



## Immanuel Lutheran Preschool Family Handbook

### **Welcome to Immanuel Lutheran Preschool!**

We are delighted that you have chosen to enroll your child(ren) at Immanuel Lutheran Preschool (ILP). We are an extension of the ministry of Immanuel Lutheran Church. We believe that the education and care of children is a cooperative effort that will include parents, teachers, and children as partners for families. This handbook is your guide to our program, people and operational procedures, a blueprint, if you will, for how we help those stories unfold. We want you to be very pleased and comfortable with your decision to choose ILP. If you have any questions about the policies in this handbook, or if there's anything we could be doing better, please speak to the director. Please take a few minutes to become familiar with this information, before your child's first day, we ask you to complete the Acknowledgement of Receipt form, then return it to the Director. We're looking forward to getting to know you and your child(ren). And again, if there's anything we can do to improve ourselves, don't hesitate to speak up. Together, we can provide your child(ren) with love, fun, education and care in a Christ-centered environment.

### **Immanuel Lutheran Preschool Mission Statement**

We believe that the Christian education and care of children is a cooperative effort that includes parents, children, teachers, and congregational members as partner with families. Immanuel Lutheran Church and its Preschool ministry are involved in caring for children and providing early education through activated and experiences that help develop skills necessary for school and for a Christ-centered life.

### **About Us**

**Name:** Immanuel Lutheran Preschool (ILP)

**Address:** 902 Cleveland Ave Charleston, IL 6190

**Office Telephone:** (217)345-3042

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**Email:** [ilpcharleston@gmail.com](mailto:ilpcharleston@gmail.com)

**Ownership:** Immanuel Lutheran Preschool is a nonprofit, Christian Center operated by Immanuel Lutheran Church, Charleston, Illinois. The Immanuel Lutheran Preschool board approves our policies and governs our Center.

**Affiliation:** Our Church and Center are affiliated with the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. We reside in the Central Illinois District.

**License:** We are licensed by the State of Illinois, Departments of Children and Family Services as a preschool and early childhood care facility. The license is renewed every 3 years. The Center also receives regular visits from the State Fire Marshall and the Coles County Health Department.

**Caring and Dedicated Staff:** When it comes to keeping you up-to-date with your child's engaging learning experiences, we strive to make our service and communication exceptional. We base our daily updates on notes from and conversations with your child's teacher, and include information on activities, developmental changes and, of course, milestones. We're always happy to meet and talk

about your child's progress at any time. We also have processes — formal and informal — to make sure we thoroughly communicate your child's progress. Our teachers are eager to understand your needs and to serve your child as a unique member of ILP.

### **Our Educational Philosophy**

Learning is meant to be a natural, joyful experience. Our goal is to help your child develop socially, emotionally, physically, and intellectually. Children thrive when the process of discovery is lovingly encouraged and gently reinforced. This is the philosophy behind our research-based curriculum that fosters individual growth by providing plenty of opportunities for exploration and child-initiated choice. All children need opportunities to be responsible, to make choices, and to be treated with respect. Our program encourages your child(s) growth and development with early learning experiences that build a strong foundation for his or her social, emotional, physical and intellectual skills. We believe each child has unique talents and interests. Our teachers honor these differences by providing your child with customized attention and activities that enable your son/daughter to learn and grow at his or her own pace and in your child's own way. This hands-on approach, combined with our balanced curriculum, is designed to encourage children to become confident, happy and self-aware.

### **Making Your First Day Easier**

Getting comfortable with a new environment can be challenging for any child. Some adjust quickly, while others may take a little longer. It's natural.

We make every effort to be aware of anything that might affect your child adversely when starting here and work with you to help ensure a smooth adjustment.

If possible, spend a little extra time with your child while he or she transitions into the classroom during the first couple of days. This helps both you and your child ease into the routine. We also encourage you to call or stop by any time during the day to see how your child's adjusting. A bit of separation anxiety is normal and expected, and we'll be happy to provide suggestions to minimize any stress for you and your child.

Starting a new chapter can be exciting and sometimes scary. We go out of our way to make it just plain exciting!

Remember, your child will soon feel comfortable here, and attending the center will become a joyful part of your son or daughter's routine.

