts:

1. Approach calmly, stopping any hurtful actions
2. Acknowledge children's feelings
3. Gather information
4. Restate the problem
5. Ask for ideas for solutions and choose one together
6. Be prepared to give follow-up support

Challenging Behavior Policy – Toddlers/Preschool/Pre-K

Our program utilizes a behavior management plan which rewards desirable behavior in a number of creative ways. Positive reinforcement decreases the number of situations that require some type of disciplinary action. In addition, by creating an environment for success, by providing sufficient choices and variety of choices, and providing opportunities for children to learn the guidelines for acceptable behavior, we reduce opportunities for idle time, which may lead to inappropriate actions.

All participants are entitled to a safe and educational experience. First Lutheran strives to serve all children, but sometimes cannot serve a child whose behavior disrupts and immobilizes the whole program. Challenging or disruptive behavior will be addressed in a Behavioral Incident Report. This report will be signed by the parent/guardian of the child, the director of the program and the staff that handled the situation. A copy of the incident report is given to the parents and the original is placed in the child's file.

Challenging behavior is considered behavior which:

1. Interferes with children's learning, development and success at play
2. Affects the emotional well-being of any child
3. Inflicts physical or emotional harm on other children, adults or self
4. Displays physical aggression such as hitting, biting, kicking, throwing of objects, using threatening words
5. Refusal to follow classroom/programs rules.

Procedures to deal with challenging behavior

1. A disruptive child will be given time apart from other children, in order for him/her to calm down and think about his/her actions and behavior.
2. The staff involved will talk with the child to gain some insight into the child's understanding of the situation. At no time, however, will the staff person shame the child or call the child names.
3. If the disruptive action was significant, the appropriate staff will complete a Behavioral Incident Report. The original will be placed in the child file and the copy will be given to the parent.
4. If the behavior of a child continues to be disruptive, staff will document all incidents and discuss with parents. If a child has difficulty managing his/her behavior on a recurring basis, parents/guardians will be asked to meet with the child's teacher and the director of the program. Parents and staff may complete a behavior response plan. If parents are willing, First Lutheran Children's Programs may reach out to specialists who can advise on more approaches to help curb the disruptive behavior.

Challenging Behavior Policy – SAC and Camp

School-Age Care Program – UPDATED September, 2025

First Lutheran Children's Program is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all children and staff. While many behaviors that we see are developmentally appropriate, at times there may be displays of inappropriate behaviors for children in group care.

This policy outlines how we respond to unsafe behaviors, balancing safety with support for each child's growth.

Inappropriate behaviors for this age group are those that put the child, other children, staff, or the environment at risk. Examples include but are not limited to:

- **Physical aggression:** hitting, kicking, biting, pushing, scratching, and physically harming other children and/or caregivers.
- **Bullying:** intentional verbal or physical targeting of peers.
- **Discriminatory behavior:** displaying prejudice or bias against other children based on factors such as race, gender, ability.
- **Verbal aggression:** threats, severe name-calling, intimidation, using profanity, offensive language, or derogatory remarks.
- **Dangerous misuse of property:** throwing chairs, slamming doors, deliberately damaging toys.
- **Other unsafe actions:** running away from the group, ignoring safety directions, climbing on or throwing furniture or using materials in a dangerous manner.

The following course of action will be implemented once a pattern of challenging behaviors are noted and documented.

Step 1 – First Unsafe Incident (same day)

The child takes a brief cooldown break (5–10 minutes, or until calm) in a supervised space away from the group. The incident is documented in the daily log and an incident report is given to the parents. The child rejoins the group once calm and committed to safe behavior.

Step 2 – Second Unsafe Incident (same day)

Parents/guardians are called for **immediate pickup**. Refunds are not issued for days when a child is sent home. Written Incident Report provided. If a parent refuses or delays pickup, the administrator may determine if services will continue.

Step 3 – Ongoing Pattern

Three or more incidents within two weeks → parent conference scheduled. A Behavior Support Plan is created with specific, measurable goals.

Step 4 – Behavior Support Plan

The child is placed on a 1–2 week probation period. If goals are not met, a second parent conference is held to adjust the support plan.

Step 5 – Disenrollment

If unsafe behaviors continue in spite of the support plan, the child may be disenrolled. At any point, based on severity, the administrative team reserves the right to disenroll immediately.

