



Precious Lambs
PRESCHOOL

PARENT HANDBOOK

2025-2026

TRUST
IN THE
LORD
FOREVER
FOR THE
Lord God
IS AN
Everlasting
ROCK
ISAIAH 26:4

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WELCOME

Welcome to Precious Lambs Preschool! We are excited to work with every parent to provide the best possible Christian preschool experience for every child. The teachers are hopeful that children's faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior will be nourished and grow. Our prayer is that God's will be done, and His name be glorified.

This handbook has been written to describe our program, policies and the myriad of practical details that go into making each school day as happy and successful as possible. Please review it and keep it for reference, as it will answer many of your questions.

WHO ARE WE?

Precious Lambs Preschool is owned and operated by St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church and is under the supervision of St. Paul's Council of Ministry. Our church and school are members of a larger church body called the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, which has been providing quality Christian education for over 150 years. We are one of the largest Private / Christian School Systems in the United States (National Center for Educational Statistics) and have:

- 1,243 Churches
- 356 Early Childhood Ministries
- 280 Lutheran Elementary Schools
- 32 Lutheran High Schools
- 2 Colleges
- 1 Theological Seminary

SCHOOL HISTORY

St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church was established in 1974. In 1994, the congregation built an addition to the church to serve as an educational wing for a new elementary school dedicated to July 31, 1994. Though at that time, many of St. Paul's members were of retirement age, they were motivated to share their faith with children and their families by following Jesus' words to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19). In 1994, the congregation also called the school's first Principal, Mr. John Melso, and began the school year with 17 students in grades K-8.

In 1998, St. Paul's called Miss Sherri Sukow (now Lueck) to teach Kindergarten and part-time Preschool. Preschool was later taught by Mrs. Carole Melso for the 2000-01 school year and by Miss Roberta Mele' from 2001 to 2003. In 2003, Mrs. Kay-Lynn Johnston became the PreK-4 teacher and Director. St. Paul's added a second preschool classroom, and Mrs. Sharon Welfel, the teacher's assistant from 2003-08, was hired to teach PreK-3 and PreK-4 beginning in the fall of 2008. Mrs. Kay-Lynn Johnston and Mrs. Sharon Welfel served together for over fifteen years until Mrs. Johnston's retirement in May 2019. Mrs. Allison Dorn was called by St. Paul's to be the preschool director and preK-4 teacher in 2019. She served for two years until she and her husband relocated to Minnesota in the spring of 2022. In the fall of 2022, Mrs. Sharon Welfel was called to be the preschool director. She continues to teach Prek-4 and three-year-olds in a combined class in the morning. Lucy Siegler was also called the same year to teach preK-4 full-time for morning and afternoon sessions. Mrs. Roberta Opall has been Mrs. Welfel's assistant for ten years, and in 2022, she was hired to take on the extra role of Extended Learning Coordinator, making her full-time. The Fall of 2024 brought more changes as Mrs. Becky Ramsey became the lead VPK teacher, replacing Mrs. Siegler, who now teaches in our kindergarten at St. Paul's. Throughout the years, Precious Lambs Preschool has been extraordinarily blessed with wonderful, loving Christian women. God continues to bless our preschool with dedicated and hard-working staff members.

During the 2003-04 school year, grades K-8 were privileged to move into a new educational unit on the church property. Preschool classes continue to be held in the original educational wing of the church. When the expansion of our elementary school in 2011 allowed for a separate kindergarten class, it remained in the preschool wing of the church for a couple of years. As growth has continued in the elementary school,

adjustments are made yearly for the placement of student classrooms. Currently, kindergarten through third grade, the offices, gym, and kitchen, are in the main building. The remainder of the grade school (4th-8th) is located in the newest modular building at the end of the parking lot. The extra classroom in the preschool was renovated this summer. A wall was opened up to create one, much larger classroom. Currently, our preschool enrollment stands at twenty-eight students.

While we strive to keep our policies and procedures unchanged, we reserve the right to make changes if necessary. If changes are made, we will notify you promptly of the occurring change.

A Note from the Director

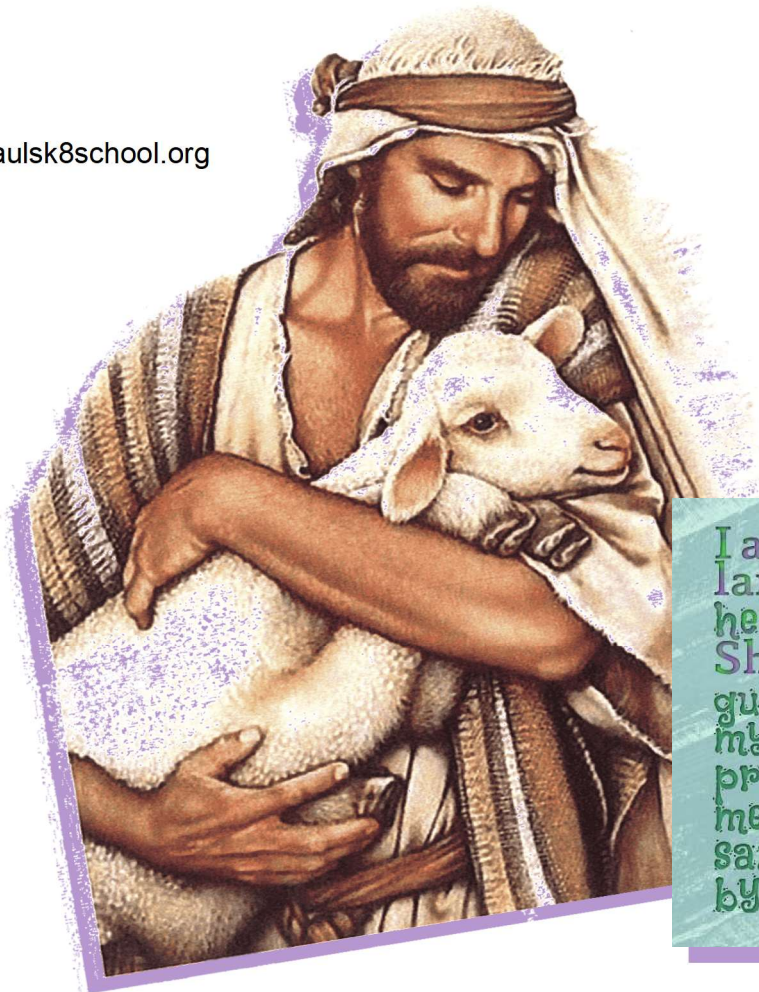
Thank you for giving us the opportunity to care for your child. Our success at Precious Lambs Preschool comes from the close relationship between the school, the child, and the child's family. Working together helps meet your child's academic, emotional, social, and spiritual needs. We are excited to provide your child an environment where they can grow and thrive.

We look forward to having you and your child as part of the Precious Lambs Preschool family.

Thank you again for taking the time to review this information. Don't hesitate to contact me if you have questions regarding any of the stated policies in this handbook.

Joyfully in Christ,

Sharon Welfel
Preschool Director
(352) 489-3027
sharon.welfel@stpaulsk8school.org



I am Jesus' little
lamb, ever glad at
heart I am; For my
Shepherd gently
guides me, knows
my need, and well
provides me, Loves
me every day the
same, even calls me
by my name.

SECTION ONE: Foundations

Mission Statement

“Preparing children for this life and eternity by offering a superior academic and spiritual education.”

It is the mission of Precious Lambs Preschool to support and encourage parents in their God-given responsibility to educate and spiritually train their child. We provide young children a safe, loving Christian environment where they are prepared physically, socially, emotionally, and educationally for future learning experiences, and where they are disciplined spiritually to live for Christ. It is our goal that children learn to love others with Christ's love while developing a lifetime love of learning.

Vision Statement

Precious Lambs Preschool is known for its superior spiritual and academic education whose students:

- are well-prepared for kindergarten and the early elementary grades
- show compassion and respect for others
- make God-pleasing choices and decision
- know and appreciate how much Jesus loves them
- develop individual self-worth in Christ
- appreciate God's gift of health and choose a healthy lifestyle



Philosophy of Education

Precious Lambs Preschool we believe that the Bible is the true, unchanging Word of God and is the final authority in all matters of life. (II Timothy 3:16-17) When all learning and living takes place in light of this scriptural viewpoint, children are prepared to fulfill God's will for their lives and are trained for a life of Christian service in a non-Christian world. (Proverbs 22:6 and II Tim. 3:15)

We believe that God created human life to be developmental and that the educational process must nurture the development of the whole child. The classroom environment must be flexible in allowing children to go through the predictable stages of growth and maturation on individual timetables, and also allow for the unique characteristics, learning styles, and family experiences of each child. Children are active learners and learn best through concrete, quality play experiences which are facilitated through purposeful planning and modeling by caring adults.

Proverbs 22:6 (NIV) “Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not turn from it.”

II Timothy 3:15-17 (NIV) “And how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

Statement of Faith

At Precious Lambs Preschool we believe and teach that...

- **God is real**, revealing himself to us through the beauty of nature and the wonder of the universe (Psalm 19:1-2)
- **God is wise**, revealing his wisdom to us in his holy Word (Psalm 19:7-11)
- **God is caring**, taking care of all our earthly needs (Psalm 145:15)
- **God is loving**, giving us Jesus Christ, who gave up his own life that we might have forgiveness from sin and eternal life in heaven (I John 1:7, John 3:16)
- **God is relational**, desiring to have a personal relationship with all people, including young children, in this life and forever (Luke 18:16, Proverbs 22:6)

Statement on Family Values

The faculty and staff of St. Paul's Lutheran School and Precious Lambs Preschool agree with and model to students and other staff Christian principles of morality and family life. Among these is the belief that marriage is a divine institution between one man and one woman.

