

Epiphany Early Childhood Center

Parent Handbook

**Epiphany Early Childhood Center
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Philosophy of Epiphany Early Childhood Center

Epiphany Early Childhood Center (EECC) provides a Christian centered full day preschool education for children ages 18 months – 5 years. EECC is dedicated to discovering the needs of each child and developing the unique talents he or she has been given by God.

The purpose of the Epiphany Early Childhood Center is to provide the community a program which encompasses the finest in early childhood education within an environment of love and support.

Throughout the Center, emphasis is placed on the growth and development of the whole child. This includes the cognitive, spiritual, emotional, social, and physical aspects of the child's development. We seek to present an environment which promotes positive self-concept and self-expression. Recognizing that children grow and develop at different rates, learning activities appropriate for the children's developmental level are provided.

We recognize that the family is the basic framework through which the child learns early socialization and cognitive skills. EECC, in cooperation with the family, will strive to offer a continuation of the educational and socialization processes.

Goals

The primary goal of Epiphany Early Childhood Center is to provide a warm and supportive atmosphere wherein children can develop the skills appropriate to their developmental level. More specific goals supporting our primary goal are:

- To provide an environment which supports the growth of the whole child in developmentally appropriate ways, focusing on large and fine motor skills, communication, cognitive skills, and socialization.
- To experience and learn about God's love through Jesus Christ.
- To encourage children to acquire self-esteem, concern for others, a sense of community, and a spirit of sharing.
- To foster creativity, exploration, self-discipline, and a love of learning.
- To utilize art, music, and creative play as an integral part of the program.
- To assist and support parents in guiding the development of their children.

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Enrollment Policies

Eligibility

Registration forms are available at the EECC office. Admission to the school is made without regard to race, color, creed, sex or national origin. Preference is given to families of children currently enrolled in our program and to the families of the Lutheran Church of the Epiphany. Children aged 18 months through 5 years whose parents or guardians are either employed or full time students are able to enroll. Children are accepted for enrollment on a first come, first served basis.

Registration and Deposits

Completed registration forms are to be returned to the office and will reserve a spot for your child. There is a one-time registration fee of \$50.00 that is due upon your child's first day of attendance. When a child is registered, we assume it is for the entire year and our budget is so planned. Registration fees are non-refundable and non-transferable.

Childcare Payment

Tuition is due the 1st of each month. A \$20.00 late fee will be charged on all payments not received by the 5th of each month. If you are unable to pay the tuition by the 15th of the month, you need to advise the Director of your situation. The school operates solely on the funds provided by the tuition fees and the financial health of the school depends on prompt payment. There will be no deduction for absences due to illness or any other reason.

Checks need to be made payable to EECC. Include your child's name on the check. Your cancelled check will serve as your receipt unless you notify the Director that a separate receipt is needed. There will be a \$20.00 charge for returned checks.

The current monthly fee for younger 2s, 2s, and 3s is \$725.00

The current monthly fee for older 3s, 4s, and 5s is \$675.00

An activity fee of \$35 will be collected twice a year to cover the cost of special programs.

Epiphany Early Childhood centers reserves the right to drop any child delinquent in payment. Parents will be given notice of this policy at the first of the year and will also be notified of any delinquency and the opportunity to correct it in a timely fashion.

Scholarships

We accept children with DSS vouchers, scholarships from Smart Start, and at times, the church can provide temporary scholarships for children of families with special financial needs. Please see the Director if you need scholarship help or information.

Withdrawal Procedures

EECC charges tuition for every month, or any part of a month, in which the child attends school. Parents must give the EECC a 30 day written notice when withdrawing a child. Refunds are handled on an individual basis and will be granted based on the merits of each case.

The Director has the authority to drop any child from enrollment for violation of center policies. Those reasons include:

- Tuition fees more than two weeks late.
- The child's immunization and medical records are not current. When corrected, the child may reapply for admission to our program.
- The child's has consistently been picked up late (after 5:30) by the parent/caretaker.
- The child's behavior/presence jeopardizes the welfare of the other children or staff members.
- The parents make unreasonable demands on the staff or are disrespectful to staff members.
- The parents physically discipline their child at the Center or are disrespectful or abusive to another child at the Center.