All steps outlined above are up to the discretion of the First Lutheran Children's Programs administrative team. A child may be disenrolled based on the severity of the behaviors at any time in the process without warning.

Important Notes

All steps above are cumulative and at the discretion of the administrative team. A child may be disenrolled **at any point** in the process based on the severity of behaviors.

Immediate pickup is required if a child: Causes physical harm to self or others. Makes

a credible threat of harm. Engages in behavior creating immediate danger.

Return Procedure:

The child may return the next scheduled day after a parent/staff conversation. For severe cases, a Behavior Support Plan must be drafted before returning. If unsafe behavior recurs within 5 program days of return, the child may be placed on probation, suspended, or disenrolled.

Our Promise

Supportive strategies come first; discipline is never punitive. Disenrollment is a last resort, after reasonable support has been tried. Families are informed and involved at every step.

Together, we work to help every child feel safe, respected, and successful.

Resources for Chronic Disruptive Behavior

- Center for Community Inclusion: T 207.581.1084 F 207.581.1231
E ccidsmail@maine.edu
- Child Development Services: T 207.781.8881
- Maine Roads to Quality–Warm Line T 1.844.209.5964 E inclusion.warmline@maine.edu
- Placement Services: Childcarechoices.me

BULLYING

Bullying is an extreme form of peer conflict that is deliberate, repeated, and involves a power imbalance. Bullying may take different forms, from physical assaults, to name calling, to rumor spreading and social exclusion. Recent years have seen the growth of cyberbullying, which occurs through the use of technological devices.

First Lutheran Children's Programs has a no-tolerance policy towards bullying and actively takes steps to prevent bullying from happening by encouraging pro-social behavior and fostering a sense of community among children and youth.

Staff has been trained through workshops on how to recognize when a child may be experiencing bullying. Staff works to prevent bullying by:

1. Discuss and model positive behavior and other ways young children can make friends and interact with their peers. Offer the words and actions they need to be successful
2. Set clear rules for behavior.
3. Be vigilant.
4. Value kindness
5. Use age-appropriate consequences for aggressive behavior
6. Help children learn to substitute alternative behaviors for aggression
7. Teach them to report to an adult

Procedures to deal with a bullying situation:

1. Staff intervenes immediately and appropriately to stop the bullying
2. Staff follows up individually with the involved children and youth;
3. Staff documents the incident and follows up with the involved parties and other program staff to make sure the bullying does not continue.
4. Parents are notified of the incident verbally and with a written report.
5. Situation will be assessed by director and if deemed necessary a meeting with the parent will be held. Behavioral plan will be put in place.
6. Second incident of bullying, the children will be suspended from the program for a time determined by the director. (varies from 2 days to suspension from program due to the severity of the bullying)

GRIEVANCE POLICY – FAMILIES & CHILDREN**Problem Resolution:**

Families, children and other stakeholders of First Lutheran Children's Program are encouraged, in a climate of openness and mutual respect, to reconcile their differences with each other. All stakeholders have the right to file a grievance without any fear of retaliation.

Families:

Families have the right to state their grievances in either written or verbal form to the Director. If the problem cannot be resolved at the administrative level, it must be brought to the attention of the President of the Advisory Board. If the dispute cannot be resolved at the board level, it may be brought to the Church Council.

If the dispute cannot be resolved after going to Church Council, families may bring it to the Department of Health & Human Services

Children

Children are encouraged to state their grievance to staff member either verbally or in written form. If issue cannot be solved it will be forward to the Director. The Director will use measures to solve the issue, if it does not satisfy the child, then it must be brought to the attention of the Board of Directors.

If necessary a translator will be provided by the family or program.

FIELD TRIPS

Occasionally, First Lutheran Children's Programs will take (age appropriate) field trips. We will use different modes of travel based upon the age of the classroom and destination of the field trip. These modes could include any or all of the following: by foot, by buggy/carriage, city bus, van and chartered bus. We will gain permission from parents before we travel away from the church.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES – PARENTS/FAMILIES**CHILD ABUSE REPORTING****Abuse and neglect reporting procedure:**

Children's Emergency Services – 24 hours 1-800-452-1999

Any person or professional who provides health care, social services or mental health services or who administers a Child Care Facility or program are mandated reporters of any suspected child abuse or neglect.