Core Values

The members of St. Paul's Lutheran Church have established a preschool in order to bring children to Jesus at a young age so they might learn to know His love for them and trust in Him as their Savior. Jesus said, "*Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.*" (Mark 10:14) By these words Jesus indicated His love for little children and His desire that they be brought to Him so He could bless them.

Precious Lambs Preschool believes the Bible is the true Word of God and written on its pages is God's plan to save His children. (2 Peter 1:20, 21) Through Bible lessons children learn that by nature we all are sinful (Romans 3:23) and in need of forgiveness. God accomplished this through His own Son, Jesus: "*For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.*" (John 3:16) God brings all people to this life-saving faith in Jesus through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Precious Lambs Preschool believes all children are a gift from God to families, and He has given parents the main responsibility for the nurturing and training of their children. (Deuteronomy 6:4-7; 2 Timothy 3:16) It is our privilege to share in this God-given responsibility with parents. Precious Lambs Preschool loves and values each child and is prepared to support and encourage parents in this most important task.

We believe that God created human life to be developmental, and that children grow and learn in unique ways on individual timetables. (Luke 2:52) Our goal is that children develop their full God-given potential and become life-long learners. This can best be achieved by providing rich experiences for children and opportunities for age-appropriate play, hands-on activities, problem-solving and reflection.

We believe by integrating God's Word into all areas of curriculum and by receiving Christian guidance and positive role-modeling from their teachers that the children will grow in their faith and Christian living and demonstrate this in their own behaviors and attitudes.

Precious Lambs Preschool is delighted to share their faith, love, and knowledge with preschool children and their families.

Religious Exemption from Licensure

Precious Lambs Preschool is a faith-based, licensing exempt preschool program, and is committed to ongoing self-monitoring that meets or exceeds state licensing regulations.

Preschool Accreditation

Precious Lambs Preschool is a fully accredited preschool through the Association of Christian Schools International, and first achieved accreditation status in June 2007 and was reaccredited in June 2013 and April 2018. ACSI is a member of the National Council for Private School Accreditation.



SECTION TWO: Preschool Program

PROGRAM GOALS

Through their experiences at Precious Lambs Preschool our children will:

Spiritual Development

- know Bible stories
- know who God is and that he cares about us
- know who Jesus is and what he's done for us
- know that they can speak to Jesus in prayer
- understand that there is certainty after death
- know there's never a problem so great that we can't handle it
- know that they are never alone

Social-Emotional Development

- understand their feelings and express them in words
- demonstrate growing independence and confidence in their abilities
- develop responsibility for themselves and their environment
- show curiosity and a desire to learn
- learn to play, work, and communicate with peers and adults
- show love and respect for all people

Cognitive Development

- expand logical and mathematical thinking
- acquire problem solving skills
- make choices and plans, and bring them to completion
- gain knowledge and concepts about the world
- develop in their ability to understand language and to communicate
- develop an interest in books and reading in various ways
- demonstrate writing in various ways
- use creativity and imagination
- appreciate and express themselves in art, music, and movement



Physical Development

- learn to care for their own bodies
- develop good nutrition habits
- observe safety precautions
- use large motor skills with confidence, control, and coordination
- refine small motor skills by using small muscles:
 - to coordinate eye-hand movements
 - for self-help skills
 - to use drawing and writing tools

Family Development

- grow spiritually as a family
- draw closer to other families
- share in maintaining a partnership between home and Precious Lambs Preschool

CURRICULUM

Parents often have questions and concerns about preschool curriculum. Many people tend to equate a school's curriculum with a published set of materials that lead a teacher from one lesson to the next. These may include pre-made materials like worksheets or cut and paste activities. Many preschools use such curriculums, but research disagrees that these create the best results in children. We have chosen to utilize research-based curricula that is flexible to meet the unique needs of the children in each classroom, and which use open-ended activities in which the children are active, participatory learners. Our curriculum is based on our Christian faith, our understanding of child development, current research in early childhood education, and our knowledge of each individual child, his interests, needs, abilities, and background. As such, we believe the curriculum of Precious Lambs Preschool is designed to meet the spiritual, physical, cognitive and social-emotional developmental needs of our children.

"Curriculum" in our early childhood setting is everything that we do throughout the day. In addition to addressing traditional academic subjects, it promotes independence, curiosity, decision making, cooperation, persistence, creativity, and problem solving in young children. Our day consists of active and quiet times; individual, small, and large group experiences; and indoor and outdoor play.

During Bible Time children learn about Jesus through Bible stories, verses, songs, and prayer. This is a large group activity that also fosters children's listening, comprehension, and verbal skills. By teaching the Bible in a child's language through fun activities children find joy in learning God's Word. Doing things the "Jesus Way" is how they will want to respond to God's love. We want each child to develop to his full potential to fulfill God's will on earth.

The rich classroom environment allows children to be comfortable and practice skills they have learned and encourages them to try new experiences. Children will develop the skills, attitudes and concepts that will enable them to make sense of the world, be successful and therefore develop a true feeling of self-worth. Following a daily routine helps children feel secure by giving them a sense of control as they come to know what to expect.

The teachers act as facilitators in this child-centered classroom as they guide and supervise play to foster learning. Children are encouraged to make choices, engage in active learning, and build relationships with peers and teachers. The learning centers are filled with concrete, process-oriented experiences for children. Through supervised play children become better thinkers and problem solvers and develop creativity.

Other small and large group times involve children in teacher-initiated experiences. These are scheduled throughout the day and may include listening to stories, playing a game, cooking, singing, learning a finger-play, experiencing music movement, or planning and sharing.

We believe this curriculum will create capable learners who are able to think for themselves, solve problems, and live as children of God. Their faith in Jesus our Savior will be strengthened through his Holy Word. Children will be challenged to use language and to construct meaning from print. They will stretch their ability to think logically, solve problems, see relationships, and to use their senses. It is the integration of a day of preschool experiences that helps children learn and builds a foundation for further education in reading and math.

CLASSROOM INTEREST AREAS

Interest Areas are an essential part of the total curriculum. Although each area serves to help children meet the goals in all areas of development, this list will accentuate developmental goals that are particular to specific interest areas.

In the **House Area** children

- learn about themselves, families, and their community
- take on a role or occupation and imitate behavior
- make-believe and use their imagination
- engage in socio-dramatic play
- develop social skills as they share, negotiate, compromise, and appreciate others
- develop abstract thinking skills by recalling and visualizing experiences to re-create

In the **Construction Area** children:

- grow in strength and coordination as they carry and place large and small blocks and props
- experiment with construction
- use blocks, animal and people figures, and vehicles for dramatic play
- develop abstract thinking skills as they re-create pictures of the concrete world
- develop math concepts as they count, sort, weigh, match, compare, order, measure, and balance



In the **Sand/Water Area** children:

- develop small motor control and eye-hand coordination
- have a tactile experience with a variety of materials
- engage in dramatic play using props
- explore science concepts of cause and effect and make comparisons

learn about size, shape, volume, and quantity

In the **Toys and Games Area** children:

- use self-correcting toys to build independence
- use open-ended toys to improve small motor skills and eye-hand coordination
- use collectibles to practice sorting, matching, classifying, comparing, sequencing, and patterning
- use cooperative games to develop visual discrimination skills, counting and numeral recognition
- develop social skills as they share and take turns playing a cooperative game

In the **Reading and Writing Area** children:

- develop an interest in reading
- enjoy stories, poems, rhymes, and music through books, tapes, CD's, flannel boards and puppets
- develop an understanding that written words are symbols and a means of communication
- increase vocabulary

gain information and knowledge from books

In the **Art Area** children:

- engage in the process of working with art and writing materials
- express feelings and ideas
- have sensory experiences
- develop small motor skills
- experiment with color, shape, line, size, and texture

In the **Discovery Area** children:

- develop new vocabulary as they discuss investigations, ask questions and share experiences
- use tools and materials to explore and discover how the world works
- use thinking skills to investigate, explore, discover, make predictions, solve problems
- use senses to touch, feel, taste, smell and see
- develop dexterity and eye-hand coordination



In the **Outdoor Area** children:

- develop large muscle skills of balance, coordination, and spatial awareness
- develop small muscle skills
- dig and construct in sandbox play
- experience a quiet play area for art, music, games or dramatic play
- learn about science and nature

DISCIPLINE

Preschoolers are practicing independence and assertiveness. They are learning how to use words for their feelings, needs and desires. They are learning how to be part of a group. They are building relationships. Preschoolers are beginning to understand that what they say and do affects others. A healthy sense of self-control over their lives, and a positive self-esteem comes from learning to solve problems, deal with social conflict, and make choices and decisions.

Teachers guide these young Christians in learning about making God-pleasing choices. The Christian teacher's foundation for guidance is having faith in Jesus as their Savior. Children will want to love others through words and actions because of what Jesus has done for them. Teachers guide children through this Biblical perspective using their understanding of child development, their knowledge of the individual child, and implementing appropriate expectations.

