

**Family Handbook**

**Saint Luke’s Lutheran Church**

**5265 North Union Boulevard**

**Colorado Springs, CO 80918**

**(719) 598-7821 www.stlukeskids.org**

**Saint Luke’s Children’s Center**

**Family Handbook**

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**Welcome to Saint Luke’s!**

**Mission Statement**

**Empowering God’s Children**

# **Philosophy**

Welcome to Saint Luke's Children's Center. We are glad to have you as part of our team! Our goals for the children at our center are to help them grow in faith in Jesus Christ, grow in knowledge about the world around them, and grow in self-esteem as a special child of God. “Children are a gift from GOD.” (Psalm 127:3)

# **Governing Body**

Saint Luke’s Children Center is overseen by the Children’s Center Advisory Team, who reports to the Pastor and the Congregation Council. Advisory Team members include church members, the Pastor, the Center Director and Assistant Director and at least one center family representative. Our staff and management team encourage and empower families to be involved in all Center activities.

# **Ages**

We care for children ages 6 weeks to 5 years old. We welcome children ages 5-8 years old to our summer camp.

# **Children with Special Needs**

Saint Luke’s Children Center is in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Children with special needs are welcome to enroll at Saint Luke’s Children’s Center. Our Center is completely handicapped accessible. A copy of an existing individualized health care plan is required. The plan should include a medication schedule, equipment, nutrition and feeding instructions, medical emergency instructions, and toileting and personal hygiene information. A yearly update to the health care plan is required. The care plan must be signed by a physician and the child’s family or legal guardian.

# **Hours of Operation/Holiday Closures**

The Center is open Monday through Friday from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm. We are closed on the following holidays:

* New Year’s Eve and New Year’s Day
* Good Friday
* Memorial Day
* Independence Day
* Friday before the first day of the new school year (Teacher work day)
* Labor Day
* Thanksgiving Day and the following Friday
* Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

If a holiday falls on a Saturday we will be closed Friday and if it falls on a Sunday we will be closed on Monday.

# **Inclement Weather**

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If the Center needs to close due to inclement weather or for any other emergency, notification will be sent through our Procare App and Remind App as well as posted on KKTV news. Web address is [www.kktv.com.](http://www.kktv.com/) In cases of extreme wind, cold temperatures or excessively hot weather the children will utilize Luther Hall for outdoor/physical activities.

# **Snow**

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When local area schools are closed due to inclement weather, the Center will accept older children of currently enrolled families if space and staffing allow. Families must call the Director or Assistant Director to reserve a space for their child(ren) by 7:00 am. A set fee per child for daily care will be added to your weekly account.

# **Fire/Tornado/Active Shooter**

In the unlikely event of a fire, the Center will be evacuated. Fire alarms are monitored by the fire department. The Center is also fully equipped with a fire sprinkler system. In the event of a tornado, all children and staff will go to the lowest level and most interior rooms. In the event of an active shooter children remain in their classroom, hidden and a door security device is put in place to keep anyone from entering the room. Families will be notified of any such event as soon as possible. Fire, tornado and active shooter drills are completed monthly to ensure that all children and staff are knowledgeable and in compliance with procedures in an emergency situation.

# **Registration and Fees**

## **Admission and Registration**

A pre-admission meeting with the child’s family(s) is scheduled to determine if the child requires any special services and to fully discuss the Center’s policies and procedures. In compliance with Colorado state regulations, families must complete an enrollment packet containing general information forms and a food program form; families must also provide an immunization card signed by the child’s physician. A registration fee is due at time of registration.

## **Health Records**

Health records for each child are required and kept on file at the Center. Records should be updated at every well baby/child checkup or as the Center requires when quarterly updates are completed. All children's records are available for review upon the request of state authorities.

## **Center Fees**

All fees are clearly stated in the enrollment packet. Families are required to sign a tuition/fee agreement form as part of the enrollment process. A $25 late fee will be charged if payment is not received within three business days of the individual tuition agreement date. As both a business and a ministry we encourage you to communicate with the Pastor and Director within five business days if you need special arrangements. We will make every effort to work with you on a short-term basis. If arrangements cannot be made then we will regretfully need to dis-enroll your child the following Monday.

## **Non-sufficient Funds Check Fee**

A $35 fee will be charged for any check returned by the bank. If this occurs, we will only accept payment in the form of a money order until the NSF check issue has been resolved.

## **Withdrawal from the Center**

A two-week written notice is required when childcare services are no longer needed. If a two-week written notice is not provided, families will be required to pay an additional two weeks tuition.

# **Our Building**

## **Smoking/Vaping**

Saint Luke’s Children’s Center and Saint Luke’s Lutheran Church is a smoke free campus. Smoking/vaping is not allowed in the building, on the playgrounds, or in the parking lots.