### **Types of Classrooms**

#### **Infants**

Need a safe, secure "home away from home" where they can learn, play, and grow. That's why we've designed a nurturing, creative world for infants six weeks and older that helps their minds and bodies develop. We're committed to creating a strong bond with your child to ensure his or her best start in life. With that, we understand that the first five years of a child's life are an amazing time of growth and learning that serves as the foundation for future stages of development. Our Infant program provides a rich environment and a variety of experiences to meet your child's rapidly developing skills. Our program emphasizes the importance of positive, supportive interactions between teacher and child. Our teachers sing, read, and talk with your child to help him or her with this critical developmental stage. Because our classrooms and equipment are developmentally appropriate in size, infants can move, explore, and play with confidence. Age-appropriate activities are individually planned to promote your child's specific cognitive and social development in a warm, nurturing environment. Families shall furnish all diapers, wipes, diaper cream a change of clothing, breast milk, formula, bottles, food and snacks. If your child(ren) is on a special schedule (sleeping, eating, etc.) please give a copy of that schedule to the teacher. We will strive to maintain your home schedule as closely as possible within the center's limits.

## **Toddlers**

A whole new world opens to children when they take to their feet. They walk, talk, and begin to develop relationships with one another. Our Toddler program is filled with sensory experiences that emphasize the importance of a toddler's environment and relationships. Our teachers provide a high level of interaction while individually nurturing each child.

Families shall furnish all diapers, wipes, diaper cream and a change of clothing. Sheets and cots will be furnished by the center for nap/rest time; however, your child may bring a doll, blanket, small pillow or stuffed animal to cuddle. Pacifiers will be allowed at nap time. If your child(ren) is on a special schedule (sleeping, eating, etc.) please give a copy of that schedule to the teacher. We will strive to maintain your home schedule as closely as possible within the center's limits.

## **2-year Old's**

Two-year-olds are curious about the world around them. They're busy exploring their environment and learning to communicate their thoughts. While they're beginning to exert their independence, they're also gaining a better understanding of group play. Our Preschool program emphasizes developing the whole child by focusing on both education fundamentals and social skills. Our passionate teachers keep small hands busy and young minds engaged through activities designed specifically for this age group. Our experienced teachers provide many outlets for creative expression — including games, songs, movement, and art — that let your child build skills and confidence. By encouraging child-directed play, we ensure your child develops at his or her own pace. Sharing, cooperating, and taking turns all teach your child the importance of being part of a group. Your child will grow into his or her own person, ready to tackle the next challenge: preschool! Families shall furnish all diapers, pull-ups, wipes and a change of clothes. Sheets and cots will be furnished by the center for nap/rest time; however, your child may bring a doll, blanket, small pillow or stuffed animal to cuddle. If your child(ren) is on a special schedule (sleeping, eating, etc.) please give a copy of that schedule to the teacher. We will strive to maintain your home schedule as closely as possible within the center's limits.

## **3-year olds**

A preschooler's world opens up in new ways as he or she improves coordination, learns complex skills, and begins to interact more with peers. Our preschool program introduces language, math, science, and social skills in a logical, appropriate sequence that encourages learning one step at a time. And we provide plenty of individual attention to support your child's unique needs. This program provides a rich classroom environment where children are encouraged to explore and challenged to learn, all while making friends and developing self-confidence. Children strengthen their cognitive skills through fun memory games and are provided opportunities for hands-on experiences — such as creating collages — that combine creative expression and tactile experiences. Families shall furnish a complete set of clothing in a zip lock bag, labeled with the child's name. Sheets and cots will be furnished by the center for nap/rest time; however, your child may bring a doll, blanket, small pillow or stuffed animal to cuddle. Please If your child(ren) is on a special schedule (sleeping, eating, etc.) please give a copy of that schedule to the teacher. We will strive to maintain your home schedule as closely as possible within the center's limits.

A child must be potty trained. There are no diaper-changing facilities in these rooms, so diapers and pull-ups may not be used.

## **4-year old's**

With formal schooling on the horizon, prekindergarten is a critical time for children. Our Prekindergarten program promotes independence while preparing your child for the next exciting phase: kindergarten! We make the transition smoother by helping children become familiar with a

more structured learning environment. Our teachers have a passion for what they do and consider it a privilege to partner with you during this special time in your child's life. We make sure to pay special attention to developing and enhancing your child's communication, relationship-building, and higher-level thinking skills but we also help refine your prekindergartner's motor skills and encourage him or her to express creative ideas out loud! Sheets and cots will be furnished by the center for nap/rest time; however, your child may bring a doll, blanket, small pillow or stuffed animal to cuddle. If your child(ren) is on a special schedule (sleeping, eating, etc.) please give a copy of that schedule to the teacher. We will strive to maintain your home schedule as closely as possible within the center's limits.

### **After School**

This program helps school-agers develop a sense of who they are and what they can do. We promote collaboration and positive group interaction, giving children a choice in daily planning while encouraging independent learning. Additionally, we offer exciting activities, hands-on exploration, and a quiet, comfortable place for your child to do his or her homework. Our center works with your school calendar to offer fun-filled programs during holidays and out-of-school days, too.