Christian guidance occurs when a teacher develops a positive relationship with each child and interacts with them rather than manages their behavior. Teachers make positive comments about children's experiences. Teachers show love and concern for children by letting them know what is expected and setting appropriate limits. Teachers are consistent, give clear directions, and state rules positively and firmly. Teachers try to anticipate problems and plan accordingly.

Teachers encourage children to think for themselves, correct their own mistakes, and solve their own problems. The techniques of redirection and negotiation are used to change children's behavior and assist in conflict resolution. The teacher may work with all the children involved in a conflict, only the child who needs help, or just be nearby to support children in their own negotiations. Time out will be used only for behavior that is repeatedly aggressive or unsafe.

Persistent behavior problems will be brought to the attention of the parent, so that both may work together for positive changes. Learning to get along with others and accept limits takes time and adult patience.

Teachers' attention will be focused on the problem behavior and not the child. No one will do anything that could break the spirit of a child, be humiliating, frightening or abusive. No one will use food, rest, toileting, or physical punishment to manipulate a child.

CALENDAR

The Preschool will be closed in observance of holidays, teacher conferences, and in-service days as indicated on the Precious Lambs Preschool Calendar. Several dates or daily hours differ from St. Paul's Lutheran School calendar and Citrus County Public School calendar. Precious Lambs Preschool Calendar should be your go-to calendar for correct dates of closings, early dismissals, and special events.

There is no fee reduction for any Preschool closings. Tuition costs reflect these closings.

DAILY SCHEDULE

Hours of Operation

MORNING 3'S & VPK SESSION

Preschool Doors Open: 8:00 AM

Dismissal: 11:30 AM

Extended Learning: 11:30 AM – 3:15 PM

Early Dismissal 11:00 AM (unless otherwise stated)

AFTERNOON VPK SESSION

Preschool Doors Open: 12:00 PM

Dismissal: 3:15 PM



Sample Classroom Schedule

8:15 Arrival Time

8:20 Greeting Time

8:25 Plan – Work – Clean Up - Recall

9:30 Snack Time

9:45 Bible Time

10:00 Outside Time

10:40 Small Group

11:00 Large Group

11:15 Story Time

11:30 Dismissal

ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE ROUTINES

Arrival:

- Be sure you have brought all the belongings your child needs for the day. (See What to Bring/What to Wear)
- Observe speed limit signs and drive slowly as soon as you enter the church property. Turn the engine off on your vehicle.
- Walk your child into the preschool and help him/her to unpack and put away his/her belongings.
- Sign your child “in” on the daily attendance sheet in the correct binder with the time and your name, which is mandatory by state law.
- Encourage your child’s independence but give the necessary assistance when arriving.
- Upon arrival, help your child follow the posted arrival procedures. Then leave your child with the teacher, making contact with the teacher to ensure the teacher knows your child is there.
- Check the Family Communication Center at the Preschool upon arrival for important information and lesson plan activities.
- If your child was absent, remember to bring a note to present to the teacher upon arrival.

Departure:

- Children will be dismissed from the preschool porch, one at a time to their parent or legal guardian, or previously authorized adult. Please wait on the porch until your child is dismissed to you. The teachers will help all children gather their belongings to take home before dismissing them to you.
- Upon departure, you will sign your child “out” on the daily attendance sheet, which is mandatory by state law.
- These procedures have been established for the safety of the child. We need to ensure that children are safely delivered into your hands and that we have the opportunity to convey information about the day.
- Take your child’s belongings home daily: daily folder, lunch box, water bottle and any soiled clothes to be laundered.



DAILY DISMISSAL

- For the children's safety, they will only be released to parents or guardians with legal custody or to a previously authorized adult.
- Notify the preschool director or your child's teacher immediately of changes of authorized adults for Praxi updates. The preschool staff will abide by authorized adults listed on Praxi only.
- Children *will be released* to persons listed on Praxi when the parents give written or verbal (phone call) instruction to do so.

- Children *will NOT be released* to anyone that is not listed in Praxi unless a parent has notified the Preschool in person and has provided a written note in advance.

PLEASE NOTE: Children *will NOT be released* to anyone not listed on Praxi when the parents give only verbal (phone call) instructions.

Teachers must know the adult or must see a photo ID before releasing the child. Be sure that the pickup person comes with a driver's license for proper identification.

If a parent or authorized adult appears to be under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs, the staff will attempt to contact the other parent or authorized adult on the pick-up list. The Precious Lambs Preschool Staff does not have the right to deny the parent access to their child, but the staff will contact the police immediately if the center is not able to contact another parent or authorized adult to pick up the child.

Precious Lambs Preschool Late Pick-Up Policy for AM VPK and AM Three-year-old Program

Parents are to pick their child up on time at 11:30 AM (grace period until 11:35 AM) other than in an extreme emergency such as a life-or-death situation (car accident, hospital, etc.). As soon as possible, notify your child's teacher or preschool director by calling the preschool or the teacher's cell phone so that we can assist you.

If you unexpectedly find you will be late (traffic, stuck at the store, lost track of time, etc.), Immediately notify your child's teacher by calling the school or the teacher's cell phone. You will be charged for these types of late pick-ups after the first instance.

After the first late pick-up that Precious Lambs does not consider an extreme emergency or unusual situation, we will give you a verbal reminder of our policy, and you will not be charged a late fee. Subsequent late pick-ups, however, will be billed.

Repeated late pick-ups may result in your child being suspended or removed from the Precious Lambs Program.

Late charges will be billed to your Praxi account, and prompt payment is expected.

Late charges are not allowed to carry over to the following statement. Late fees that go unpaid or into the next month may result in your child being suspended from preschool until payment is made.

Parents shall pick up their child from the morning session of preschool at 11:30 AM. Late pick-up fees shall apply as follows:

- **Late pick up charges will begin being billed at 11:36**
- 11:36 – 11:40 \$5.00
- 11:41 – 11:49 \$2.00 extra per minute
- 11:50 – 11:54 \$5.00 per minute
- After 11:55 @ the discretion of Precious Lambs Preschool
- Staff will verify the late pick-up time by cell phone clock

DAILY ATTENDANCE

Mandatory Sign in/Sign out

It is mandatory by Florida state law that each child must be signed in and out daily by the parents or another authorized adult who is at least 18 years old. Binders for each classroom are on the table in the hallway for this purpose. At dismissal, a teacher will hand you the binder as your child called.

VPK Attendance Policy Requirements:

Parents of VPK students understand that in order for their child to participate in Precious Lambs Preschool VPK Program, they are required to:

- Have their child in attendance at the preschool at least one program day per calendar month, or their child will be suspended from VPK services.
- Limit their child's absences to those allowed by Florida Administrative Code:
 1. Illness or injury of the child
 2. Major illness or injury of a child's family member
 3. Medical appointments of students
 4. Head lice – a maximum of 2 days for each occurrence
 5. Death in the family of the student
 6. Compliance with a court order (e.g., visitation, subpoena)
 7. Special education or related services as defined in 20 U.S.C. 1401 (2004) for the child's disability.
 8. Observance of a religious holiday or service, or because the child's or parent's religion forbids secular activity on the instructional day
 9. Family vacation, not to exceed 5 excused absences per program year; or
 10. Extraordinary circumstances beyond the control of the child and the child's parent.
- Provide written documentation after every absence, including the date(s) and reason for the absence. Text or email is acceptable.
- In the event of excessive unexcused absences resulting in non-payment by the Early Learning Coalition (ELC), parents are responsible for paying for those missed days out-of-pocket. If payment is not made, their child may be terminated from the Precious Lambs Preschool (free tuition) VPK Program.
- Have their child in regular daily attendance during the program hours established by the preschool.
- Bring their child to preschool between 8:15 and 11:30 AM for the morning session or between 12:00 PM and 3:15 PM for the afternoon session. Pick-up for the morning session is no sooner than 11:30 AM and no later than 11:35 AM. Pick-up for the afternoon session is no sooner than 3:15 PM and no later than 3:20 PM every day.
- Verify in writing, each month, their child's VPK attendance during the previous month. This verification will be provided when the parent signs the Florida VPK Child Attendance and Parental Choice Certificate. Children's certificates will be provided at the appropriate time.

At the discretion of Precious Lambs Preschool, a child may be removed from participating in Extended Learning for non-payment or regularly paying late (without a payment arrangement).

EXCLUSIONS FROM ATTENDANCE

Reasons a child may be excluded from admission or attendance in the preschool program:

- The child appears ill, overtired, or unable to participate in the daily program.
- Child is not developmentally ready for the preschool curriculum or routine.
- Child is not toilet trained.
- Preschool cannot meet the needs of the child with reasonable accommodations.
- Parents do not observe the policies outlined in the Preschool Parent Handbook.
- Non-payment or late payment of fees. (See Financial Policies)

Procedure for temporary exclusion:

- Parents will be asked to take an ill child from the Preschool immediately if present, or within one hour of notification if not present.
- Parents will be asked to pick up a disruptive child as soon as possible.
- The preschool director will inform the parents verbally or in writing concerning the reason for the exclusion, the date exclusion will begin and the conditions necessary for the child to return to Preschool. There will be no adjustment in tuition.

