

HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER

PARENT HANDBOOK



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INTRODUCTION

Your child's years here at Holy Cross will be an adventure in learning, growing and discovering God's world. We thank you for entrusting your child to us. We will treat them as what they are --- people for whom the Lord Jesus Christ died and lives!

Joy and Peace in Christ,

*Christy Purl,
Early Childhood Director
Holy Cross Lutheran Church
Early Childhood Center*

PHILOSOPHY

Holy Cross Lutheran Church established its Early Childhood Center as a most effective means of providing a Christian beginning for children. Holy Cross views Christian education as a basis to sound life preparation, while focusing upon the individual's relationship with Jesus Christ. Through the Early Childhood Center, Holy Cross strives to provide a variety of spiritual, intellectual, and social experiences which challenge each child to become a thoughtful and self-disciplined Christian, responsive and sensitive to the needs of others.

Holy Cross Lutheran Early Childhood Center exists:

- 1. To provide quality child care for the parents of Holy Cross Lutheran Church and the community. The daily program will strive to meet the needs of each child as reflected by the developmental levels, individual interests, and general basic care needs.*
- 2. To recognize each child as a unique child of God with programs designed to meet the needs of the infant through school-age child.*
- 3. To provide a developmental program which is Christ-based. The program will nurture the spiritual growth of the child, promote his/her physical development, help him/her to become socially competent in relating to others and encourage emotional growth and control.*
- 4. To provide a developmentally appropriate curriculum with an emphasis on problem solving skills, sensory and motor experience, outside exercise and indoor play, language experiences, the fine arts and creative activities.*
- 5. To provide a support system for the family through a program which includes several fellowship opportunities.*

OPERATION

Holy Cross Lutheran Early Childhood Center is owned and operated by the members of Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod. To carry out the philosophy and objectives of the center, the voting members of Holy Cross Lutheran Church elects a Board of Christian Day School to supervise the functions of the Early Childhood Center.

The Board of Christian Day School has placed direct responsibility of the Early Childhood Center into the hands of the Director. Under the Board's supervision, the Director oversees the daily functions of the early childhood center by developing and supporting the staff members, establishing and maintaining a positive school environment, and working directly with the students and their families.

LICENSE

In September 1986, Holy Cross Lutheran Early Childhood Center completed the requirements for licensing as set up by the Missouri Department of Health. Holy Cross meets, and in many areas exceeds, the health and safety standards designated for early childhood programs. A copy of Licensing Rules for Group Care Homes and Child Care Centers is available for review by all families, and is located in the parent sign-in area.

FACULTY

All staff comes to Holy Cross with an interest in child development and a genuine love for children. Most also come to us with child development education and experience as part of their background. All staff are at least 18 years of age, and receives a minimum of 12-clock hours of training in the early childhood field per year.

PROGRAMS

Holy Cross Lutheran Early Childhood Center offers a wide variety of programs. The center is open year-round, Monday through Friday, to provide child care to families in the Northland. The center is open from 6:30am-6:00pm and closes for the following holidays: New Year's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

CLASSROOM DESCRIPTIONS

NOAH'S ARK (Six weeks-8 months)

This program is available for infants ages six weeks through eight months. Holy Cross is licensed for eight infants and maintains a ratio of one caregiver per four infants. Families provide all personal belongings. Holy Cross provides all baby equipment, bedding and developmentally appropriate toys. When the child begins eating table food, the parent can choose to have Holy Cross introduce food from our program meals until the child eventually eats all their meals as provided by Holy Cross. These meals are provided at no extra charge. Children move to the Little Angels room when they are mobile and are eating some table food.

LITTLE ANGELS (8 months-16 months)

This program is available for toddlers ages eight months through sixteen months. Holy Cross is licensed for eight children in this age group and maintains a ratio of one caregiver per four children. To be in this room, the child must be able to sit up and crawl. Families provide the bedding to go on their child's cot, or crib, personal hygiene products, and a change of clothes. When the child starts eating table food Holy Cross provides all meals (two snacks and a hot lunch), equipment and developmentally appropriate toys.

LITTLE LAMBS (16 months-24 months)

This program is available for toddlers ages sixteen months through twenty-four months. Holy Cross is licensed for eight children in this age group and maintains a ratio of one caregiver per four children. To be in this room, the child must be walking, eating table foods, off the daytime bottle, and be able to go most of the morning without a nap. Families provide the bedding to go on their child's cot, personal hygiene products, and a change of clothes. Holy Cross provides all meals (two snacks and a hot lunch), equipment and developmentally appropriate toys.