### **Child Care and Health**

#### **Food and Nutrition**

Our program is very active, and children need the necessary nutrition to maintain a high level of interest and energy throughout the day. Mealtime promotes healthy eating patterns and fuels your child's readiness to learn. The menu is planned by our cook and satisfies all applicable federal and state nutrition guidelines. Children are more welcome to bring in a sack lunch from home. Guidelines from the State prevent us from storing items in the refrigerator-nor can we heat up any items. Lunches from home must stay in the child's cubby. Please feel free to bring in a healthy snack to share with the rest of your classroom. Food brought in must arrive unopened as packaged by the bakery or manufacture. We encourage healthy snack options such as whole-grain items, vegetables with dip, or fresh fruit platters. When entering the building in the morning, please refrain from bringing any outside food or drinks into the center.

#### **Food allergies**

Information on special diets shall be obtained in writing from the parent(s) and /or medical providers and maintained on file at the center. It may be necessary for parents to provide meals or portions of meals to meet the needs of their child. The parent shall be responsible for the safety and clear labeling of food brought into the center. Our staff will be willing, will accommodate this child to help maintain his/her health.

#### **Lunch**

Children will be served their meal at 11:30am. Occasionally, the group may eat in their classroom or outside. Our meal times are designed to be an enjoyable experience for the children and the staff. We will teach and encourage good manners. We will encourage children to try all foods.

#### **Snacks**

2 snacks will be provided each day. The first will be mid-morning, the second will follow nap/quiet time in the afternoon. We appreciate donations of snacks.

#### **Celebrations and Birthdays**

Seasonal and cultural celebrations and birthdays are special days for children, and we understand you may want to celebrate these occasions at the center. If you'd like to provide food for the celebration, we ask that all food items be commercially packaged with

ingredient statements in order to properly account for child food allergies. We encourage healthy snack options such as whole-grain items, vegetables with dip, or fresh fruit platters. Please be sure to provide enough food for every child in your child's classroom. And please, due to allergies and necessary scheduling needs, make arrangements with your teacher prior to the special day.

### **Breastfeeding**

Your preferences involving food and feeding practices for your child are very personal. In addition, our center is equipped to handle your expressed breast milk. Milk must be bottled in liquid form, not frozen. Please discuss your decision to breastfeed with your teacher to ensure we provide the right environment and support for you and your child.

### **Infant and Toddler Supplies**

Once your child begins eating table food, a nutritious meal and snacks will be provided according to the center policy and current menu. Bottles must be brought to the center each day already prepared. They should be clearly labeled with the child's first and last name. Center staff cannot mix formula bottles and cannot add cereal to bottles. Please do not leave bottles at the center overnight; their contents will be discarded. Due to the potential risk of tooth decay, bottles are not placed with children in cribs. For the safety of all our infants, we are unable to use glass bottles in our centers. Please provide your infant or toddler with two complete sets of clothing in a large zip lock bag and label them with your child's first and last name.

### **Clothing**

We want to be sure your child has fun while playing and learning in our center. Because a full day can include such activities as singing, painting, playing both indoors and out, dancing, and eating, we recommend easy fitting, comfortable, washable clothes. Be sure shoes are rubber-soled and closed-toe with a closed heel or heel strap. Flip-flops, sandals, and shoes with wheels are not appropriate in our environment. Shoes are required for all walking children. Please provide two complete sets of extra clothes, including socks, for your child. We request an extra pair of shoes and a sweater or sweatshirt be kept at the center, too. Clothing should be labeled in a big zip lock bag with your child's first and last name, and reviewed periodically to make sure it fits. In hot weather, apply sunscreen to your child before arriving at the center and dress your son or daughter with hats/visors and tightly woven clothing to help prevent sunburn during outdoor play. Please note: We require a written authorization from you before we can apply sunscreen/sunblock to your child. In cold weather, provide appropriately layered clothing to create insulation, including: mittens or gloves; caps, hoods, or hats; sweaters or sweatshirts; socks; and warm waterproof outerwear and footwear. Please be sure to label all extra clothing (e.g. jackets, sweaters and hats) with your child's first and last name.

### **Personal Belongings**

Your child will be provided with stimulating, educational toys every day. Because children often find comfort in special objects, your child may bring a blanket, a special soft toy, or a stuffed animal for rest time. Please do not let your child bring other toys or belongings from home, as bringing a treasured object to the center can create tension between children and each child's personal storage space is limited. It's also distressing for children and staff members when things are lost or misplaced. Cell phones and other electronics (iPods, MP3 players, etc.) should be left at home whenever possible. Use of electronics is not permitted in the classroom due to the distracting nature of these devices. We cannot assume responsibility for loss of, or damage to, personal belongings.