## **Firearms**

Firearms are prohibited in Saint Luke’s Children Center and Saint Luke’s Lutheran Church.

## **Illegal Drugs and Alcohol**

Illegal drugs and alcohol are prohibited in Saint Luke’s Children Center. Children will not be released to anyone who appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

## **Environmental Hazards**

The Center will protect all children from environmental hazards at all times. The Center is free from asbestos and operates within public health requirements for air pollution, lead, and asbestos.

**Peanut Free Environment**

Due to the severity of peanut allergies, any food brought into the building should be peanut-free. This includes food brought in for parties. We also ask that no gum or candy be brought to the Center. A supply list of approved party treats is available in the office.

## **Visitors**

All visitors must sign a log book stating the reason for their visit. While on the Children’s Center premises, all visitors are to remain with a staff person, unless authorized by the Center Director.

# **Our Families**

## **Communication with Families**

Families are welcome to stop in and check on their child at any time. Families may also call during the day and check on their child. We strive to keep our families well informed about their child’s childcare/preschool facility. We communicate in person during pick up and drop off times, and through the Procare and Remind Apps, conferences, email, and surveys.

## **Confidentiality**

Each Center family’s confidentiality is our utmost concern. A child’s records are available to the Director, the child’s teacher and the State of Colorado Child Licensing representatives. Families must provide written consent for other parties to view their child’s record. Records are kept securely locked in the Director’s office.

Any assessments or screenings of Center children will only be viewed by the family, the child’s teacher, and the Center Director. If any screenings or assessments indicate concerns, families will be contacted and given information for outside resources.

## **Questions/Concerns**

Questions or concerns should be brought to the attention of the Director immediately. We are here to serve families and children.

## **Family Volunteers**

We encourage families to volunteer in their child’s classroom or for any Center activity. Families who would like to volunteer should contact their child’s teacher.

## **Filing a Childcare Complaint**

We encourage open, honest, pro-active communication and problem-solving between families and Children’s Center staff. Families have the right to file a complaint with the state of Colorado childcare licensing office. You may contact them at 1-800-799-5876 or at Colorado Department of Human Services, 1575 Sherman St, 1st Floor, Denver, CO 80203-1714.

## **Reporting Child Abuse**

All staff members of Saint Luke’s Church and Children’s Center are mandated reporters by law. If a staff member or family is concerned for the safety and welfare of a child, it should be brought to the attention of the Director or Pastor. Child Protective Services will be called. If a staff member or family suspects any form of child abuse, a formal complaint may be filed by calling 719-444-5700 or by mail at Citizen’s Service Center, 1675 Garden of the Gods Road, Colorado Springs, CO 80907. To file a complaint with the El Paso County Health Department, call 719-578-3199.

# **Curriculum, Assessment and Conferences**

## **The Creative Curriculum**

Our Center’s curriculum of choice is The Creative Curriculum.

“For over 30 years, Teaching Strategies has helped early childhood educators across the country to plan and implement content-rich, developmentally appropriate programs that support active learning and promote children’s progress in all developmental areas. Today, The Creative Curriculum® is widely regarded as a forward-thinking, comprehensive, rigorously researched curriculum approach that honors creativity and respects the role that teachers play in making learning exciting and relevant for every child.“

(Creative Curriculum)[.](http://www.teachingstrategies.com/page/cc) [www.teachingstrategies.com/solutions/](http://www.teachingstrategies.com/solutions/)teach

Thematic units in this curriculum enrich and help children grow in knowledge as God’s children and learn about the world around them.

## **Classroom Assignments**

Children will remain in their assigned classrooms unless the Director deems it necessary to move them. We recognize the importance of children having the same teacher for the majority of the school day.

## **Age and Skills Questionnaires**

Age and Skills Questionnaire (ASQ) assessments will be completed twice yearly for all children over 18 months. The ASQ will be completed every four months for children younger than 18 months. Families of children under the age of two receive a daily observation sheet.

## **Family/Teacher Conferences**

Family/Teacher conferences are conducted in fall and spring and are based upon the ASQ questionnaires, curriculum assessments, and daily observations made in the classroom.

## **Annual Reports & Surveys**

An annual survey will be given to each family to provide the center with feedback on their performance. These results, along with other reports, will be used by the staff and advisory team members to create goals for the center and processes for improvement. These reports are available to all families that are enrolled.

# **Arrival and Departure**

## **Identification and Tracking of Children**

State regulations require a family to sign his/her child in upon arrival at the Center. The family shall then walk the child to the appropriate classroom or playground. The child’s teacher will sign the child in to the daily Procare or Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP) systems, noting the time. Teachers keep a constant head count throughout the day and utilize their daily logs to keep track of students in their classes at all times. When a child leaves for the day, the family will sign out his/her child. The teacher will note the time and sign the child out of the log book.