THE WHALES (2 years)

This program is available for toddlers ages two to three years. Holy Cross is licensed for sixteen two-year-olds and maintains a ratio of one caregiver per eight children. To be in this room the child should be at least two years old. Families provide the bedding to go on their cots, personal hygiene products, and a change of clothes. Holy Cross provides all meals (two snacks and a hot lunch), equipment and developmentally appropriate toys.

THE LIONS (3 years)

This program is available for children ages three to four years and maintains a preschool environment. This classroom licensed for 20 children, and maintains a ratio of one caregiver per ten children. The child should be at least three years of age, completely independent in the bathroom, and able to function in a small group for a minimum of 5-10 minutes. Holy Cross provides all meals (two snacks and a hot lunch), equipment, developmentally appropriate toys and educational materials. Families provide the bedding to go on their cots and any personal care items, including a change of clothes.

THE CRUSADERS (3-4 years) & EAGLES (4-5 years)

This program is available for children ages four years to school-age and maintains a classroom environment. This classroom licensed for 20 children, and maintains a ratio of one caregiver per ten children. The child should be at least four years of age, completely independent in the bathroom, and able to function in a small group for a minimum of 15-20 minutes. Holy Cross provides all meals (two snacks and a hot lunch), equipment, developmentally appropriate toys and educational materials. Families provide the bedding to go on their cots and any personal care items, including a change of clothes.

PRESCHOOL

This program is provided by Holy Cross Lutheran School and is available for children who are three years old by August 1. This class is for families who desire an introduction to a structured environment and socialization. Preschool meets for 2½ hours on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. Additional childcare is available upon request.

PRE-KINDERGARTEN

This program is provided by Holy Cross Lutheran School and is available for children who are four years old by August 1. This class is for families who desire a structured program to help their child prepare for the transition into kindergarten. Pre-kindergarten meets for 2½ hours on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, morning or afternoon classes are available. Additional childcare is available upon request.

Drop-in care will be available when space permits and arrangements have been made. To make these requests, please call the Early Childhood Center office at 454-2307. You may ask to speak directly to the Director or administrative staff.

ADMISSION

Holy Cross Early Childhood Center does not deny admission to children based on race, color, national or ethnic origin and provides to them all rights, privileges, programs, and activities made available to all students at the center. Holy Cross does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, and other center administration programs.

Holy Cross Early Childhood Center is not equipped or staffed to handle children who have severe learning, emotional, and/or physical problems.

ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

A child will be enrolled upon payment of the enrollment/registration fee, first week's tuition and completion of the following forms:

- Enrollment form*
- Medical/Immunization information - due no later than 30 days after first date of attendance.*
- Tuition Contract*
- Individualized child care plan required for special health care needs.*

STUDENT RECORDS

Holy Cross Early Childhood Center maintains permanent records on each child. These records include screening results, copies of evaluations, enrollment documents, accident reports, medication forms, and any other pertinent data. These records are confidential and are available only to parents, legal guardians of the child, the child's teacher/caregiver, and agencies or persons deemed appropriate as indicated by written consent of the parents or guardians.

Records will be kept for one year after the child leaves the program.

ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Your child is always to be delivered to his/her room by an adult, and picked up from his/her room by an adult. In the child care rooms a "sign-in" and "sign-out" book is maintained. It is the responsibility of the parent to sign his/her child(ren) in and out everyday.

Children will not be released to anyone other than the parents or guardians without written authorization by the parent or guardians. There is a designated spot on the enrollment sheet to list people authorized to pick up the child(ren). If a person not listed is picking up the child, the center must be notified in writing. Staff are instructed to check identification on all people picking up the child(ren) until that person is recognizable by the staff.

ATTENDANCE

Your child's attendance is anticipated by all the children and staff. Prompt arrival, pick-up and regular attendance will help your child obtain maximum benefit from their program. If a child is going to be absent for a scheduled day, please notify the center at your earliest convenience.

We also appreciate notification when your child(ren) will be absent for more than one day, i.e. if you are planning to be out of town for an extended time or if your child has a contagious illness.