## **Outdoor Activities**

Outdoor play occurs daily, weather permitting. In the event weather conditions prevent outdoor activities, alternate indoor gross-motor activities will be substituted. Please note that we require a written authorization from a parent or guardian before we can apply sunscreen or sunblock.

## **Positive Guidance**

Part of what children are learning in their early years is how to get along with others and what behaviors are appropriate in different situations. We take a proactive and preventive approach to guidance that reinforces appropriate behaviors rather than focusing on inappropriate behaviors. To do this, our teachers are trained to use various techniques including redirection, praise, and distraction. In this positive guidance atmosphere, most inappropriate behaviors are avoided. However, in extreme situations and as a last resort, a child may be guided to an alternate activity away from the group for the benefit of the child and the rest of the children. Teachers use this strategy not as a punishment, but to help redirect the child when he or she returns to group activities. The child is allowed to return to the group activity when he or she feels ready to do so. At times, when a child's behavior is threatening to himself, others or the activity in progress, that child will be removed from the situation (time out). The process of removing a child from his/her current location interrupts the child's unacceptable behavior and actions. No child will leave a time out without a caring discussion with the caregiver. Action taken by the director as follows: 1<sup>st</sup> incident=child will meet with the director, 2<sup>nd</sup>= parents, director and teacher will meet, 3<sup>rd</sup>= child will not be able to attend school for one week. These incidents will be on a rolling 30-day timeframe. Accordance with our corporate policy and state child care licensing regulations, our staff never uses corporal punishment. We welcome families as partners in teaching children about socially appropriate behaviors. As your child's most influential teacher, we may occasionally ask you to work with us to help extinguish an inappropriate behavior. We understand these issues are sensitive and many different parenting styles are reflected among our families. We also ask that, while on our grounds, you refrain from using any form of guidance that is not consistent with our center's positive guidance approach or individual state child care licensing regulations. Please note: Any staff member who witnesses any form of physical or corporal punishment, even if administered by a family member, is required by law to report his or her observations to the appropriate local authorities.

## **Biting**

Biting is common among young children. During early childhood, children are sensory learners and often explore orally. In addition, children at a young age do not have fully developed language skills. Impulse control can lead children to bite as a way of making their needs known. We realize that biting can be a big concern, and we strive to minimize the behavior whenever possible. Our teachers and staff are trained to recognize triggers and how to prevent and decrease incidents. If your child bites or is bitten, you and the parent(s) of the other child involved receive an Incident/Accident Report that keeps the identity of both children confidential. If you have any concerns regarding a biting incident involving your child, please talk to your child's teacher or your Center Director.

## **Diapering and Toilet**

Learning high collaboration between you, your child, and your child's teachers makes for more successful toilet learning. Children best learn toileting skills through consistent, positive encouragement from all the adults who care for them. When your child shows an interest, you and your child's teachers will discuss how to work together to encourage toilet learning. We're committed to working with your child consistently, so toilet learning can be accomplished in a developmentally appropriate manner and with minimum stress for you and your child. Every child begins toilet learning at a different age and progresses at a different rate. We're always available as a resource to answer any questions about your child's progress. Several complete changes of clothes

and two pairs of shoes should be kept at the center during toilet learning. Until your child shows an interest in toileting, we'll provide diaper changes on an as-needed basis. Diaper changing procedures are posted in each center, and the specific times of each diaper change will be listed on your child's daily sheet.

### **Rest Time**

For healthy growth and development, it's essential for children of all ages to have time to rest or enjoy quiet activities during the day. At our center, your child will rest in the afternoons for one to two hours or longer, depending on his or her needs and individual state child care licensing regulations. Children who don't sleep are encouraged to read a book, play with puzzles, or participate in other quiet rest-area activities. Most school-age children have typically outgrown the need to nap and are encouraged to participate in quiet activities midday to recharge and rejuvenate. School-age children are not required to nap. Depending on your child's age, we provide cozy cribs or cots for rest time. Please label all personal rest items with your child's first and last name.

### **Infant Sleep**

Infants sleep according to their needs and the individual plans prepared by you, in cooperation with your child's teachers. In keeping with the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, all infants will be placed on their backs to sleep unless a documented medical condition requires alternate sleeping positions.

### **Allergies**

If your child has allergies, please inform your director and teacher and list the allergen information on your Enrollment Agreement so we can take the right precautions to protect your child(s) health. Your director, teacher, in partnership with our cook, will gladly work with you and your pediatrician to accommodate your child's dietary needs. Due to severe peanut allergies, some of our centers have adopted a "no-peanut" policy. If your child has severe allergies that may require a medical response (such as the use of an EpiPen), additional forms may be required prior to your child(s) first day.