Procedure for permanent exclusion:

- Children who, in the professional opinion of their teacher and the Director or school principal, exhibit behavior
- which is physically harmful to other children; or
- which causes willful or malicious damage to the school or school property; or

- which is unreasonably disruptive of the daily program; or which exhibits disrespect toward adults; or
- which shows willful disregard for the morals and conventions of a Christian school may be subject to, but in extreme cases not limited to:
 - Notification of parents by the preschool director or principal.
 - A one-day suspension with notification of the parents.
 - A three-day suspension **and** a mandatory conference with the parents if the problem continues.
 - Permanent expulsion from the school if the problem continues. This will be after review of the case by St. Paul's Council of Ministry. The parents shall be required to be at this review, or the child will automatically be expelled from the preschool.

This policy has been adopted to maintain a healthy Christian atmosphere within our preschool. It also aims to promote the best possible environment for learning and teaching. Any severe case may directly lead to expulsion. If the child is permanently excluded, unused tuition will be refunded. Parents agree not to use social media as a vehicle to air any preschool-related grievances.

ABSENCE POLICY

Notify the Preschool as soon as possible when your child is going to be absent.

A parental note is needed upon arrival when the child returns to school excusing the child from Preschool. Text or email is acceptable. This note shall include:

- date the excuse is written
- date(s) of the absence
- reason for the absence
- parent's signature

WHAT TO BRING

Bring Daily

- A complete set of extra clothing that includes a shirt, pants, socks, shoes, and underwear in a zip lock bag with the child's name on the bag. Be sure to update the outfits when your child grows into a larger size or when the weather changes.
- A daily snack in a lunch box with an ice pack.
- A school-age backpack to carry belongings to and from preschool, roomy enough to include a 2-pocket folder, snack container, water bottle, and extra clothing such as a light sweater or jacket.
- The preschool will provide the 2-pocket folder, which will be used to transport items to and from home. The teacher and parents are both expected to check these folders every day. Examples of items teachers may be sending home are Christ Light Bible lessons, newsletters, monthly calendars, field trip forms, and special notices.
- A no-spill water bottle with a closable spout labeled clearly with the child's name. **NO DISPOSABLE** water bottles and **NO** water bottles with a **SCREW CAP** of any kind - disposable or reusable. **NO SIPPY CUPS** or **TERVIS**. Water bottles should contain only water, not juice! Children may use their water bottles in the classroom, especially during snack time, but having one for playground use is a **MUST**. The bottle will be taken home daily to be washed and returned filled the next day. Any child who needs to borrow a water bottle from preschool will be provided with one. Repeated occurrences will result in a charge of \$10 to pay for a new water bottle provided by the preschool. Charges will be billed on Praxi.

Bring for Extended Care

- Children staying for Extended Care will need to bring a lunch in a lunch box with an ice pack.
- Children staying for Extended Care will need a blanket (twin size or larger) stored in a pillowcase. The blanket will be used under and over the child. They may also bring a favorite stuffed animal and a pillow. These items will need to be taken home weekly and laundered. All items (zip lock bag, outdoor clothing, lunch box, backpack, water bottle) should be visibly labeled with your child's name.

Do Not Bring

- Do not bring toys, guns, or money. Teaching children to share when the toy belongs to someone special is more challenging, and toys from home can get broken or lost. Action figures and toy weapons are never appropriate for preschool.
- Do not bring gum, candy, carbonated soft drinks, caffeinated drinks, glass containers, Hugs drink barrels, pizza Lunchables.

SPECIAL CELEBRATIONS

Birthdays at Preschool

The preschool will celebrate every child's birthday that occurs during the school year. Parents should discuss with their child's teacher when to celebrate birthdays that fall on a weekend or over a break. Preschool does not usually celebrate summer birthdays, as children need to understand time properly, which can be hard for them. Half birthdays are not observed. Preschool parents may bring store-bought birthday snacks. Teachers will provide a birthday crown, a balloon, and a number candle to commemorate the special occasion.

Birthday Party Invitations

No one wants to disappoint a child knowingly. Therefore, the preschool asks parents to be very discreet when sending birthday invitations to classmates. The first names of classmates will be given out upon request. Parents should hand invitations for classmates to a teacher or place them in their child's folder. The teachers will put the invitation in the children's folders to go home to parents.

Holiday Celebrations

Our Christmas and Easter celebrations will be centered on the true significance of these holidays for Christians. Jesus' birth will be the center of Christmas. Jesus' death and resurrection will be the focus of Easter. On October 31, we will observe Reformation Day and celebrate the gift of God's Word.

EXTENDED CARE & FULL-DAY THREE YEAR OLD'S

Preschool Extended Care is a separate program from morning preschool and is paid separately from the regular preschool day. The hours of Extended Care are from 11:30 AM until 3:15 PM. During this time, the children will follow a schedule including lunch, naptime, and varied daily activities. There is no drop-in care.

Children are very active at preschool and, therefore, are required to have a nap or rest period during Extended Care each afternoon. The preschool will provide each child with a cot and a quiet setting. Each child will need to bring a blanket (twin size or larger) from home in a pillowcase with their name written on all items. The blanket will be used under and over the child. Plan on leaving all bedding items at preschool for the week. On the last day of the week, naptime bedding will be sent home to be laundered. Children may also bring a favorite stuffed animal. Toys are not permitted.

Precious Lambs Preschool Late Pick-Up Policy for PM VPK and EXTENDED CARE

Parents are to pick their child up on time at 3:15 (grace period until 3:20) other than in an extreme emergency such as a life-or-death situation (car accident, hospital, etc.). As soon as possible, notify your child's teacher or preschool director by calling the preschool or the teacher's cell phone so that we can assist you.

If you unexpectedly find you will be late (traffic, stuck at the store, lost track of time, etc.), Immediately notify your child's teacher by calling the school or the teacher's cell phone. You will be charged for these types of late pick-ups after the first instance.

After the first late pick-up that Precious Lambs does not consider an extreme emergency or unusual situation, we will give you a verbal reminder of our policy, and you will not be charged a late fee. Subsequent late pick-ups, however, will be billed.

Repeated late pick-ups may result in your child being suspended or removed from the Precious Lambs Program.

Late charges will be billed to your Praxi account, and prompt payment is expected.

Late charges are not allowed to carry over to the following statement. Late fees that go unpaid or into the next month may result in your child being suspended from preschool until payment is made.

Parents shall pick up their child from Extended Care at 3:15 PM. Late fees shall apply as follows:

- 3:21 – 3:25 \$5.00
- 3:26 – 3:30 \$2.00 extra per minute
- 3:31 – 3:40 \$5.00 per minute
- After 3:41 @ the discretion of Precious Lambs Preschool
- Staff will verify the late pick-up time by cell phone clock

SAYING GOOD-BYE AT PRESCHOOL

The first day of Preschool is exciting for your child, but it can also be filled with anxieties of separation and new experiences. Let your child know that you are enthusiastic about the coming events, and they will be, too. Dealing with change and new experiences is a lifelong skill that takes practice. Life is filled with hellos and good-byes! Be kind to yourself, too. Remember, you are also experiencing a separation. Here are some ideas that will help to make a smooth transition from home to Preschool:

- Create a routine at home as you prepare for Preschool
- Talk to your child and let them know what is going to happen – “You’re going to stay at preschool while I go to...”
- Follow the same routine each morning when you arrive, (put belongings away, use the toilet and wash hands, sign in, wave goodbye from the window). Create a routine for going home when you pick up your child from Preschool, too.
- Allow a few extra minutes to spend with your child on the first few days.
- Talk together with your child’s teacher. Let your child see that you are all friends.
- Getting your child involved in an activity usually lessens the anxiety.
- Assure your child that you will come back to pick them up. One of their greatest fears is that you won’t come back. Tell them when that will be. Use an activity for a reference point, such as “I’ll be back when you finish your snack.”
- Don’t sneak away, even if it seems easier for you. Leaving unnoticed will violate your child’s trust.
- Create a ritual for saying goodbye. Ask your child what they want to do. Do they want to have two hugs, three kisses, or rub noses?
- ***Once you start to leave, don’t stop.*** It’s important that you follow through even if your child cries. We will comfort your child.
- Feel free to call later in the morning to see how your child is doing.
- Many children adapt quickly to the routine. However, it is perfectly normal for some children to take several days, or even weeks, to adapt. Some children adjust well at first and then later experience anxiety.

SECTION THREE: Preschool Enrollment

ADMISSION

Admission Requirements

Precious Lambs Preschool is a school-year preschool program for all children who are at least three years old, and who are fully toilet-trained and self-sufficient in the bathroom. (*This means no pull-ups or diapers will be worn during the Preschool program*)

Probationary Period

All children will be enrolled for a probationary period of six weeks. If after six weeks there are no reasons to exclude them from attendance, they will be fully admitted. In certain circumstances, a shorter trial period may be mutually agreed upon.

Order of Acceptance

Children shall be enrolled for the school year on a first-come basis, as space permits, and as required non-refundable registration or enrollment fees are paid in full and VPK voucher submitted, if required.

STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

In the Bible God tells us that He “...wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.” (1 Tim. 2:4) All children are welcome to enroll in Precious Lambs Preschool without reference to race, religion, national or ethnic origin or gender.

REGISTRATION AND ENROLLMENT

The registration procedure begins when you inquire on the website stpauls.edu or call the school office.

- Once on the website, click **Precious Lambs Preschool**
- Next click **PreK Interest Form Start Here**
- Complete Interest Form
- The Preschool Director will contact you by email or phone
- You will receive an email invitation from our Financial Coordinator to complete registration application and set up an account on Praxi

To complete the registration process, you may be required to make a non-refundable payment. You will not be required to make a payment if you are signing up for VPK only. There is no fee associated with the initial inquiry.