FEES

Holy Cross Early Childhood Center is maintained by members of Holy Cross Lutheran Church. The center operates as an outreach ministry to the community. The church supports the center spiritually and financially. However, fees are assessed to cover payroll, benefits, food and supplies. The fee structure is assessed on a yearly basis, with necessary tuition adjustments being made annually. For a listing of current fees, see the director.

ENROLLMENT FEE

The enrollment fee covers the cost of instructional materials, art and handicraft items, and educational materials. This fee is due at the time of enrollment. For children already enrolled the fee is assessed once per calendar year, near the anniversary of their start date.

TUITION

*All children attending any of the programs offered by Holy Cross pay tuition according to the tuition schedule, as determined by the Board of Christian Day School. Tuition is due no later than Thursday at 6:00 pm for the following week's care. **Payment is always to be made in advance for care**, regardless of which program a child is enrolled. For children enrolled on a part-time basis, tuition is assessed for days reserved, regardless of attendance and must be paid in advance. If payment is not made in compliance with established procedures, Holy Cross Early Childhood Center reserves the right to ask families to remove their child(ren) from the center. If payment is two or more weeks behind, your electronic entry code may be removed from the security door until payment is made.*

Families are required to sign a tuition contract which indicates their fees along with their understanding of and adherence to the payment policies. The "Tuition Contract" is a legally binding contract governed by the State of Missouri.

RETURNED CHECK FEE

There will be a \$30.00 charge for any checks returned for insufficient funds.

EARLY DROP-OFF/LATE PICK-UP FEES

Our hours of operation are 6:30 am—6:00 pm. Children attending any of the child care programs must be dropped off no earlier than 6:30 and picked up no later than 6:00pm. If a parent arrives before/after these times, a \$5.00 fee will be assessed for the first 10 minutes before 6:30 am/ after 6:00 pm, and then increases to \$1.00 per minute for each additional minute. The caregiver that stays with the child earns the fee and will be compensated by Holy Cross in their paycheck.

The clock at Holy Cross is the official clock used when determining late fees. All center clocks are checked periodically to assure accurateness and continuity. Please be sure to check your watch against our clocks.

DISCOUNTS

Families with more than one child enrolled in the Early Childhood Center will receive a 10% discount on the oldest child's tuition. There are no family discounts for enrollment fees or activity fees.

HALF PRICE WEEKS

Each child enrolled in full-time care is allowed four half-price weeks to use throughout the fiscal year (July 1-June 30.) In order for these weeks to be applied, the enrolled child must be absent at least half of their scheduled days. (i.e. absent Mon, Tues, and Wed when enrolled for the full week)

PART-TIME CARE

Part-time care is available for children two years and older as space permits. Fees are assessed when part-time care is reserved and the child does not attend. See the Director for pricing and space available information.

CURRICULUM

The basic curriculum involves learning through discovery and play. During each session a variety of interesting, creative and stimulating age appropriate activities are provided for the children.

All of the following curricular areas are assimilated into the program during the course of the year and are offered as an integral part of the weekly theme:

<i>Language Experiences</i>	<i>Fine Motor Development</i>
<i>Pre-Math Activities</i>	<i>Art</i>
<i>Physical Education—</i>	<i>Music</i>
<i>(gross motor development)</i>	<i>Jesus Time</i>

PARENT CONFERENCES

Evaluation of progress is a continuous process carried on by both the child and his teacher. In the child care programs, communication is daily, when the child is brought in and picked up. If additional time is desired to discuss the child and any concerns, conferences will be scheduled as needed with your child's caregiver/teacher or the center director.

Mutual communication is a key ingredient in our relationship. If you or your child is experiencing changes at home or work that might affect the child, please let us know. We are here to help you and your child, and knowing that something significant has happened will alert us to extra ways in which we can help. We feel that open and frequent communication is the key to a successful relationship between the school and family.

DISCIPLINE

At Holy Cross we view discipline as a process of teaching the child. This includes both the setting of consistent limits, and when necessary, the enforcement of these limits.

The goal for which we strive as we guide children's behavior is the establishment of autonomy in the child. We want children to become increasingly independent, having the ability to make decisions, to make their needs and wants known, and to accept the natural consequences of their decisions and desires. This is usually more difficult than saying "no" right away, but we feel it is important for the development of self-confidence and autonomy in the child.