### **Hand Washing**

Teaching your child(ren) the importance of hand washing at an early age helps maintain his or her health; it also assists your child's ability to take an active role in staying healthy. With that in mind, your child will be required to wash his or her hands when entering the classroom before eating, after bathroom visits, when returning from outside, and at any other appropriate time. We encourage you to reinforce hand washing at home.

### **Illnesses**

Children may become sick during the day or show signs or symptoms of illness prior to arrival. Please keep your child(ren) at home if he/she has exhibited any of the following symptoms within the last 24 hours:

1. Fever of 100 degrees F or higher
2. Vomiting, nausea, diarrhea, or severe throat
3. Discharge from the body
4. Any undiagnosed or contagious rash
5. Severe headache
6. Infected skin patches (i.e. impetigo, etc.)
7. Unusual behaviors
  - a. Child is cranky or less active than usual
  - b. Child feels general discomfort or just seems ill
  - c. Child cries more than usual

8. Loss of appetite
9. Red, watery eyes with recurring yellow/green discharge
10. Lice or nits
11. Onset of contagious disease (mumps, chicken pox, etc.)

If you keep your child at home, please notify the director by 9 a.m. If your child becomes ill while at the center and we think it's better for him/her to be home rather than in contact with other children, we'll call and ask you to pick your child up no more than one hour later. In the event of a serious accident or illness, an ambulance will be called. To ensure your child's safety, your Enrollment Agreement provides a record of names, addresses, and phone numbers of those people you have authorized to pick up your child. We ask you to keep this information current and supply names and phone numbers of your family doctor and preferred hospital.

### **Temporary Exclusion**

To reduce the spread of illness and maintain the health of all children at the center, we may temporarily exclude your child from attending the center. Please refer to the following section for information on the types of illnesses that we cannot support at the center, as well as the criteria required for return to the center. If you have any questions or need more information on a specific illness or criteria for return, please ask your director. We will ask that your child remain away from the center if he or she has an illness or symptom that prevents participation in routine daily program activities including outdoor activities or if your child has an illness that requires more individual care than our center staff members can provide without compromising the health, safety, and activities of the other children. For their protection, children who have not been immunized against certain childhood illnesses may be subject to longer periods of temporary exclusion from the center. We may also ask you to keep your child(ren) at home if your child(ren) has any other illness that local regulations require us to exclude from a group care setting. Unless our corporate policy is more stringent, we use individual state child care licensing regulations and health department regulations when making decisions about temporary exclusion. In addition to the illnesses referenced in the table that follows, we may require health care provider clearance for other illnesses at our discretion.

### **Medical Records**

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has released recommended guidelines for vaccinating young children. ILP and the American Academy of Pediatrics strongly support the program and urge you to follow its guidelines. We follow individual state child care licensing regulations regarding medical examinations and immunization records for your child. Medical examinations and immunization records must be provided upon enrollment and kept current. We cannot permit attendance unless immunization records on file meet individual state child care licensing regulations.

### **Medications**

Medications will be administered in accordance with individual state child care licensing regulations and as described below. In the event the two regulations differ, the more stringent guidelines always apply. We recommend that you administer medications prior to arriving or after leaving our center. To help with medication scheduling, you may consider asking your physician or health care provider for prescriptions with 12-hour dosages. To authorize us to give your child prescription or nonprescription medications or to apply topical nonprescription medications you must complete either a Medication Authorization Form or Topical Ointment Authorization Form (or other such forms as required by individual state child care licensing regulations). On the form, you must note the number of days we should give your child the medication, and how often he or she needs to receive it (the daily frequency). Please provide us with all printed information about the medication's possible side effects. Bring medication in its original container in a clear bag. Clearly label the container and bag with your child's first and last name. Prescription medication must include a

prescription label with specific dispensing instructions and a current date. Do not store medication in diaper bags, lunch bags, backpacks, or any other personal belongings. We do not mix medication with food, formula or juice, nor will we dispense any medication in a bottle or cup. Unused medications must be taken home every Friday or on the child's last day of attendance each week. With the exception of emergency medication and medication needed by school age children who do not arrive with their parents or guardians on their first day of the week, our centers cannot store medications over the weekend.

## **Medication Authorization Forms**

### **Prescription Medications**

In order for a staff member to administer prescription medications to your child in accordance with the prescription label, you must complete a Medication Authorization Form. A prescription in your child's name demonstrates physician authorization.

### **Nonprescription Medications**

In order for a staff member to administer nonprescription medications to your child in accordance with the manufacturer's directions on the label, you must complete a Medication Authorization Form. • We require written instructions from a physician any time the manufacturer's instructions require physician-directed dosage — or whenever your instructions differ from the age and weight information on the label. If your child is under the age of two, we require written instructions from a physician before we can give your son or daughter over-the-counter medication.