Enrollments are accepted in the order in which applications are received.

The St. Paul's Council of Ministry oversees the review of all applications for enrollment. In the event the Council of Ministry declines to accept an application for enrollment, that registration/enrollment fee will be refunded. However, the non-refundable fee will not be refunded if the application is retracted by the applicant.

Once the maximum number of preschool students has been reached, your name may be put on the waiting list by notifying the preschool director. Applicants on the waiting list will be notified of any vacancies in the order in which they were received.

By completing the enrollment forms and submitting the non-refundable registration fee, or non-refundable Extended Learning enrollment fee through Praxi, or submitting the VPK voucher to the preschool director, parents agree to abide by the policies of the Preschool.

All parents who are not members of St. Paul's, are strongly encouraged to attend a brief Bible Information Class with our Pastor. This will enable the parents to fully understand the spiritual foundation of our Preschool, and then also support it in their homes.

Complete and submit these forms prior to the school year (before your child may attend).

- **Copy of Birth Certificate**
- **Florida Certificate of Immunization*** - Immunizations must be documented on DH Form 680 and must be signed by a practicing physician in the State of Florida. DH Form 680 may be obtained from a private physician or the local county Health Department.
- **Student Health Examination*** - The Student Health Examination must be documented on DH Form 3040 and must be completed by a person given statutory authority to perform health examinations. DH Form 3040 may be obtained from a private physician or the local county Health Department. The examination is valid for 2 years from the date it was received. However, upon admission the examination must have been received within the past year.

*Parents may consult their private physician or contact:

Citrus County Health Department, 3700 W. Sovereign Path, Lecanto (352) 527-0068

STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

Children's records are open only to the Teacher, the Director or Principal, an authorized employee of the Department of Children and Family Services, an authorized employee of ACSI, or the child's parent or legal guardian. Information parents share with the Director or Teacher will be kept confidential. Only pertinent information will be reported to the necessary authorities.

MEDIA RELEASE AGREEMENT

Children may be photographed, audio taped, and videotaped for use within our Preschool either for educational, promotional or advertising purposes. Families give permission to St. Paul's Lutheran Church and School and Precious Lambs Preschool the right to record and reproduce on film, tape, print, audio, or web materials the physical and/or vocal image and words of the student without using any children's names.

FAMILY INFORMATION RELEASE

Preschool families understand that their name and contact information have been added to Precious Lambs database. Families may receive school publications as well as information (letters, phone calls, etc.) regarding school activities and enrollment information.

DRESS CODE

Preschool children need to wear clothes that are clean, comfortable and modest. ***They must wear clothes that they can independently manage in the bathroom and are not concerned about when playing with messy materials.*** Plan for the weather. We will go outside daily, weather permitting. When it is hot, children will be comfortable in shorts and short-sleeved shirts. When it is cool, children will need jackets. Some children will also be more comfortable wearing a sweater or light jacket in the air conditioning.

Children may not wear their caps, hats, mittens or sunglasses indoors, though these may be worn when we go outside. Please use discretion when allowing children to wear jewelry. Necklaces, rings, bracelets, watches and earrings that are large, loose and dangling may present a distraction or a safety concern and may be removed from the child at the discretion of the teacher.

Children need to wear socks and play shoes with non-skid soles (no sandals). Their shoes need to be safe for movement activities both inside and outside.

Precious Lambs Preschool Dress Code:

- **Pants and shorts**
 - No holes, patched or frayed edges
 - Regular fit: no form-fitting or baggies
 - Shorts must be of conservative length using a fingertip length guideline
 - Pants and shorts must fully cover the buttocks area
 - No belts that cannot be managed independently by the child
 - NO OVERALLS

- **Shirts and blouses**
 - Long enough to cover the midriff
 - Patterns, designs, and emblems allowed
 - No advertising, logos, or commercial interests allowed
 - No slits or open backs
 - Sweaters and sweatshirts may be worn on cool days – NO HOODIES in the classroom

- **Skirts and dresses**
 - Conservative length (fingertip guideline)
 - Girls must wear shorts or leggings under their skirts and dresses to cover their underwear
 - Dresses can have no spaghetti straps that fall off the shoulders or are revealing

- **Shoes and socks**



- Socks must be worn with shoes
- Shoes should have non-skid soles, safe for inside and out
- Shoes must be of a style that stays on the foot while running and active – NO SANDALS, CROCS, OPEN-TOED, or OPEN-BACK shoes
- Shoes must cover the entire foot (example: sneakers)

SECTION FOUR: Family Partnership

PROCEDURES

Records

For your child's safety, keep your child's registration information updated. Whenever you have a change of address, employment, phone number or emergency information, be sure to inform the Director so that your child's file may be corrected.

Policies

Each parent receives the policies of the preschool in the Precious Lambs Preschool Handbook via email, and it can be found on Praxi by logging into your account.

Complaints, Grievances and Questions

At times parents may have concerns or complaints. God's Word gives us guidance in how to handle these situations (Matthew 18 and I Corinthians 13).

- Speak first to the teacher with whom you have a concern or complaint before speaking with anyone else.
- If the issue has not been resolved, speak with the preschool director. If that does not resolve the issue, speak with the school principal.
- If you still feel that your issue is not resolved, speak with the Council of Ministry chairman.
- All requests to speak directly with the members of the Council of Ministry at one of their meetings to express a complaint or grievance must be submitted in writing to the COM chairman at least one week prior to the next scheduled meeting. The written request should include the nature of the complaint or grievance along with specific times and dates when the previous steps were taken with the individuals who could not adequately resolve the problem.

Any questions you have regarding enrollment, payments or school policy may be addressed to the preschool Director. Questions involving the regular workings of the classroom or pertaining to your child's time in the classroom should be directed to the lead teacher in that classroom.

PRESCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

We believe that children have the right to play and learn in a supportive, caring, and safe environment. When behavioral expectations are consistent, and when reasonable boundaries are put in place by caring and supportive practitioners, the occurrence of bullying can be minimized.

Bullying affects everyone, not just the bullies and the victims. No one should have to accept this type of behavior. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed will a child best be able to benefit from the opportunities that preschool offers. Although bullying in the strongest context of the word does not generally occur with preschool-aged children, it is recognized by practitioners that preschoolers are still developing their social skills and expanding their understanding of what is appropriate behavior. They are still learning a great deal about how to get along with others—and they're less experienced in solving the problems that arise when playing with others. Thus, they may use aggression to solve problems, rather than more effective ways of conflict resolution. While all bullying is aggression, not all aggression is bullying.

We acknowledge that children's biological and cognitive development at this age needs to be nurtured and supported and those very young children do not purposely wish to cause hurt.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING:

Bullying is the willful, conscious, and persistent desire to cause emotional, verbal, and/or physical hurt to another. This hurt may be caused by actual or anticipated actions which put the victim under stress. These actions are accompanied by an awareness of the impact of the behavior on the child who is the victim. The characteristics of bullying suggest that the child who is bullying has reached a state of cognitive development where they are able to plan to cause distress in another. But it is sometimes hard for young children to distinguish bullying from hurtful and/or immature and inconsiderate behavior. Bullying can take many forms, but in preschool it may look like this:

- Emotional: being unfriendly or unkind, excluding from activities or play
- Physical: non-accidental hitting, pushing, punching, pinching, kicking, hiding, taking or defacing belongings or any use of violence
- Verbal: name-calling, teasing

ACTION TO BE TAKEN WHEN BULLYING IS SUSPECTED:

Please note that an instance of bullying may fall into more than one 'category' listed above. If a child bullies another child or children:

We will support children by following the six steps of conflict resolution as follows, stopping the child who is being hurtful, and comforting the child who has been hurt:

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

We equip children with appropriate ways to stand up for themselves during times of conflict. We make sure that children who bully receive praise when they display acceptable behavior; We do not label children who bully.

When children bully, we discuss what has happened with their parents and work out a plan with them for handling the child's behavior; and When children have been bullied, we share what has happened with their parents, explaining that the child who did the bullying is being helped to adopt more acceptable ways of behaving.

PROACTIVE PREVENTION OF BULLYING:

1. Nurture and support children's social-emotional growth through play, story times and circle time activities
2. Model kindness, empathy, and respect to all children
3. Encourage and equip all children with problem-solving skills
4. Equip children to use their voice and share their feelings to become confident communicators

SCRIPTURE VERSES SUPPORTING KINDNESS, COMPASSION, EMPATHY, FRIENDSHIP AND FORGIVENESS:

- Ephesians 4:32 - "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."
- Mark 12:30, 31 - "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."
- I John 4:19 - "We love because he (Jesus) first loved us."
- Romans 12:18 - "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. "
- Proverbs 17:17 - "A friend loves at all times."

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

God's Word

The Gospel of Jesus as our only Lord and Savior is God's power to create faith and give forgiveness. The Gospel message of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ runs like a golden thread through our entire curriculum. Therefore, an informational session explaining the basics of the Bible is led by the Pastor of St. Paul's Lutheran Church. In this class he will introduce you to basic teachings of the Bible, the ones we will be teaching your children. The Preschool encourages all parents to take advantage of this opportunity to learn about or review God's Word. Our pastor or teachers will let you know about the dates and times of the sessions, or you may ask to meet personally with the pastor.

Visiting the Preschool

It is expected that parents will make an appointment to visit the Preschool with their child when they are considering enrolling their child. After children are enrolled, parents are welcome to visit their children anytime. The Preschool encourages parents to speak to the Director and take advantage of this welcome in a manner that fits their individual schedule.