Our general disciplinary approach is to educate the children in appropriate behavior in a specific setting or situation. It is our hope that discipline problems will be minimized through keeping the program fun and interesting. In the event of a discipline issue a staff member will activate the following plan:

- 1. The child will be redirected.*
- 2. The child will be asked to stop the behavior and a caregiver and child will discuss the behavior and the options available.*
- 3. If necessary, the child will be asked to sit for a short time to think about their behavior and options. The number of minutes sitting will be equivalent to the age of the child.*
- 4. If the behavior continues the parent will be notified.*
- 5. If the behavior is serious in nature i.e. leaving an area without permission, the child may be asked to leave the center for the remainder of the day or other specified period of time.*
- 6. If the behavior continues and is not resolved, the child will be removed from the center and*

care will no longer be available.

DISMISSAL OF A CHILD

In the event that the child's behavior cannot be controlled, and the behavior interferes with the safety and well being of the other children, the child with the unacceptable behavior may be asked to leave the center.

A child may also be dismissed if tuition is not paid in compliance with established tuition procedures.

WITHDRAWAL

Due to staffing requirements, which are based on enrollment, a two week written notice is required should a child be withdrawn from the center. Full tuition is due through the two week notice period regardless of attendance. If written notice is not received an additional two weeks will be billed representing the notice period.

OUTSIDE PLAY TIME

In compliance with our licensing regulations all children, except infants, are expected to play outside everyday throughout the year. Only under extreme weather conditions will children be kept inside, although the weather may indicate the length of time spent outside.

*Parent requests **will not** be honored to keep the children inside. Numerous reports have been made in reference to the positive effects of fresh air. Germs also grow quicker and faster inside. If a child is too sick to go outside, then he/she should be kept home from school. A child should be kept at home until they can participate in all school activities, indoors and outdoors.*

While it is not often possible, infants will occasionally go outside; infant guidelines are,

- *A 15 minute time limit for non-walkers.*
- *Non-mobile children will be in an exerciser or bouncy seat.*
- *Crawlers will be kept on a mat.*
- *Children are encouraged to wear hats.*
- *Sunscreen will be applied only at written direction of the parents.*
- *Walking children may stay out a little longer if the ratio allows for one staff person to stay outside with them.*

SUPPLIES

Holy Cross provides all equipment and educational supplies except the following:

NOAH'S ARK- *due to the different allergies and needs of infants, the parents provide all diapers, wipes, creams and lotions, formula, food when ready, and change of clothes.*

LITTLE ANGELS- *parents will provide all formula, food, (once on table food, Holy Cross will provide snacks and lunch-check with your caregiver when ready) diapers, wipes, creams, lotions, bedding for the cots or cribs. Bedding is to be taken home weekly for laundering.*

LITTLE LAMBS- *parents will provide diapers, wipes, creams, lotions, bedding for the cots. Bedding is to be taken home weekly for laundering.*

THE WHALES- *parents will provide diapers, wipes, creams, lotions, bedding for the cots. Bedding is to be taken home weekly for laundering.*

THE LIONS- *parents provide bedding for cot, laundry bag for bedding storage (bedding is to be taken home weekly for laundering), a change of clothes, and a backpack.*

THE CRUSADERS- *parents provide bedding for cot, laundry bag for bedding storage (bedding is to be taken home weekly for laundering), a change of clothes, and a backpack.*

If a child needs something and the parents have not provided it, we will not borrow from another child. Holy Cross maintains a supply of diapers, wipes, and clothes, although we can not guarantee the fit. Any items borrowed, such as clothes, are to be washed at home and returned within two days so that they are available for another child, if needed. Diapers usually are paid back when brought from home. For example, a child uses two diapers, and when their diapers are brought in, two diapers are taken from their pack and added back to the extras. We do this so that fairness is given to all and costs are maintained.

SICK CHILDREN

Sick children will not be admitted to the center according to the "Sick child" guidelines as outlined in the Licensing Rules for Group Child Care Homes and Child Care Centers. A copy of this manual is available at any time for your review.

When a child exhibits signs of illness while at the center, the child's parent(s) will be notified immediately. Arrangements must be made so that the child can be picked up as soon as possible.