### **Topical Nonprescription Medications**

In order for a staff member to administer topical nonprescription medications to your child in accordance with the manufacturer's directions on the label, you must complete a Topical Ointment Authorization Form.

## **Safety and Security**

### **Security**

Keeping your child safe and secure is our first priority. In addition to the built-in security features at the center, we strictly follow established procedures for your child's arrival and departure. All children must be signed in and out on our paper-based roster with a signature. When you first enroll, you'll complete an Enrollment Agreement including the Primary and Emergency Contact and Release sections. These sections authorize specific individuals to pick up your child. You are responsible for maintaining accurate, complete, and current information. Written authorization must be on file at the center prior to your child's release to anyone. Please inform anyone listed on your Enrollment Agreement that they'll be asked to verify their identity. Staff members will ask for government-issued photo ID for anyone who is not positively known to them. We know you'll feel more secure and confident when we're aware of who may and may not pick up your child. We will not release a child to any Emergency Contact younger than 18 years of age unless the individual is the legal parent/guardian. Please use the south double doors as you enter and exit the building.

### **Confidentiality and Children's Records**

All information contained in your child's records, including your personal information, is confidential. Anyone who is not directly involved in the care of your child or affiliated with child care licensing, protective services, or other government agencies will not have access to the records without your written authorization or court order. As a parent or guardian, you can request access to your child's records. We are happy to provide access at reasonable times to records kept at the center, including the Enrollment Agreement, Incident/Accident Reports, Family Communication sheets, or progress notes. For information about the process needed to access other documents that may be included in

your child's records, please contact your director. As a primary parent or legal guardian, you have the right to add and update information, comments, data, or other relevant materials to your child's records. If you withdraw your child from the center, we will maintain your child's records for the minimum period of time referenced in your individual state child care licensing regulations. If you want a copy of your child's records at the center, an administrative fee may be charged to offset copying and delivery charges.

### **Mandated Reporting Requirements**

It's our mission to ensure all children in our centers are safe and well cared for not only while they are at our center, but at all times. The law requires everyone who works directly with children to report suspicions or evidence of child neglect or abuse to individual state child care licensing agencies or law enforcement agencies. Those who fail to report according to individual state child care licensing regulations can be held accountable under the law. The law prohibits interference with an individual's attempt to report child abuse or neglect. If you're interested in the mandatory reporting requirements of your state, please ask your director for more information.

### **Arrival and Departure**

We want to make sure your child begins and ends his or her day with us on a happy, positive note. Our centers are equipped with doors that require a key fob to enter. Every morning and afternoon, we require you to sign in and out with your full legal name using our paper-based roster and/or via our computer system. We also require you to make direct contact with a staff member at the start and end of the day by personally escorting your child to or from the classroom. Please use the south double doors as you enter and exit the building.

### **Late Pickup**

Your child looks forward to your arrival at the end of the day. Please make every effort to pick your child(ren) up on time. If you know you can't arrive on schedule, please arrange to have your child picked up by another adult who has been authorized on your Enrollment Agreement. If a late pickup is unavoidable and you're unable to reach your designated emergency contact, please notify us immediately. If your child is not picked up after the normal closing time and you have not contacted the center:

- We will attempt to contact you or the person(s) authorized to pick up your child.
- Late fees for being late: 1-14 minutes: \$20 for the first offense, \$25 second offense, \$30 3<sup>rd</sup> offense and each time thereafter.

In the event of a late pickup, please note that the director or person in charge can never transport your child from the center under any circumstances.

### **Emergency Situations and Evacuation Plans**

To maintain a safe environment, we make every attempt to be prepared for potential emergency situations. We regularly schedule and practice emergency evacuations as required by individual state child care licensing regulations. In addition, an emergency plan and list of procedures are posted in each classroom. Please be aware of the procedures and evacuation location in the event of an emergency evacuation. If an actual emergency requires evacuation, we'll notify you as soon as the children have been relocated to a safe area.

### **Child Accidents**

We take every precaution to make sure your child is safe, and that you receive communication regarding accidents or injuries. This includes a comprehensive safety-awareness program, as well as frequent inspections and maintenance of our buildings, playground, and equipment. In spite of all our efforts, accidents do happen. If your child is injured at the center, you'll receive an Incident/Accident Report at pickup time. If your child needs treatment by a health care professional, we'll make every effort to contact you and/or the health care professional you have identified on your

Enrollment Agreement. If we can't reach you, we'll contact one of the individuals you've listed on the Enrollment Agreement. In the event of an emergency, we'll make sure your child receives any necessary emergency treatment until we can reach you.