Grievance Process

All suggestions, ideas, and concerns about your child should be discussed with your child's teacher first. If a problem is not resolved then you need to see the Director. Parents who question or disagree with the Center program or policies should discuss these concerns with the Director. If after talking with the Director, a parent is still not satisfied, the parent should then contact the senior pastor, who may direct your concerns to the EECC committee chair. We work to keep all lines of communication open for the well-being of your child.

Daily Operating Procedure

Arrival and Departure

Epiphany Early Childhood Center is open from 7:30am to 5:30pm, Monday through Friday, except on designated holidays (refer to EECC calendar). A calendar is posted on the parent information board and in each of the child's classrooms.

Upon arrival, parents need to bring the child to their assigned teacher and make the teacher aware of the child's arrival. Please plan to arrive by 9:00 a.m. to start our day. Parents must sign in, and place lunch boxes on the rolling cart. Between 7:30 and 8:00, the children gather in several rooms according to age level.

The responsibility for each child remains with the teacher until the parent has personally received the child and signed him/her out. **You must make arrangements for your child to be picked up no later than 5:30pm.** We understand that under rare circumstances beyond your control, you may be a few minutes late. You must notify the Center as soon as you realize that you will be tardy so arrangements to keep your child will be made. The Center reserves the right to charge a late fee and you will be asked to sign a late slip upon your arrival. A fee of up to \$10.00 will be charged for any part of the first fifteen minutes and will be added on to your monthly statement.

Communication with Teachers

The teachers at EECC will communicate daily with the parents through "Today We..." sheets describing the day's activities and daily reports in the younger classes. You may speak to the teacher briefly in person when you arrive in the morning or during pick-up. We realize that some of you rarely see the teacher due to conflicting schedules, so there are also notepads and pens provided in each room near the sign-in sheet to leave the teacher notes if desired. We hope that this will help with communication. Planned conference times can be arranged during the year as needed or requested. Lesson plans are also posted in each classroom to keep you informed. You will receive newsletters, calendars, and menus from the office each month.

IT IS THE PARENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO CHECK THE CUBBY EACH DAY FOR NOTES AND OTHER INFORMATION. Notes will not be pinned to the children's clothing.

Authorized Release of Children

No child will be released without written authorization from a parent. Please notify your child's teacher in writing about car pool arrangements. Written permission, or in an emergency, a phone call to the Director, is required if there is any change from the person(s) authorized to pick up a child as listed on the child's application form. **VERBAL MESSAGES FROM CHILDREN CANNOT BE ACCEPTED!** Parents are responsible for providing transportation for their child. Please send a note if your child is to go home with a friend or is being picked up by someone else. **THIS IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT!** We will not release a child to anyone unless we have written permission for the appropriate person. Authorized adults may be asked to present photo ID.

Daily Schedule and Curriculum

Your child's daily schedule will vary according to his or her age. The schedule will include the following: learning centers, teacher directed and individualized learning time and activities, meals and snack, nap or quiet rest time and indoor and outdoor play. We emphasize self-help skills and independent learning that is developmentally appropriate for your child's age group. Your child will enjoy music, cooking, art, science, movement and dance, storytelling, and Chapel. Additional enrichments are provided by our parent group PALS. These include Creature Teacher and Kids in Motion. Parents may be asked to participate in ways that they feel will enrich the classroom experience. Check with your child's teacher for ways your family can participate.

There will also be an additional activity fee due twice a year to cover the cost of additional special programs that will be offered to all of the students.

Epiphany Early Childhood Center curriculum is geared to the young child's rhythm of development and designed to nourish his or her cognitive, emotional, social, and physical growth. Learning is a creative life-long process which for children begins in play and flourishes in wonder, discovery, and active involvement in hands on experiences which have meaning for them. EECC is a living, learning laboratory for 18 month, 2, 3, 4, and 5 year olds that is guided by supportive teachers who work closely with families to enhance their children's development.

The curriculum is designed to give the child a variety of quality experiences in language development, art, math concepts, science, social studies, music, health, safety, physical education, and spiritual development. Each teacher is responsible for the individual curriculum for her class and will keep you informed of classroom activities. A special devotional time is held weekly with the Pastor or Assistant Pastor. Prayers are a part of our day, especially at snack time and lunch.