**Releasing Children from the Center**

A child will be released from the Center only to individuals authorized on the required emergency contact form. Photo ID is required until the Director and staff visually recognizes a person. No one under the age of 16 is allowed to pick up a child from the Center. We do not allow children to be picked up from a field trip site.

## **Late Pick-up**

If a child is picked up late, a $1.00 per minute per child fee is added to the weekly bill. If a child is still in the center 15 minutes past closing, staff will begin calling people listed on the child’s emergency contact form. If a child remains at the center 30 minutes after closing and we have not been able to contact any individual listed on the emergency contact list, we are required to contact Department of Human Services or the police.

## **Field Trips**

Every field trip requires a permission slip signed by the family. When classes leave the Center for a field trip, teachers will have a list of participants and all emergency information for each child. In addition they will have water, a first aid kit, and a cell phone (for emergency purposes only). If a child arrives late when his/her class is on a field trip, he/she will be placed into another age appropriate class until his/her class returns to the Center. Children are required to wear rubber-soled shoes for safety reasons. No money shall ever be brought by a child, since all field trips will be paid for in advance.

# **Daily Routines**

## **Daily Correspondence**

Families should check their family mailbox and child’s daily take home pocket located outside of their classroom (excluding infants) for important notes from the Director and teachers. Folders are kept in the child’s classroom. Daily correspondence is made through the Procare and Remind apps by teachers and staff.

## **Meals and Snacks**

At Saint Luke’s Children’s Center breakfast is provided at 8:30 am. Lunch is served at 11:30 am and an afternoon snack is served at 2:45 pm. We participate in the Colorado State Food Program. All of our meals and snacks comply with regulations regarding nutrition and portion size. Infants are fed according to the family’s guidelines.

## **Discipline**

Our teachers communicate with children at an appropriate developmental level to help them work through the understanding of emotions as well as develop problem solving skills. We may also pray with the children and ask God for guidance in their day. Notes are sent home to inform families if their child has had a difficult day. If a particular negative behavior continues, we will schedule a meeting with the family(s).

## **Infants**

* Infants are placed on their backs unless there is a signed Alternate Sleep Position form from the infant’s pediatrician indicating that an alternate sleep position is medically indicated and includes a health care plan that is signed by the physician and on file.
* Infants will not use infant swaddling unless there is Swaddling Permission Form from the infant’s pediatrician indicating that swaddling is medically indicated and includes a signed health care plan by the physician and on file.
* Room temperature will be kept at a temperature that is comfortable for a lightly clothed adult. Sleep sacks (only those that allow free movement of arms and legs) or one-piece sleepers will be used in lieu of blankets. Sleep sacks that swaddle or restrain the arms will not be allowed, unless the physician permission form is complete and on file.
* Pacifiers will be offered for all infants one month and older at every sleep time unless the family has signed a waiver that the infant is not to be given a pacifier. The pacifier will be clean and dry and will not be coated in any sweet solution.
* During sleep, infants are physically observed by sight and sound (normal skin color, normal breathing, level of sleep, signs of overheating and restlessness) every 10 minutes while in crib.
* Pillows, quilts, comforters, sheepskins, stuffed toys, mobiles and other soft items are not allowed in cribs for infants younger than eight months.
* Music in the crib area will be played softly; no music will be played in, under or within three feet of crib. Music will be developmentally appropriate and promote a comforting sleep environment.
* Infants unable to sit will be held during bottle feedings. Bottles are not allowed in cribs or on beds. Bottles are never propped for feeding. Cups and bottles are not to be carried by children while walking or crawling.
* Fluids are offered from a cup as soon as families and teachers decide together that a child is developmentally ready.
* Parents should prepare bottles of breastmilk daily. These bottles should be labeled with the child’s first and last name and date prepared. Breastmilk will be stored in the classroom refrigerator until served or taken home by families. Small amounts of frozen milk labeled with the child’s first and last name and date prepared can be stored in the freezer on site for emergencies and can be stored for up to six months.
* Baby walkers are not allowed in the Center.

## **Diapers**

All children who are not potty trained must be supplied with enough diapers to be changed every two hours. If families prefer to have their child in cloth diapers, they must supply a hands free container with a waterproof bag for soiled diapers and an adequate number of cloth diapers and liners with a waterproof insert. All soiled diapers will be sent home on a daily basis. Health Department regulations prevent staff members from rinsing out any cloth diapers at the Center.

## **Toilet Learning**

Families and staff of Saint Luke's Children's Center will determine a child's readiness for toilet learning, based on a series of signs exhibited by the child which indicate interest and readiness. This will be based on the child's developmental level rather than solely on the child's age

The goals of toilet learning at Saint Luke's Children's Center are to help the child develop self-esteem, independence, and to maintain a consistent pattern.

When your child shows an interest in toilet learning, his or her teacher will provide a detailed written procedure to the family. A family is asked to sign the documents and a copy will be maintained in the child's records.