The State of Maine Rules for Licensing of Child Care Facilities requires all staff to be mandated child abuse reporters. No child should ever be subjected to harm by an adult. Children are unable to control the actions of the adults in their lives. Any suspected cases of abuse or neglect will be reported to the State of Maine Child Protective offices at the above number.

Potential abuse/neglect by Staff Members/Volunteers:

The director must be notified immediately of allegation of suspicion of child abuse that are raised against a staff person or volunteer by someone who is not any employee or volunteer. In the event that a staff member or volunteer is suspicious of child abuse or neglect on the part of another employee or volunteer, she/he must report those suspicions to the Director.

If the Director deems it is appropriate, a report will be filed with DHHS Abuse Unit. The Director will make a verbal report by phone. There will not be any conversation with the employee or volunteer before a verbal report has been given to DHHS.

After the report has been given, the Director will have a conversation with the employee or volunteer about the allegations. The Director will report information gathered from the conversation with the employee or volunteer to DHHS, if needed.

If the Director decides not to file and the staff member or parent/guardian disagrees with this decision the staff member is obligated to file as an individual. They may call DHHS at 1-800-452-1999.

After the report has been given, the Director will have a conversation with the employee or volunteer about the allegations. The Director will report information gathered from the conversation with the employee or volunteer to DHHS, if needed.

A staff member will be immediately suspended for a period of time without pay for any allegations of abuse or neglect towards any child. The director will immediately inform the Department of Health and Human Services. An investigation will be conducted and if the allegation is found to be true the staff member will be immediately terminated. If the investigation finds that the allegations are false, the staff member will receive the pay earned during the suspension time.

Any staff member accused of abuse or neglect towards a child, cannot return to work until the Department of Health and Human Services notifies the center to do so. First Lutheran Children's Programs will continue to cover the staff member's health and dental insurance, during suspension time until the investigation is over.

If the Director decides not to file and the staff member or parent/guardian disagrees with this decision the staff member is obligated to file as an individual. They may call DHHS at 1-800-452-1999.

Potential Abuse/Neglect by Parents/Guardians/Others: The director must be notified immediately of suspicion of child abuse and neglect. In the event that a staff member or volunteer suspects child abuse or neglect on the part of a parent/guardian, the staff member must report the suspicions to the Director.

The Director along with the staff member will file a report with the DHHS Abuse Unit. The Director will make a verbal report by phone 1-800-452-1999. Child Care personnel are mandated reporters. Failing to report is a civil violation with a fine up to \$500.

Staff who report suspicions of child abuse or neglect are immune from discharge, retaliation, or other disciplinary action for that reason alone unless it is proven that the report is malicious.

Potential Abuse/Neglect by Parents/Guardians/Others: taken from Staff Handbook

Potential Abuse/Neglect by Parents/Guardians/Others: The director must be notified immediately of suspicion of child abuse and neglect. In the event that a staff member or volunteer suspects child abuse or neglect on the part of a parent/guardian, the staff member must report the suspicions to the Director.

The Director along with the staff member will file a report with the DHHS Abuse Unit. The Director will make a verbal report by phone 1-800-452-1999. Child Care personnel are mandated reporters. Failing to report is a civil violation with a fine up to \$500.

Staff who report suspicions of child abuse or neglect are immune from discharge, retaliation, or other disciplinary action for that reason alone unless it is proven that the report is malicious.

ALCOHOL/INTOXICATING SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Our primary concern is the safety and wellbeing of the children enrolled in our program. Because of this, we require that parents not use alcohol or other intoxicating substances within a responsible period of time prior to picking up and transporting their child to and from the program.

If a staff member has reason to believe that a parent or responsible adult is under the influence, the staff member will address their concern and help in arranging for alternative transportation for the adult and child.

Reason for concern may include the odor of alcohol, slurring of speech, disturbance of gait, confusion and/or unusual behavior that may indicate impaired judgement or risk to safety.

If, in the opinion of a staff member, the responsible adult is impaired to the point of representing a clear and present danger should they attempt to operate a motor vehicle, the staff member will take any and all steps necessary to protect the safety of the child in their charge, including informing the local and/or state police.