¹²

Conferences

Informal "chats" will be ongoing. Parents may request a conference at any time. However, parents will be invited to two conferences during the school year as noted on the Precious Lambs Preschool calendar. These conferences are for the purpose of discussing your child's preschool progress and may take place at the preschool.

¹²

Singing in Church and Special Programs

Singing in church and other special programs have been scheduled throughout the year. These dates are available in advance on the Precious Lambs Preschool calendar. All children are expected to be present when their class is singing. Please talk to your child's teacher if this causes any hindrance to your faithful service of the Savior.

Family Programs

Throughout the year parents will have the opportunity to attend regularly scheduled parent programs. These will revolve around topics of interest concerning different aspects of family life, parenting, and education, and may include outside speakers, video presentations, and forum discussions. Input from parents will be sought regarding areas of need or interest by means of parent surveys.

Field Trips and Special Days

Educational and fun *field trips* will be scheduled throughout the school year. These events are on the preschool calendar. Parents will be reminded in advance as these events get close. Precious Lambs Preschool teachers do not transport or chaperone any child on field trips, nor is another parent permitted to transport and chaperone any child other than their own. Parents are welcome to carpool, but each child attending must have a family member adult supervising.

The Preschool also enjoys *Special Days* with the preschoolers and their families. These are activities which are planned to celebrate holidays and other special times. Parents and immediate family members are always encouraged to join in these events.

Helping Hands Volunteers

Parents have many opportunities throughout the year to volunteer. Your help is encouraged and welcomed!

Donations

The Preschool welcomes donations of consumable items such as boxes of tissues, plastic spoons, baggies, etc. You may also support the preschool with items like quality toys and books. Please ask us if we can use the item before bringing it to Preschool.

Evaluation of the preschool

Each year families will have opportunities to evaluate the Preschool program using short survey forms. Your feedback is essential. It lets us know what we are doing right, as well as things that need to be changed or improved.

Parent Responsibilities at School

Prepare your child in advance of arriving at school that you will be leaving him at his classroom door and that you will be returning at a specified time. It is hard for parents to leave a crying child at the door, but be assured that they are usually busy playing by the time you are in your car and on your way. Feel free to call us and check on your child. We want you to feel confident about leaving your child with us.

- Confer with the teacher, but refrain from discussing the child in his presence. They hear and understand what you are saying!
- Realize that arrival and departure times are not convenient times for a teacher to have lengthy discussions with a parent. Their full attention should be on the children in their room, including your own.
- Work with the teacher concerning any problems that may arise.
- Share with us any upsetting experience you think may help the teacher understand your child better.
- Please notify us of any situation at home that could affect your child's behavior. We feel that our preschool is a ministry. We hope that you will feel free to come to us at any time for a listening ear. We have an "open door" policy and you are welcome anytime.
- Help your child to attend regularly and to be on time. This is a pattern that is set for the rest of a person's life.
- Help your child understand that his teacher will not ask him/her to do anything that will hurt him/her. We are here to teach and have learning experiences in a safe environment.

Parent Responsibilities at Home

- Breakfast is an important beginning to a preschooler's day to ensure they are ready to learn. Please ensure your child has this important meal before arriving at school.
- Preschoolers do best on a regular routine. They do not like surprises.
- A preschooler functions best with a consistent bedtime that is unrushed.
- As a parent, take the initiative to guide your child rather than punishing him for something they did not know how to do.
- Give acceptable choices rather than "no".
- Try using more positive statements than negative. Example: "You are a bad boy". There is no such thing as a bad child, only inappropriate behavior. Encourage your child to make "good" choices.
- Ask your child what they did at school each day, and review the material they bring home. Reinforce the things they are taught, and help them to practice concepts and techniques.



Lambs' Tales
Weekly News of Precious Lambs Preschool



HOME/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

Family Communication Center

A Family Communication Center is in the hallway of the preschool. Information is updated regularly. Some of the items that will be posted include weekly lesson plans, special events, and sign-up sheets. Parents are asked to check the boards upon arrival.

Backpack Communication

Information for your child will be put in a two-pocket folder so that they may bring it home daily in their backpack. The teacher and parents are both expected to check these folders every day. Christ Light messages, newsletters, special notices, and children's work are examples of items teachers will be sending home.

Monthly Calendar Email Updates

At the beginning of each month parents will receive a reminder email about upcoming events.

Weekly Preschool Newsletter

At the end of each week parents will receive the Preschool newsletter, Lambs' Tales. This weekly news will share with parents the words to songs and finger plays that the children are learning, and a recap of activities enjoyed during the week. It will also indicate the new weeks' plans and coming events. The weekly newsletter will be sent to you via email. Your child's teacher may also send a classroom specific newsletter in your child's take-home folder.

Weekly St. Paul's School Newsletter

Each Friday parents will receive (via email) the St. Paul's School Newsletter highlighting news of the entire school, which sometimes includes preschool.

Christ Light Bible Curriculum

At the end of each week parents will receive a detailed explanation of the Bible story the children have learned about that week. It has a color picture and application ideas for parents to use at home. Many families choose to make a Bible Story book from these pages.

Children at Work

Photos or artwork displays may be found in the classrooms or hallway. Videos and snapshots of children may be texted or emailed to their families or included in the newsletter. Photos of preschoolers at work may also be posted on our Preschool Facebook page and on the St. Paul's website, www.stpauls.edu

SECTION FIVE: HEALTH AND SAFETY



ENTERING and EXITING THE CAMPUS

The speed limit through the church parking lot is **5 MPH**. This is slow but is meant for the safety of all children. Drive the speed limit as soon as you enter the church and school property. Park your car and turn off the engine. **ALWAYS HOLD YOUR CHILD'S HAND WHILE CROSSING THE PARKING LOT** when bringing your child into the preschool or leaving. Always use extra caution when backing out to leave. Children move quickly and can be difficult for drivers to see. **DO NOT** allow your child to run ahead of you in the parking lot – ever!

Preschool (and kindergarten) families are permitted to park in the upper lot by preschool. Please place the yellow car sign on your dash so that grade school families can see that you are not “cutting” the car line.

It is advisable that preschool families should not park in the first row as you come into the parking lot. Circle around to the back side so that you are not blocked in by the car line and have an easy path to exit back out the way you entered.

RECORDS

Children entering preschool for the first time must provide the preschool with a copy of the child's birth certificate, an Application for Enrollment, original copies of a Florida Certificate of Immunization (DH 680) showing that all required immunizations have been obtained, and a current Student Health Examination (DH 3040) signed by a licensed medical professional. These health certificates must be on file within 30 days of enrollment and remain in the child's file while enrolled. These medical records are property of the parent or legal guardian when the child withdraws from the facility and are transferable if the child attends another facility.

ALLERGIES

Doctors and parents will inform the Preschool of the child's allergies on the Student Health Examination form and the Emergency Contact and Medical Information form. In the event that a child has a life-threatening allergy to specific food items, that food will be banned from the preschool while the child is enrolled to ensure an allergic reaction does not occur.

Allergies will not be permitted as an excuse for your child to attend preschool when they have symptoms of illness without a note from your child's doctor stating that your child is not contagious.

ILLNESS

It is in the best interest of your child and the other children and staff of the Preschool to keep your child at home when they have symptoms of illness. Please understand that this procedure is not enforced to inconvenience you, but rather has been put in place for the welfare of the students, other student families, and staff.

Preschool Staff members conduct a daily health check of each child as they enter the classroom. A child may not be accepted into the center if staff deems the child is too ill to attend or is contagious.

Some reasons for a child to remain at home or to be sent home are fever (100 degrees), vomiting, skin rash or sores, inflamed or swollen eyes, diarrhea, dark urine and/or gray or white stool, yellowish skin or eyes, severe coughing, difficult or rapid breathing, stiff neck, sore throat, headache, head lice, lethargic, EXCESSIVE COUGHING or SNEEZING or any other unusual sign of symptom of illness. Children are often ill without a fever. If your child is not acting like they feel well. Keep your child home. ***Fever is sometimes a factor, but staff may determine that a child is not well enough to attend preschool with or without the presence of a fever.***

A child may return to the Preschool when they are **free of symptoms for 24 hours and/or 24 hours after prescribed medication has begun.** 24 hours means that if your child was ill in the afternoon, evening, during the night, or in the morning - it has not been a full twenty-four hours. Therefore, **your child is not permitted to attend preschool.**

A child who has had head lice may return after treatment has removed all lice, lice eggs, and egg cases. However, if any lice, nits (lice eggs), or egg cases are still visible, they will not be permitted to attend preschool.

NOTE: A child with diarrhea may not return to school until they have had a normal bowel movement. A child with green, thick or mucous runny nose may not return until the nose is clear. Conjunctivitis (pink-eye) is contagious without fever; therefore, a child must remain at home until symptoms have disappeared.

Should a teacher observe that a child has signs of illness while at preschool, the parent or a parent-designated person will be notified immediately and requested to make arrangements for **transportation home within 30 minutes.** The ill child will be isolated and supervised until picked up. A written report (FYI or Medical Referral) may be given to the parent upon pickup depending on the nature of the illness. **Your child is not permitted to attend preschool the following day if they are sent home from preschool for illness – no exceptions.**

NOTE: Because preschoolers will be ill on occasion, it is helpful to have plans for alternate care in case of illness. We understand that illness of a child is hard for working parents, but these policies are intended to protect all of our children from catching illnesses that can spread through a class. We ask that you help your child and your child's teacher by not sending your child to school when they are not feeling well.