## **Supplies**

We ask that all families bring in a blanket and travel size pillow for their child to use at rest time. We also ask that an extra set of clothes be kept at the Center in case of an accident. Please include top, pants, socks and underpants. Each child should have a toothbrush, toothbrush cover and toothpaste. During the winter months snow pants, boots, and mittens may be required for outdoor play.

## **Personal Belongings and Money**

We are not responsible for lost or broken items brought from home. No toys are to be brought from home unless it is the child’s designated show and tell day. Money should not be brought to the Center by any child.

## **Outside Playtime**

All children will have a daily morning and afternoon outdoor playtime for at least 30 minutes each session. The outside temperature must fall within a temperature range provided by Colorado Department of Health standards. Notifications for air quality and other situations are also observed. Families should dress their child according to the weather. Indoor playtime in Luther Hall will be provided if weather prevents outdoor play.

## **Rest Time**

All children are given a two hour rest period each day. If after 45 minutes a child does not fall asleep, quiet activities will be provided. Infant naps are based on individual needs.

## **Shoes**

For safety reasons, we ask that all children wear closed-toe shoes at all times while at Saint Luke’s Children’s Center.

**DVD/Video Viewing**

Children ages two and above may periodically enjoy a thirty minute “G” rated DVD/video.

## **Pets**

Classroom pets, visitor pets or service animals are all welcome to the center as long as they meet the state rules and regulations and have been approved by the Director. Reptiles are not allowed in the Center at any time.

# **Illness & Emergencies**

## **Illness**

If a child displays any of the following symptoms, we ask that the child be kept home for the day. If any of the following symptoms arise during the day, the family will be contacted to pick up the child.

* Fever over 100 degrees
* Undiagnosed rash
* Colored secretions from the eyes, ears, or nose
* Diarrhea
* Vomiting

A child MUST BE SYMPTOM FREE FOR 24 HOURS without the

assistance of any over the counter medication. If a child has been prescribed antibiotics they must have taken them for 24 hours before returning and MUST BE SYMPTOM FREE FOR 24 HOURS. A note from the child’s health provider stating that the child may return to the Center does not automatically mean that a child will be accepted back into the Center. The Center Director and Assistant Director will make any final decision.

**If a Child Becomes Ill at the Center**

When a child becomes ill, we will contact the child’s family and request that the child be picked up within 30 minutes in order to minimize exposure to other children. When a child becomes ill at the Center, we will complete extensive, additional sanitizing of the classroom and toys. The family is asked to notify the Director of the doctor’s diagnosis so that other families may be informed.

## **Medication**

Medication procedures are as follows:

* Over the counter and prescription medication must be labeled with the child’s name. Families must provide a signed physician and family consent form with specific instructions on administering the medicine. This includes dosage, time to be given, date authorized, end date, reason for medication, and potential side effects.
* Families must supply an appropriate measuring device (regular tablespoons are not accepted).
* All medications are kept in a locked cabinet and properly stored away from children.
* Only those staff members who are medication certified will administer medication to children.

## **Infectious Diseases**

If a child has contracted an infectious disease, he/she must remain at home until a physician releases the child to return to the Center. A note is required from the physician authorizing the child’s return.

## **Caring for Injured Children**

In the unlikely event a child is injured at the Center, proper first aid will be administered. If necessary, 911 will be called. Families will be notified and informed of any incident. An incident report will be completed. Families may state a hospital preference; however, emergency personal can override that preference in order to make sure the child is given the best care possible. A copy of the child’s medical information will be given to the paramedics.

## **Children with Special Medical Conditions**

A child with a special medical condition must have an individual medical emergency and care plan on file at all times. This plan must be kept up to date and signed by the child’s physician. In the event of an emergency, this plan will be taken with the child to the hospital.

**Lost Child**

In the unlikely event that a child is lost, the Director and family(s) will be notified immediately. Every effort will be made to locate the child, and when necessary, local authorities will be contacted for help in the search.

## **Emergency**

In a lock-down emergency situation, all children will go to specified areas in their classrooms. Doors will be secured with the door security device and lights turned off. Children will be reminded to be as quiet as possible. Teachers or staff will give the signal for lock-down by shouting CODE BLUE.

In a disaster/event requiring evacuation of the building only, staff, teachers and children will walk to the building north of the church. The site is Total Lending Concepts at 5333 El Capitan Drive, Suite 100, Colorado Springs, CO 80918. Upon arrival at Academy Mortgage Corporation families will be notified where they are to pick up their children.

In a disaster/event requiring evacuation of the building’s surrounding area, the staff and teachers will transport children in their cars to: Bethel Lutheran Church at 4925 Farmingdale Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80917. Upon arrival at Bethel Lutheran Church, families will be notified where they are to pick up their children