SMOKING /FIREARMS

We strive to maintain a positive healthy environment for children and families. It is our policy that no smoking is allowed on church grounds. "Church grounds" means any area that children

are using during their time with us: building, playground, parking lot, etc. No smoking materials should come into the building or be in the presence of young children.

Smoking is strictly prohibited at any time on First Lutheran property.

The State of Maine prohibits smoking in any public building, restaurant or any place of employment.

Firearms are prohibited any time on First Lutheran property. Only law enforcement personnel are allowed to carry a firearm on to property.

CELL PHONES

For the safety and comfort of your children, please **DO NOT** use your cell phone when dropping off or picking up your child.

CHILDREN'S RECORDS

Each child's record contains enrollment information and other pertinent forms, evaluation reports, IEP, etc. These files are confidential. Only authorized persons may have access to these files. Authorized persons include FLCP staff members, State of Maine licensing agents and legal parent/guardian. Parents have access to their child's records and may see them upon request. All forms are kept in locked student files on site. Records are not forwarded to the public schools or any other agencies without written and signed consent from the parents or guardians.

When the program receives a request for the release of confidential information about a child or youth, or when the release of confidential information is necessary for program participation, prior to releasing such information, the program:

- a) Determines if the reason to release information is valid;
- b) Obtains informed, written authorization from the child or youth and a parent or legal guardian;
- c) Offers a copy of the signed authorization to the parent or legal guardian, and maintains a copy in the child's file.

Paper Records Access: Access to records is limited to authorized personnel on a need-to-know basis. For example: FLCP teachers are required to read the children's personal file to gather pertinent information about the child that may assist in the care of that child. Teachers review the children's files in the office as the files are not allowed to be removed from the office. The program maintains a file on each child enrolled. These files are confidential. Only authorized persons may have access to these files. Authorized persons include FLCP staff members, State of Maine licensing agents, and legal parents/guardians. A Request for Information may be filled out by any person wishing to access any portion of a child's file. This request will be reviewed for approval by the Program Director. If an approval cannot be immediately granted, the request will be forwarded on to the Board of Directors. If they do not feel that an easy decision can be made based on the information provided, a lawyer will be retained to review the request. All requests will be copied for the family and for the child's file.

Rights of Children and Parents:

Rights of Children. Children receiving childcare from Child Care Facilities have the following rights.

1. Children must be free from emotional, physical and/or sexual abuse, neglect and exploitation.
2. Each Child has the right to freedom from harmful actions or practices that are detrimental to the Child's welfare, and to practices that are potentially harmful to the Child.
3. Each Child has a right to an environment that meets the health and safety standards in this rule.
4. Each Child must be provided child care services without regard to race, age, national origin, religion, disability, sex or family composition.
5. Children must be treated with dignity, consideration and respect in full recognition of their individuality. This includes the use of developmentally appropriate practices by the Child Care Facility.
6. Each Child has the right to the implementation of any plan of service that has been developed for that Child in conjunction with community or state agencies by the Child Care Facility.
7. Each Child has the right to Developmentally Appropriate activities, materials, and equipment.
8. Children with disabilities have the right to reasonable modifications to Child Care Facility policies and practices.

B. Rights of parents and legal guardians of children receiving child care from Child Care Facilities.

1. A Child's Parent or Legal Guardian must be fully informed of items or services which are included in the rate they pay for childcare services.
2. A Child's Parent or Legal Guardian has the right to be fully informed of findings of the most recent inspection conducted by the Department. The Child Care Facility must inform Children's Parents or Legal Guardians that the licensing inspection results are public information and inspection results must be posted in a prominent place on the Premises.
3. Parents or Legal Guardians must be notified by the Child Care Facility within two business days of any actions taken against the Child Care Facility by the Department, including but not limited to, decisions to issue conditional Licenses, refusal to renew a License, or to impose fines or other sanctions.

ABOUT FIRST LUTHERAN

SUPERVISORY & OFFICE STAFF

Sherryl Eastman is the Program's Director. Sherryl became the director in April, 2022 and was the Assistant Director since July 2018. She has been at First Lutheran since 2006. Sherryl has many years of experience in early childhood education and worked in both the SAC program and the toddler program.

Beth Rovnak, Business Manager, is the person who manages the "business side" of the program. This includes tuition receipts, key fobs and program registration. Any tuition questions for program participants should be directed to her.