### **Center Pets**

Your center may or may not allow classroom pets (such as guinea pigs, gerbils, or fish) as a teaching tool. Personal pets belonging to families or staff members are not allowed at the center. All centers with pets adhere to all state licensing and health regulations and to internal safety guidelines. Service animals are not considered to be pets, and may be allowed on the premises as a reasonable accommodation.

### **Field Trips**

Field trips give your child hands-on, real-world learning experiences. Trips often include visits to nearby parks, museums, and other local educational sites. In order to make field trips both meaningful and safe:

- Families are notified at least one week in advance of each field trip with the time, schedule, location, and any extra costs that may be involved with the trip.
- Permission slips are required for all field trips. Each trip requires a separate form describing details of the event. We must have your written permission authorizing your child to participate. Permission via a phone call or fax is not acceptable.
- Family volunteers are welcome on field trips, although we cannot allow you to transport your child or any other children in your personal vehicle. If space permits, volunteers may ride in center vehicles. All volunteers must be a minimum of 18 years old.

### **Weapons and Violence**

Family members, children, and guests are strictly prohibited from possessing firearms or other weapons on our property and at events sponsored by us. An exception may be made for sworn law-enforcement officers if required by law. If children are found to be in possession of weapons, center management will confiscate the weapon and notify proper authorities. When a particular child or parent's behavior threatens the safety of others, or if a child or parent becomes abusive toward other children, parents, or staff in the center, we may disenroll the child immediately.

### **Drug-Free Environment**

We are committed to fostering and maintaining a healthy and safe environment for everyone. Staff, family members, and guests are prohibited from smoking in the center and its grounds. At no time shall anyone ever use, consume, sell, manufacture, or be under the influence of any alcohol or illegal drugs on center property.

### **Operational Procedures**

#### **Registration and Enrollment**

We create and operate our center with quality and long-term stability in mind. To enroll and annually re-enroll your child, you must complete the Enrollment Agreement and other local and state specific forms provided by your director. You must complete and sign all forms before your child may attend. We welcome all children ages 6 weeks through 10 years old. Children must be 2, 3, or 4 years old before Sept. 1 to enter each new preschool level. The director will, from time to time, prior to the summer and fall sessions make contact with the parent(s) as to the child's enrollment plan for the upcoming term. Three attempts at contacting the parent will be made, after the third unsuccessful contact and the parent has NOT notified the director of the enrollment plan for the child, the next person on the waiting list will be contacted and placed in the enrollment spot.

## Registration

A nonrefundable registration fee of \$95 is due at the time of enrollment and is charged every year. If you have more than one child attending the second child's registration fee is \$40.

## Tuition

Our program is a nonprofit organization that operates primarily on the tuition fees from each child(ren). Full tuition payments are due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month. **In-center:** Payment are due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month. There is a drop off box located to the left of the coat rack where you enter and exit the building. Tuition may change without prior notice; however, we will announce any changes as soon as possible. **Checks:** There will be a \$25 charge for any check returned from the bank for any reason. **Automatic checking account withdraw:** The tuition for each month is withdrawn automatically from your bank account. This can be set up weekly, monthly, etc. **Family Assistance:** Families receiving assistance from the State of Illinois Department of Human Services for child care payments will be responsible for any tuition remaining each month after the state payments and the parent co-pay have been received.

## Family Discounts

Family discounts apply to customers who have two or more actively enrolled children. The child with the lowest tuition charge for the week will receive a maximum discount of 10% off his or her gross tuition.

## Late Tuition Fees

A notice will be sent home at the end of the first full week of the month if your tuition or a portion of your tuition isn't paid. A \$10 late tuition charge will be applied at the end of the second week for tuition isn't received. Any tuition that is unpaid by the first day of the following month will result in preschool care discontinued and legal action will take place.

## Hours of operation

ILP is open Monday-Friday from 7:30am-5:30pm

## Types of Care and Education

ILP offers infant, toddler, 2-year-old, 3-year-old, 4/5-year-old preschool program, and an after-school program for children in kindergarten through third grade. The after-school program is for children enrolled in kindergarten through third grade or until the child(ren) turns 10 years old. The after-school program is open after the school session each day (M-F), on half days of school, and on days where there is no school attendance (other than due to inclement weather). Transportation to the center is provided by the school bus system. This program follows the same holiday schedule.

Half day (7:30am-12:00pm):	M-F M-W-F T & TH
Full day (7:30am-5:30pm)	M-F M-W-F T & TH

Drop-in care services are offered as space is available. Please call in advance (24 hours) for space availability. Drop-in fees are payable in advance or the same day of service.

## Holidays and Center Closures

Barring extreme weather or other unforeseen circumstances, our centers are open during normal operating hours on regularly scheduled days. The center will be closed on the holidays listed below.

New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Break  
Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and Good Friday.