In the event that a child has a *communicable disease*, they may not attend Preschool. The Preschool must be informed of the disease so notice of possible exposure can be given to all families enrolled and the local county health department. A memo will be posted in the parent communication center. *The child's name will be kept confidential.* A child with a communicable disease will be readmitted to Preschool only after allowing for the longest usual incubation of the disease or with a signed statement from their physician. **The returning child needs to be well enough to participate in all activities, including those outside.** Communicable diseases include, but are not limited to chicken pox, German measles, infectious hepatitis, measles, mumps, scarlet fever, or meningitis.

Children with EXEMPT immunization status will not be permitted to attend preschool if a communicable disease emergency has been declared by the State/Citrus County for which your child has not been vaccinated against until the all-clear is given by Citrus County Health Services.

MEDICATION

Only when truly necessary, doctor prescribed medication will be administered by the staff with written consent of the custodial parent or legal guardian. Teachers will not administer over-the-counter medication, unless prescribed by a physician. The first dose of any medication will not be given at preschool. The first dose of any new medication should be given at home to allow the parent/guardian to observe the child for any type of unusual reaction.

The medication must be in the original container with a child resistant cap. The label must state the child's name, date, name of the medication, the physician's name, dosage, and directions for administration.

The parent must fill out a Medication Administration Record (Regular or "As Needed"). Staff will see that the Medication Administration Record is correctly filled out by using the Medication Administration Safety Checklist. The Medication Administration Record will be kept with the medication in the medication container and initialed by two staff when administering the medication.

The Medication Administration Record must document the child's name, date, name of the medication, physician's name, directions for administering (including dosage to be given, time to be given and other specific directions as needed), and signature of the parent/guardian.

Staff will log the child's name onto the Child Care Medication Use Log. The child's name will be highlighted on the log when the medication is discontinued. The Medication Administration Record will be put in the child's file after the last day the child received the medication.

All medication is to be stored in a separate container, labeled "medication" and kept out of the reach of children. Medication needing refrigeration shall be kept in the refrigerator in a separate container clearly labeled "medication". A list of the children's special restrictions to medication and allergies will be always kept in the medication container.

Medications that are no longer in use will be returned to the parent. Containers of medication are never to be given to a child to return to the parent or for any reason.

ACCIDENTS/INCIDENTS

Parents will be notified immediately if their child is injured seriously enough to require professional medical treatment. Parents will be notified when they pick up their child if their child has sustained a minor injury. Written permission from the parent to call a child's physician or refer the child for medical care in case of injury shall be on file at the Preschool.

A closed container labeled "First Aid" containing soap, Band-Aids, disposable latex gloves, cotton balls, sterile gauze pads and rolls, adhesive tape, tweezers, an ice bag or cold pack, a surface thermometer, and emergency numbers will be available to treat minor injuries. The kit will be accessible to teachers but kept out of the reach of children.

Superficial wounds shall be cleaned with soap and water only and protected with a Band-Aid or a bandage. Ice may be applied. First Aid procedures shall be followed for serious injuries.

Suspected poisoning shall be treated only after consultation with a poison control center.

An Accident/Incident report will be written for every accident or incident regardless of how minor. These reports will be signed and dated by the teacher and the parent and kept for the records.

All accidents and incidents must also be recorded in the Accident/Incident Log Book and reviewed monthly to insure the safety of the children.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Emergency Ambulance, Fire, Police **911** (Non-emergency 1-352-637-4121)

Poison Control Center **800-222-1222**

Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline 800-96-ABUSE (**800-962-2873**)

HCA Florida Citrus Hospital, 502 W. Highland Blvd., Inverness, FL 34452 (**352)726-1551**

Tampa General Hospital Crystal River, 6201 N Suncoast Blvd, Crystal River, FL 34428 (**352)576-5600**

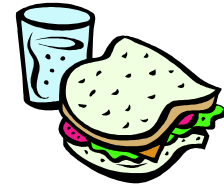
SNACKS AND LUNCHES

Daily Snacks

The **daily morning snack will be provided by the parents.** The child needs to bring a snack of at least two food groups that meet USDA requirements. (Refer to the USDA guidelines in this handbook for those requirements.) Snacks need to be in a lunch box or insulated bag (not a paper or plastic bag) with an ice pack inside for proper storage. Lunch boxes are to be placed in the child’s cubby in their locker in the hallway.

Snacks will not include foods such as pastries, donuts, cakes, cupcakes, candy, gum, soda, chips or imitation fruit drinks. *Snacks will include* these types of nutritious foods:

- | | | | | |
|-------------|----------|------------|---------|---------------------|
| fruit | cereals | crackers | muffins | granola bars |
| fruit juice | bread | vegetables | milk | trail/granola mix |
| popcorn | jello | pudding | raisins | cheese |
| yogurt | pretzels | sandwiches | | cookies (sparingly) |



Snacks that are more than a half inch in diameter and are spherical in shape are choking hazards and must be cut in half before bringing to preschool. These include foods such as grapes and hot dogs.

Hydration

Children are to bring a **Reusable Water Bottle** from home each day with fresh water for access in the classroom and outside – *not disposable* and NO screw caps, and no sippy cups or Tervis! The water bottle should be something your child can operate and will not leak if it tips over on the table or in their backpack. Disposable water bottles will be returned home unopened. A reusable water will be provided temporarily in its place. Disposable screw bottle caps are a choking hazard and a spill issue.

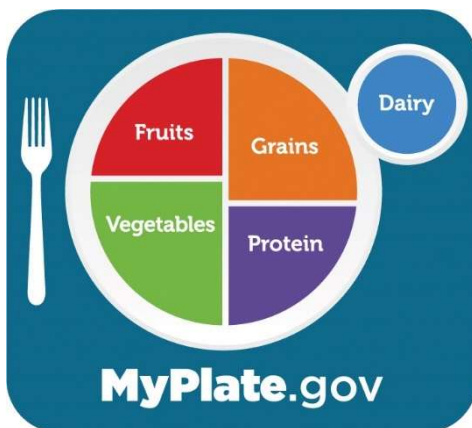
If on a regular basis, no ice pack is found to be in your child’s lunchbox (and items inside could spoil) or no water bottle is provided (or an improper water bottle is provided), one will be purchased for your child, and you will be billed on Praxi.

Food Allergies

In the case of severe food allergy in a child, we will require for the safety and welfare of that child that no children in Preschool will bring a snack containing the offending food.

Extended Care Lunch

Lunch will be supplied by the child’s family. The child needs to bring a lunch that meets USDA requirements. Refer to the USDA guidelines in this manual for those requirements. Lunches need to be in a lunch box or insulated bag (not a paper or plastic bag) with an ice pack inside for proper storage. Lunch boxes will be stored in each child’s cubby.

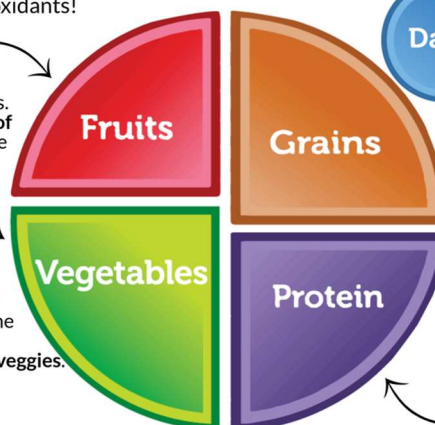


MyPlate: A Guide

Make half your plate fruits and veggies. They’re packed with fiber & antioxidants!

Fruit: Eat fruits of all colors. Go for **fruit instead of juice**, which has more fiber and fewer calories.

Vegetables: The more colors and types that you eat, the better! Aim to get mostly **non-starchy veggies**.



Dairy: 3 servings per day gets you the calcium you need. Choose low-fat for fewer calories.

Grains: Eat mostly **whole grains**. Refined grains, like white bread and white rice, have less nutrition. Whole grains have more **fiber**, iron, and B vitamins.