TEACHING STAFF

Teachers and staff members who work with children are hired for their experience, enthusiasm and ability to work with children in preschool, childcare or before and after school settings. We have been fortunate to have many staff members working with us for several years. You will be able to meet our teachers during our open houses, which are scheduled for late August and early September. In addition, our first newsletters will introduce the teaching staff.

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

First Lutheran Church is made up of people who gather together to worship, study, work and play. We believe that it is through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ that we find peace with our God and purpose for living. We emphasize the Bible and its message of God's love for all people. Program families are invited to participate in all aspects of fellowship and worship at First Lutheran.

Our pastor is Rev. Mark Perry. Worship service at First Lutheran is at 9:00. Sunday School also begins at 9:30. All are welcomed. Coffee hour is immediately following the service.

Our local ministry also includes: FLCP Children's Programs: Toddlers, Preschool, PreK, School Age Care and Day Camp, Youth Group Ministry, Bible Study Groups, Christmas Fair, Give A Child A Chance/Outreach committee, Soup Kitchen and other programs and activities.

Through the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, we are involved in other outreach programs and missions. All are welcome to join in any of our ministries.

Rev. Mark Glazener, Pastor
Joleen Knowles, Church Secretary

FIRST LUTHERAN CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS CONTACT INFORMATION

CHURCH TELEPHONE NUMBER: 207.797.2525
CHURCH FAX: 207.878.9658
CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS TELEPHONE NUMBER: 207.797.2260
E-MAIL ADDRESSES:

flcpinfo@firstlutheranportland.org – general email address
sherryleastman@firstlutheranportland.org- Sherryl Eastman
beth.rovnak@firstlutheranportland.org – Beth Rovnak

WEBSITES:

www.flcp-childcare.org
www.firstlutheranportland.org

Parent Resources

First Lutheran Children's Program	797.2260
First Lutheran Children's Program -- Fax	878.9658
First Lutheran Children's Program Tax ID #	01-0356889
Translation Services- Dept of Education	https://www.maine.gov/doe/learning/englishlearners/translatorresources
Portland Adult Education	207 874-8155

Portland Public Libraries	207 871-1700
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MRTQ warm line	844.209.5964
Center for Community Inclusion	207.581.1231 ccidsmail@maine.edu
Center for Grieving Children	775.5216
Northeast Speech and Hearing	874.1065
Child Development Services Cumberland	781.8881
Department of Health & Human Services	822.2325
Ingraham Volunteers (Crisis Line)	777.HELP (777.4357)
Kids First Center	761.2709
211 Maine – Health & Human Services Information & Referral Line	211
Maine Medical Center	662.0111
Poison Control Center	1.800.222.1222
DHHS	822.2000
Ruth's Reusable Resources	699.5565

APPENDIX 1 : ASSESSMENT PLAN

First Lutheran Children's Programs

Assessment Plan

Contents

- I. Purpose Statement**
- II. Procedure Statement**
- III. Timeline of Assessment**
- IV. Confidentiality**
- V. Referral Plan**
- VI. Curriculum and Differentiation Plan**
- VII.**

I. Purpose Statement

The purpose of First Lutheran Children's Programs (FLCP) is to provide a safe, creative environment for children and youth, from toddlers to pre-teens. Through a diverse program and provided by trained staff, First Lutheran Children's Programs seeks to help each child achieve his/her potential in terms of emotional development, physical well-being, social and spiritual growth. We are serious about First Lutheran's educational ministry. But our intent is to provide a fun-filled experience. We believe that children learn best when they are involved, experiencing and having fun. To this end, the Program provides many fun, varied experiences that are developmentally appropriate for their ages.

First Lutheran Children's Program's assessment purpose is consistent with its program's purpose. FLCP is committed to diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment of its children's behaviors, skills, competencies, preferences, and interactions through authentic means: observation, tasks, demonstrations, and more. FLCP assesses to ensure teachers can:

- a) make sound decisions about teaching and learning
- b) ensure students are meeting developmental milestones
- c) identify significant concerns that may require focused intervention for individual students
- d) gather data to improve the program

In alignment with the Maine Early Learning Development Standards, FLCP assesses Social and Emotional Development, Approaches to Learning, Creative Arts, Early Language and Literacy, Reading Standards for Literature, Physical Development and Health, Math, Science, and Social Studies.