The center's hours and holiday schedule are set and posted annually, but may change at any time.

### **Closures Due to Severe Weather**

In the event of inclement weather, if Charleston public schools are closed for the entire day, our facility will also be closed. If Charleston public schools operate a "delayed start" day, we will have our normal regular hours of operation. The procedure for notifying families if severe weather or other conditions prevent the center from opening on time, or at all, will be posted at your center, on Facebook and the teachers will contact you by phone. Center closures due to weather may also be announced on local radio or television stations. If it becomes necessary for the center to close early, it's your responsibility to arrange for your child's pickup.

### **Absences, Sick Days, and Vacations**

To maintain our high standard of quality, we budget for everyday costs related to our dedicated teachers and our educational resources. To cover these costs, we charge a full week's tuition (this applies to full-time and part-time schedules) if your child attends any portion of the week. If your child will be absent on a particular day, please notify the center staff by 8am. Is your child usually transported from another school or program to our center by school bus? Then please be sure to notify us of your child's absence prior to the scheduled transportation time. Center staff should also be notified in advance if your child will be out for multiple days due to illness, vacation, or other family activities.

### **Nondiscrimination**

ILP accepts children of any race, color, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally made available to the children at the Center. We do not discriminate on the basis of color, religion, national, or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies and preschool center administered programs.

### **Solicitation**

We prohibit any distribution of literature or products at any of our centers. Please note that this includes literature or products commonly used to raise money for public school-related activities or non-profit groups.

### **Withdrawing Your Child**

If you need to withdraw your child, we require two weeks' written notice prior to leaving. Sometimes children or families may not adjust to the center environment. In these cases, we may ask a parent or guardian to withdraw his or her child. If we make that decision, we usually notify the family one week in advance in order to permit them to find alternative care. Certain instances may require an immediate withdrawal.

### **Termination of Services**

Because we provide child care and education in a group setting, we must be concerned for the welfare and safety of all children and staff. We take action when a particular child or parent's behavior threatens the safety of or becomes abusive toward the other children, parents or center staff. As a result, we may disenroll the child immediately. We reserve the right to disenroll any child or terminate services as deemed necessary or appropriate at our sole discretion, with or without notice.

## **Family Communication and Involvement**

### **Family Involvement**

Parents and guardians are always welcome at the center. We encourage you to visit and join in our activities. Your participation and involvement are important to us as we work as partners to provide the best care and education possible for your child. Anyone authorized to pick up your child will be let in and escorted by center staff following ID confirmation.

### **Communication**

As your child's most important influence, you are a full partner in our program. Open and frequent communication between you, your child's teacher, and your director will strengthen this partnership and help your child have a positive early-learning experience. We promote close communication through:

- An open-door policy that encourages you to visit your child anytime, to observe class time, and to participate in special outings and events
- Family/teacher communication to share ideas and discuss your child's progress
- Conversation and frequent written updates highlighting your child's development
- Recommendations for home-based learning activities that support your child's learning and enjoyment of the program
- Regular parent-teacher conferences
- Daily happenings and special events
- Newsletters published by your center about your center's news and events
- Posted unit plans describing the planned activities for the classroom.

We hope you have time to talk with us when you drop off or pick up your child. We also invite you to schedule an individual conference whenever necessary. Please schedule longer discussions with teachers in advance so another staff member can be available for classroom supervision. Our center encourages communication between you and our staff on all issues related to your child and his or her classroom activities. Please remember, however, that staff members are expected to keep information about all other children and their families confidential.

### **Satisfaction and Resolution**

We are fully committed to your child's well-being and your satisfaction with our programs. Experience has taught us that open communication is the key to maintaining a positive relationship. We continually look to your input on how we can improve our programs. We want to be sure we are meeting the needs of your child and that you are confident in the care and education we give your child. Please share your ideas, suggestions or concerns with a staff member. Staff members will make every effort to be available to discuss topics regarding your child or classroom schedules and activities. If you have concerns that cannot be resolved or answered by a staff member, please speak with your director. When you have a concern that has not been resolved or answered by staff members, communicating to your director gives us an opportunity to improve our programs; more importantly, it allows us to better meet your needs. If your director does not resolve your concerns to your satisfaction, contact the Preschool Board. Your participation and involvement are important to us as we work as partners to provide the best care and education possible for your child.

**Acknowledgement of Receipt**

Please read this handbook carefully and refer any questions you may have to your director. After you have read this handbook, please complete this acknowledgement and return it to your director before your child's first day.

I have read and fully understand the guidelines and procedures set forth in the Family Handbook. I have a copy of this handbook for my personal reference.

Primary Parent or Guardian Full Name (Please Print) \_\_\_\_\_

Child Name (Please Print) \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_