Signs of illness may include the following:

- *A temperature of 99 degrees (under the arm) or above*
- *Vomiting*
- *Sore throat or difficulty swallowing*

- *Unusual or unexplained coughing*
- *Extreme nasal or bronchial congestion*
- *Difficult or rapid breathing*
- *Yellowish skin or eyes*
- *Pinkeye*
- *Extreme fatigue*
- *Diarrhea*
- *Gray or white stool*
- *Unusually dark, tea colored urine*
- *Severe itching of the body or scalp*
- *Unusual spots or rashes*
- *Infected skin patches - crusty, bright yellow, dry or gummy area of the skin*
- *Headache or stiff neck*

Children may return to child care after they are symptom-free for 24 hours.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Children must have on file all immunization records. Each child must be kept current on all immunizations as required by the State of Missouri. These records are audited by the state on a yearly basis. If your child is exempt from immunizations, an exemption card must be on file in the office.

MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS

All children must have a medical form on file within the first 30 days of enrollment as outlined by the State of Missouri. A doctor or an RN who works under the supervision of an M.D. or D.O. must complete the form for all children in all classrooms.

MEDICATION

Medication will be administered only when the proper form has been completed and signed by the parent or legal guardian. The medication form will become part of the child's permanent record. This includes all prescription and over-the-counter medications plus any creams or ointments. All medication must be sent in the original container with the child's name clearly labeled on the container.

INJURIES

In the event of an injury, the caregiver/teacher who is watching the child will administer first aid as required. After first aid is administered, an accident report will be written by the caregiver, signed by the administrator on duty, and a copy will be sent home with the child. The original becomes part of the child's permanent record.

If additional medical attention is required, Holy Cross will contact the parents or 9-1-1, depending on the nature of the injury. In the event the injury needs further attention but isn't life-threatening and the parents can not be reached, then Holy Cross will contact the emergency contacts. If they can not be reached, then the medical personnel listed on the enrollment form will be contacted. Parents are responsible for keeping the emergency contact records up-to-date.

FOOD

If a child has any allergy to a food product or beverage, this must be documented in writing by the child's physician. Only after this is received will the menu be altered for that child.

Outside food may be brought into the center for your child, upon director approval.

BIRTHDAY TREATS - Please notify your child's teacher if you want to bring in birthday treats. These treats must be store bought and in the original packaging. Homemade cupcakes or cookies, etc., cannot be given to the children.

DRESS CODE

When the children arrive at the childcare center, they must be dressed appropriately, which means in play clothes. The children play hard and will get dirty. Please send your child in clothes that can be cleaned at home and can withstand heavy play. Shorts or tights are to be worn under dresses. Spaghetti straps and backless tops are not allowed. The clothes should also be appropriate for the weather. Please keep in mind that the weather can change throughout the day. Sending your child dressed in layers or with a jacket is appropriate in this instance.

Sandals or clogs are permitted only when they have a back strap and are worn with socks.

All families must keep a change of clothes in their child's cubby or back pack at all times. This change must include underwear, socks, a shirt, and pants or shorts. Please check this change of clothes periodically to be sure the clothes still fit and are seasonally appropriate.

NAPS

All children enrolled in a child care program are required to take an afternoon nap. All children are required to lay on their cot quietly for a minimum of 30 minutes, with the ideal minimum time to be 60 minutes. Children will not be required to remain on their cot for longer than 60 minutes if they do not fall asleep and wish to get up. We believe that all young children need a rest time to relax and let their small bodies re-energize. The children may bring a stuffed animal or lovey to sleep with. Infants nap throughout the day as needed. We do not set minimum time requirements for this age group.

TOYS

Toys from home are only allowed when prior permission is received from the teacher, such as for sharing bag or when a special toy day is designated. When toys are brought from home the children tend to argue over them and problems can arise. Holy Cross Early Childhood Center is not responsible for lost or broken toys brought from home.

PARENT CONDUCT

While we at Holy Cross strive to maintain an "Open Door Policy", where parents are welcome to stop in and check-in on their children at any time, we ask that the time parents are in the classroom is limited to a reasonable amount of time. Our state licensing requires that only authorized personnel be allowed to be in contact with the children. All parents are asked to stay no longer than 5-10 minutes in the classrooms. This should provide ample time to settle your child, explain any concerns to the teachers, and allow your child to feel comfortable with your departure. If you would like to spend more time with your child during the day, we ask that you sign your child out of care and leave the premises. You are welcome to return your child to care when you need to leave, provided you have signed your child back into the care of the Holy Cross ECC.

Should you have additional questions or need clarification on any issues, please contact the ECC office at 454-2307.