II. Procedure Statement

First Lutheran Children's Program staff members are trained to authentically observe and assess children's behaviors, skills, competencies, preferences, and interactions on a daily basis.

Children are assessed in their natural environment, (classroom, playroom, outdoors). Children are not taken out of the room individually for assessment. This assessment is informal and anecdotal, though teachers are instructed to do the following:

- a) Keep a record of work samples that indicate key milestones in the Maine Early Learning Developmental Standards
- b) Provide written documentation of observable behaviors and interactions in the child's portfolio
- c) Record conversations and place in child's portfolio
- d) Keep notes from parents regarding development in the child's portfolio

At the formal level, teachers are asked to fill out a developmental checklist, aligned with the Maine Early Learning Developmental Standards 4 times per year. This is kept in the child's file and utilized to guide discussion during parent-teacher conferences, alongside the portfolio. Additionally, on a daily basis, teachers use various assessment tools to ensure that they identify students who are both adequately progressing and those who are not meeting developmental milestones, in order to both adjust instruction as appropriate and identify the need for intervention as necessary.

The Director utilizes time with teachers to both discuss individual students as well as class wide data to improve both current teaching and learning, as well as the program in the future.

III. Timeline of Assessment

As mentioned above, informal authentic assessments occur on a daily basis to be placed in each child's portfolio. Formally, developmental progress reports, based on the Maine Early Learning Developmental Standards, are completed 4 times per year, fall, winter, spring, summer. This is kept in the child's file and guides parent-teacher conferences, (face to face) which formally occur two times per year, in the fall and mid - summer. As needed or by request, additional parent-teacher conferences can occur and the informal assessments and daily, mini-checklists aid in those conversations. Written mid-year reports are given in late January and April.

Finally, a written year-end report completed in mid- summer adds well-developed color to each child's portfolio, expounding in detail on the progress each child makes in accordance with the Maine Early Learning Developmental Standards. This report is sent home to the parents in July to share their child's progress and allow for further dialogue between the parent-teacher conferences.

IV. Confidentiality

Child Records: Each child's record contains enrollment information and other pertinent forms, evaluation reports, IEP, etc. These files are confidential. Only authorized persons may have access to these files. Authorized persons include FLCP staff members, State of Maine licensing agents and legal parent/guardian. Parents have access to their child's records and may see them upon request. All forms are kept in locked student files on site. Records are not forwarded to the public schools or any other agencies without written and signed consent from the parents or guardians.

When the program receives a request for the release of confidential information about a child or youth, or when the release of confidential information is necessary for program participation, prior to releasing such information, the program:

- a) Determines if the reason to release information is valid;
- b) Obtains informed, written authorization from the child or youth and a parent or legal guardian;
- c) Offers a copy of the signed authorization to the parent or legal guardian, and maintains a copy in the child's file.

Paper Records Access: Access to records is limited to authorized personnel on a need-to-know basis. For example: FLCP teachers are required to read the children's personal file to gather pertinent information about the child that may assist in the care of that child. Teachers review the children's files in the office as the files are not allowed to be removed from the office the program maintains a file on each child enrolled. These files are confidential. Only authorized persons may have access to these files. Authorized persons include FLCP staff members, State of Maine licensing agents, and legal parents/guardians. A Request for Information may be filled out by any person wishing to access any portion of a child's file. This request will be reviewed for approval by the Program Director. If an approval cannot be immediately granted, the request will be forwarded on to the Board of Directors. If they do not feel that an easy decision can be made based on the information provided, a lawyer will be retained to review the request. All requests will be copied for the family and for the child's file.

Confidentiality: Confidentiality regarding information about children or their families is essential. At no time during or following employment with the program may a staff member discuss information about children, parents or other employees other than with staff and for First Lutheran Children's Program purposes. Information is shared only when it benefits the family and/or the child. In most situations, family partnerships are encouraged to resolve any issues. If in doubt, the Director determines if release of information is appropriate.

V. Communication Plan

Parents and guardians are notified of assessment plans in multiple ways. Assessment is covered as an integral and authentic part of the program from tours and registration, through ongoing communication, both verbal and written. Most importantly, the family handbook outlines assessment practices and the admission form that all parents and guardians are required to complete has information about our assessment and data practices.