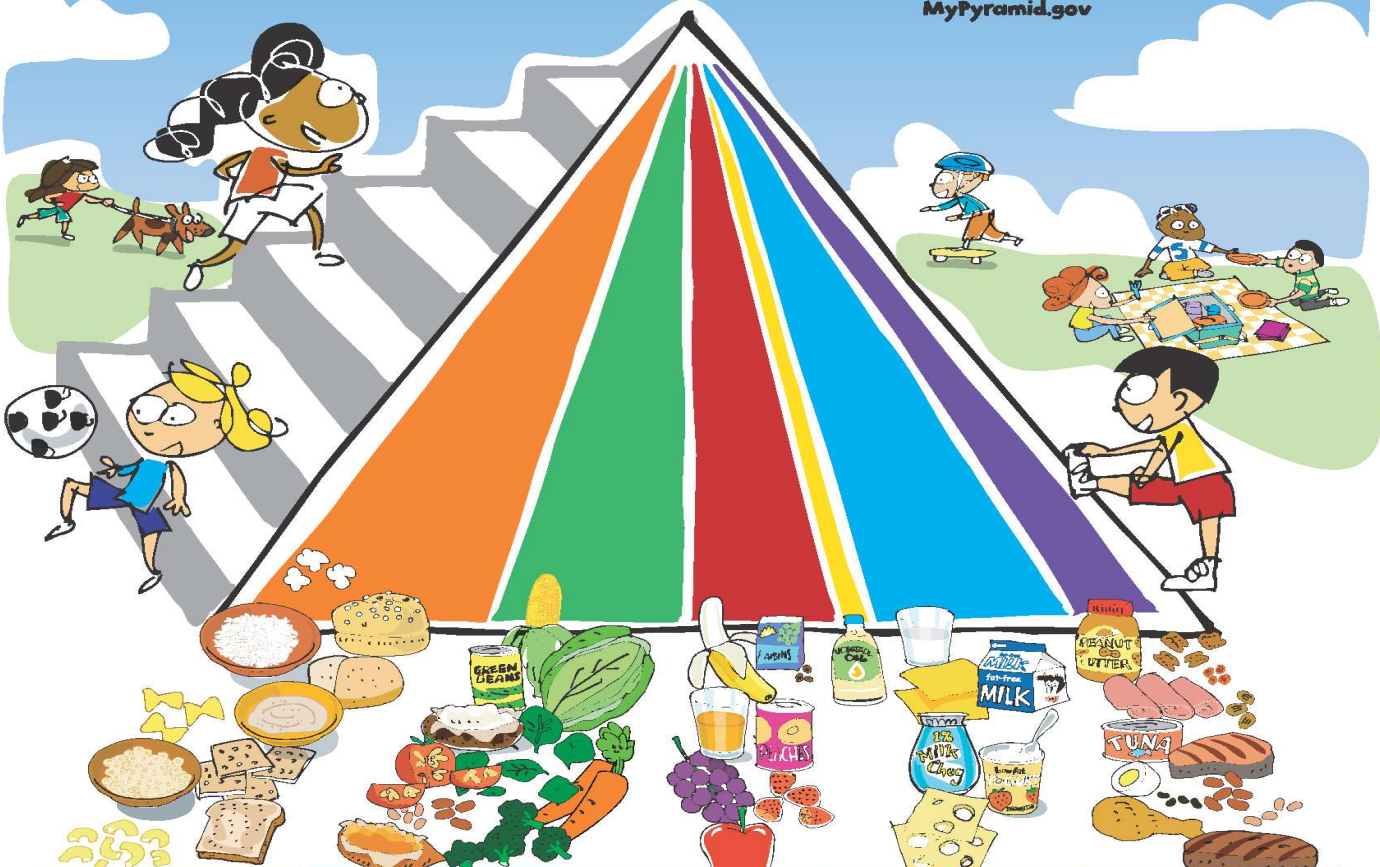
Protein: A palm-sized amount at lunch and dinner is all you need. Beans, nuts, fish, and chicken are good, lean choices.

MyPyramid

For Kids

Eat Right. Exercise Have Fun.

MyPyramid.gov



Grains Make half your grains whole	Vegetables Vary your veggies	Fruits Focus on fruits	Milk Get your calcium-rich foods	Meat & Beans Go lean with protein
<p>Start smart with breakfast. Look for whole-grain cereals.</p> <p>Just because bread is brown doesn't mean it's whole-grain. Search the ingredients list to make sure the first word is "whole" (like "whole wheat").</p>	<p>Color your plate with all kinds of great-tasting veggies.</p> <p>What's green and orange and tastes good? Veggies! Go dark green with broccoli and spinach, or try orange ones like carrots and sweet potatoes.</p>	<p>Fruits are nature's treats – sweet and delicious.</p> <p>Go easy on juice and make sure it's 100%.</p>	<p>Move to the milk group to get your calcium. Calcium builds strong bones.</p> <p>Look at the carton or container to make sure your milk, yogurt, or cheese is lowfat or fat-free.</p>	<p>Eat lean or lowfat meat, chicken, turkey, and fish. Ask for it baked, broiled, or grilled – not fried.</p> <p>It's nutty, but true. Nuts, seeds, peas, and beans are all great sources of protein, too.</p>

For an 1,800-calorie diet, you need the amounts below from each food group. To find the amounts that are right for you, go to MyPyramid.gov

Eat 6 oz. every day: at least half should be whole	Eat 2 1/2 cups every day	Eat 1 1/2 cups every day	Get 3 cups every day: for kids ages 2 to 8, it's 2 cups	Eat 5 oz. every day
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Oils Oils are not a food group, but you need some for good health. Get your oils from fish, nuts, and liquid oils such as corn oil, soybean oil, and canola oil.

<p>Find your balance between food and fun</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move more. Aim for at least 60 minutes everyday, or most days. Walk, dance, bike, rollerblade – it all counts. How great is that! 	<p>Fats and sugars – know your limits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get your fat facts and sugar smarts from the Nutrition Facts label. Limit solid fats as well as foods that contain them. Choose food and beverages low in added sugars and other caloric sweeteners.
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USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

EMERGENCY EVACUATIONS

The preschoolers practice fire drills monthly, and tornado and lockdown drills during the school year. In the unlikely event of these being real emergencies, procedures are in place for the safety and care of all children.

Emergency Evacuation of the Preschool

In any situation that requires the emergency evacuation of the Preschool, if possible, all preschool students will be relocated to the gymnasium/auditorium of St. Paul's Lutheran School located across and down the driveway from the Preschool.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSINGS

The school may close due to bad weather; parents will be notified when school sessions resume. In any other situation deemed an emergency by the principal, the school will be closed, and the parents will be notified. Stay tuned to local television and radio stations for more information. Parents should call their child's teacher if they desire more information.

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

Anyone working in the Preschool who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been abused, abandoned, or neglected is a mandated reporter and is required by Florida law to contact the Department of Children and Families central abuse hotline (1-800-96-ABUSE).



Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them,
for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

Matthew 19:14 (NIV)

FINANCIAL POLICIES

THREE-YEAR-OLD PROGRAMS

- Must be three years old by September 1st.
- **Must be fully potty trained – no pull-ups.**
- All Three-Year- Old’s - (One-time) Non-Refundable Registration Fee: \$175
- A refundable deposit of ½ months tuition must be paid prior to starting preschool and guarantees placement in full-day program. However, the **deposit will not be refunded for early withdrawal from the program prior to the end of the school year.**

Three-Year-Old Programs	CHOOSE THE DAYS	HALF-DAY Tuition Rates 8:15 AM - 11:30 AM	FULL-DAY Tuition rates 8:15 AM - 3:15 PM
		Annual/Monthly	Annual/Monthly
2 Days	Tuesday/Thursday	\$1,545/\$154.50	\$2,835/\$283.50
3 Days	Mon. Wed. Fri.	\$2,165/\$216.50	\$3,865/\$386.50
5 Days	Mon. – Fri.	\$3,300/\$330	\$6,130/\$613

VPK PROGRAMS

- Must be four years old by September 1st.
- (One-time) Non-Refundable Registration Fee: \$175
- The above stated fee applies only to Extended Care students that also attend AM VPK.
- A refundable deposit of ½ months Extended Care tuition (\$141.50) must be paid prior to starting preschool and guarantees placement in the Extended Care program. However, the **deposit will not be refunded for early withdrawal from the program prior to the end of the school year.**

HALF-DAY VPK Morning	8:15 AM 11:30 AM	FULL-DAY (Morning + Extended Care) 8:15 AM – 3:15 PM
	FREE w/voucher	Annual/Monthly
		\$2,835/\$283.50
HALF-DAY VPK Afternoon	12:00 PM (noon) - 3:15 PM	
	FREE w/voucher	

The Fine Print

Students are accepted into Precious Lambs Preschool on a first come/first served priority basis and contingent upon *paid* fees and/or VPK voucher – applicable for any programs in which you are enrolling your child.

- All applicable fees must be paid in full by the first day of preschool attendance.
- The registration fee will not be billed to VPK (only) students per state regulation.
- Self-pay and Extended Care tuition payments are billed at the beginning of each month. Depending on your child's start date, tuition payments and tuition deposit may be immediately due upon enrollment.
- The *refundable* tuition deposit will be applied to the last month's tuition or any unpaid charges.
- The *refundable* tuition deposit **will be forfeited** if you withdraw your child during the school year.
- Precious Lambs must receive your child's **VPK Voucher Certificate** by the first day of preschool attendance. When Precious Lambs receives it, your child's VPK certificate guarantees placement in the VPK program.
- Extended Care enrollment fee (paid in full) guarantees VPK student placement in Extended Care.
- ALL PRESCHOOL FAMILIES: You MUST present your child's **BIRTH CERTIFICATE, HEALTH EXAM FORM 340, and IMMUNIZATION FORM 680** by the first day of preschool attendance.
- Failure to present the required documents (listed above) may delay your child's start date.



PARENTAL AGREEMENT OF POLICIES
per Parent Handbook & Orientation Signed Documents

I certify that I will read the Precious Lambs Preschool Parent Handbook and agree to abide by the beliefs, policies, and procedures in this document, including but not limited to:

- Admission Requirements
- Statement on Family Values
- What to Bring – what parents provide so child is ready for the day
- All Attendance, Illness, Absence, and Late Pick-Up Policies
- Dress Code
- Snack and Meal Nutrition Guidelines
- Complaints and Grievances Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Financial Policies

I understand that these policies are in place for the health, safety and welfare of my child and the other children in care at Precious Lambs Preschool so that children are happy, prepared and able to learn.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

*To read and refer to the Parent Handbook during the year, you will find it on **Praxi**.