Meals and Special Celebrations

Parents are to provide a nutritious packed lunch for their child daily and the EECC provides nutritious early morning and mid-afternoon snacks. Refer to the health snacks flier provided in this packet. Monthly menus for healthy snacks are posted on the parent information board located in the lobby. **EECC is a nut free school. This includes peanuts, soy butter, nut butter, sunflower butter, and any other types of nuts.** Please be aware of this important policy. Also, please inform us of any food allergies your child may have. If a child has food allergies and has been medically diagnosed, we will allow for substitutions.

Birthdays and special celebrations for children are opportunities for you to share a special treat with your child's class. Check with your child's teacher in advance regarding birthday celebrations. Please use caution about food contents and allergens.

What to Wear to School

Think of your child's comfort and provide simple clothing that is free of complicated fasteners. We are involved in fun and creative activities and should not have to be overly concerned with staying clean. Dresses with ruffles and bows and pants with difficult belts and fastenings as well as flip flops should be avoided. We strongly recommend socks and sneakers rather than sandals for running and climbing.

We go outside, weather permitting, every day and your child will need clothing that is sturdy and appropriate. Provide seasonal sweaters and jackets for your child's comfort.

Please make sure your child has a complete seasonally appropriate change of clothes in their cubby at all times. EECC has a limited supply of spare clothing that may be washed and returned. Donations of gently used clothes would be welcomed.

PLEASE LABEL ALL CLOTHING!

Toys and Items from Home

Guns, war toys, swords, or other toys that encourage rough or violent play are to be left at home. Gum, candy, and money should also be left at home. Suitable items may be brought to school for show and share. Children may also bring a soft toy or nap buddy for nap time or a small blanket for transitions. If you have a question about the appropriate nature of the toy, please speak to your child's teacher. Each child has a cubby for his or her personal belongings and also communications from the center and teachers. **Please check their cubbies daily for communication!**

Playground and Play Equipment Policy

Parents are asked to look at the playground and play equipment both inside and outside of the building. Safety procedures and precautions will be taken by the staff to provide the safest environment possible for all children. These precautions will be reviewed at the Parent's Meeting. You will be asked to sign a copy of the policy which will be kept in your child's folder at school. Unless your child has an injury or weather related illness, he or she will join the class in outdoor play. If your child is not well enough to play outside, he or she should not attend EECC until he or she is able to participate again.

Field Trips

You will be notified of field trips via information from your child's teacher. It is very important that students arrive promptly by 9:00 a.m. so that they will not delay the class's departure. We rely on parents to help with the driving for field trips. This is strictly done on a volunteer basis. No one is required to drive at any time. However, if you do, you must have the necessary insurance protection. The person driving has the primary responsibility regarding insurance. The church's coverage is only secondary. Parents will be asked to sign a copy of the permission form, which will be kept in your child's folder.

Health and Safety Policies

Immunizations

Immunizations records are kept for all children and submitted to the state. Our records must be kept current so please provide us with documentation every time your child receives new immunizations. If a child's immunizations are not up to date, your child will be dropped from the program.

Illness

All children attending EECC must be well enough to participate in all of the daily activities, including going outside. All emergency contact numbers must be kept up to date. In the event that your child becomes ill at school, he or she will be isolated as much as possible and you will be called to pick him or her up. If you cannot be reached, your emergency contact will be called. Please refer to the health policy paper in your packet for more information.

Accidents and Injuries

When minor injuries occur due to an accident, the staff will provide first aid and provide parents with an accident report. Minor boo-boos will be reported by the teacher with an "Ouch Report." When a serious accident occurs and requires immediate medical care, the child will be transported to the hospital and the parents will be notified.

It is your responsibility to keep emergency information and phone numbers up to date so the process of notifying a parent can be accomplished without delay. We need parents' cell numbers, pagers, and work numbers, as well as the emergency contacts listed. Please notify us if you are going to be out of town for the day, or if your usual schedule has changed, so that we can locate you if needed.