FLCP strives to ensure that all communication, including that about our assessment, is presented in an appropriate and timely manner, in ways that are sensitive to family values, culture, identity, and home language. We welcome families input on your child's assessment.

While we follow all protocol, given FLCP's mission and purpose, we aim to have parents and teachers working together as a team, along with any specialist(s) involved, to communicate regularly regarding their child(ren)'s progress and achievements, as well as any difficulties at

school or home. To that end, we have the following formal and informal communication strategies in place:

- Parent-Teacher Conferences two times per year (Fall and Spring) – or as needed/upon request of the parent or teacher
- A written mid-year report expounding in detail on the progress each child makes in accordance with the Maine Early Learning Developmental Standards, sent home in February.
- Informal meetings between parents and teachers twice daily during drop off and pick up and they can be scheduled informally at any time.
- Children ages 1 – 3 are given written daily reports
- Upon request, teachers make every effort to meet with parents within a few days. In an emergency, teachers and administrators will meet with parents ASAP.

VI. Referral Plan

When assessing children, if a staff member feels that an outside party will be beneficial in helping a child achieve their full potential, the teachers will:

1. Keep written records outlining any concerns or issues for an average of 2 weeks using the observation and documentation of the child,
2. Meet with the director, after keeping notes for 2 weeks to express their concerns about the child
3. Set up meeting with the family within a few days and explain the teacher's concerns in a supportive, sensitive, and confidential manner (director will be present if necessary)
4. Give resources, information to family about services available to help their child.
Ex. Child Development Services (a Division of Maine Department of Education) for screening and/or further evaluation.
5. Director will follow up with family within 2 weeks,
6. Teachers and family will touch base on a daily basis.
7. CDS or any other agency, chosen by the parent/guardian will make the determination of the child's eligibility for early intervention services through more formal screening process.
Assessment results are viewed by teachers, families and the Child Care Coordinator and will be kept in the Child

VII. Curriculum and Differentiation Plan

FLCP's curriculum incorporates Maine Early Learning Development standards. The curriculum is thoughtfully planned for each age group and is developed to be challenging, engaging, developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive, comprehensive, and likely to promote positive outcomes for all young children.

The point of assessing children is to utilize these assessments to plan curriculum and adapt teaching practices to meet the needs of the whole group and the individual child. Diagnostic assessments and its early data inform curriculum planning for the year so that teachers can plan to hit benchmarks with children, as well as build and support their interests, abilities, and strengths. This information is also used to develop individual goals for all children and ensure

the curriculum is designed to help children meet those goals. As necessary, the curriculum is differentiated to do so.

Teachers will plan around these individual and group goals, ensuring curriculum, materials, activities, interactions, and the environment meet the needs of individuals and the group, as indicated by assessment data, both formal and informal.

Curriculum is formally revisited 2 times per year. Informally, teachers have planning periods 1-2 times weekly outside of the classroom and daily during children's rest time. They utilize informal assessment to adjust curriculum to meet the needs of their students based on what they are observing in the classroom.

VIII. Use of Assessment and Data for Program Improvement

FLCP

Uses of assessment to find out if possible changes need to occur to the environment, daily schedule, interest centers, arrangement of room, and teaching strategies

Is our curriculum working? Do we need to make changes to meet the needs of our changing population?

The teaching teams use the information gathered to guide curriculum planning, enabling them to project possible curriculum extensions and in depth exploration of topics and/or activities and make decisions about possible changes to the environment, daily schedule, interest area arrangements, styles of interaction, curriculum & teaching strategies and/or other aspects of the program to support and build on children's interests, abilities and strengths, develop individual learning goals for all children and assess their progress and to communicate with families.

On an individual basis, observation and documentation is used to support and address important learning and developmental goals. Knowing what the children can do on their own and what they can do with skilled adult prompting and support, decisions are made based on each child's current understandings and skills in the various content and developmental areas. The teaching team works collaboratively during the planning process to assess what children are ready to learn next and the instructional methods that might help the child achieve these goals.

Parent Handbook Acknowledgement Form

Child Name: _____

Date: _____

***I have read and understand the policies and procedures
set forth in the First Lutheran Children's Program
Parent Handbook.***

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____