Emergencies

In the event of a serious emergency situation, the safety and well-being of children and staff are our first priority. We make sure all children and staff are accounted for and safe, and we supervise them until we can arrange for children to be reunited with their families. Families will be notified by cell phone, if possible and information and directions will be relayed. Each teacher will be responsible for contacting the parents of the children in her room and relaying information about the situation and our response to it.

Epiphany Early Childhood Center **Discipline and Behavior Management Policy**

Praise and positive reinforcement are effective methods of behavior management of children. When children receive positive, nonviolent, and understanding interactions from adults and others, they develop positive self-concepts, problem-solving abilities, and self-discipline. Based on the belief of how children learn and develop values, EECC will practice the following:

WE:

1. Praise, reward, and encourage the children;
2. Reason with and set limits for the children;
3. Model appropriate behavior for the children;
4. Modify the classroom environment to attempt to prevent problems before they occur;
5. Listen to children;
6. Provide alternatives for inappropriate behavior for the children;
7. Provide the children with natural and logical consequences of their behavior;
8. Treat the children as people and respect their needs, desires, and feelings;
9. Ignore minor misbehavior;
10. Explain things to children on their level;
11. Use short, supervised periods of "time out;"
12. Remain consistent in our behavior management program.

Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect Policy

Legally, the Director and other staff members have the responsibility of reporting any suspected cases of abuse. In the event that abuse is suspected, the Director will notify the parents or guardians where appropriate and/or the Department of Social Services and other agencies when necessary. Documentation will be entered in the child's folder whenever there is concern. This information will be treated as confidential at all times.

Parent Participation and Observation

Parents are welcomed and encouraged to visit in their child's classroom. Parents are strongly encouraged to volunteer for various activities in the EECC program. Volunteers are needed for field trips, to help with special projects, to assist with class parties, and to volunteer during naptime (bring a sandwich and rest while the children rest). This frees your child's teacher to work on projects for the room, write reports, etc. This is a great opportunity for grandparents to be involved. PLEASE SIGN UP FOR AT LEAST ONE OPPORTUNITY.

We will be taking photos and videos through the year to share with you. You may wish to bring a disposable camera for your child's class.

PALS

PALS stands for "Parent Activity League." PALS was started a number of years ago to supplement the education experiences that our children receive at EECC. PALS make it possible to have "Kids in Motion," "Creature Teacher," and social activities in the fall and spring so that families have an opportunity to get to know each other. They also honor the staff during "Teacher Appreciation Week." PALS make it possible to improve our facility- the playgrounds, etc. and may help with classrooms supplies when needed. WOW! What a great asset to EECC! Thank you for your participation.

The EECC Committee

The EECC Committee of Epiphany Lutheran Church consists of persons who have special abilities and interest in young children. Church members, the Pastor, EECC parent representatives, and the Director make up the EECC Committee. All parents are invited to observe meetings at any time. The Director can provide the Committee Chairperson's name at any time. It is best to call ahead to add something to the agenda.

Parent Information Bulletin Board/Resource Room

A bulletin board has been designed specifically for sharing information with parents. It is located beside the Resource Room. Parents are encouraged to borrow books, videos, etc. We only ask that they be returned to share with others. Contact the Director if you have resources that you would like to share with the other families, feel free to do so. We do request that the Resource Room be off limits to children as it is difficult to maintain organization when the children are allowed to play in there. Thank you.

Transition from Home to Preschool

Be positive when your child arrives for his/her day! Your demeanor and body language are crucial factors in your child's adjustment. Although it may be upsetting to you to leave your child, please try to be positive so that your child will feel good about his/her day here. Communication between parents and staff is one of the most important pathways to success!

Please let us know of any particular event, change in your child's routine, or other situation that may affect your child having a good day. There could have been a death in the family, an upcoming trip that the child is anxious about, a parent out of town, or maybe your child simply did not sleep well the night before. Letting us know of these events will allow us to help your child. He/she may need to talk or may just need a little extra love and attention.

Please let us know of any accident/injuries or a suspicion of illness that may have occurred overnight or during the weekend. We would want to watch for additional symptoms or to prevent additional injury.

Take an interest in what your child is learning here at school and reinforce it at home. Sit down with your child when you get home and look at his/her artwork or other papers. Children delight in you asking about their work and proudly display it. Remember: you are your child's first and most important teachers!