

*Parent Handbook
for
Little Lambs Learning Center*

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Addendum

'08-'09 LLC School Calendar
"Just Playing"
First day jitters
"I am Jesus' Little Lamb – school song

Welcome to LLC.

*We are pleased that you have chosen us
for your child's early childhood education. We're looking
forward to an exciting and fun-filled year as we get to know all of
you better on a daily basis.*

Welcome in the name of Jesus, our Savior,

*Elsa Cousins
Director*

Introduction

Little Lambs Learning Center is an arm of the ministry of Lamb of God Lutheran Church. As such it is in every way operated and directed as part of our ministry through the leadership of the church.

The members have adopted the following mission statement to direct their ministry:

To preach and teach God's Word in its truth and purity to all people, using the means of grace to nurture the fellowship and growth in Christ of this congregation while witnessing actively to others that Christ died to save all people.

We believe that our preschool learning center will serve that mission. We will encourage all children entrusted to our care with the Word of God, thereby giving us an opportunity to reach out into our community to those that may not yet know Jesus as their Savior from sin.

Purpose and Philosophy

The congregation has also developed a specific mission statement for our learning center:

Little Lambs Learning Center exists to offer parents a partnership, as we work together to offer children a Christ-centered, quality education, in a safe and loving environment, by sharing the Word of God and a strong sense of Christian values

We have established our preschool learning center to train children from a Christian perspective. We will work with children to assist them in their spiritual, intellectual, physical, social and emotional development. We will share the basic Bible truths and their application to daily living with the children through our core curriculum, *Christlight*. We would like to lead the children to know and love their Lord Jesus and make Him a part of their daily lives. In this Christian atmosphere your children are seen as unique and special gifts from God and are treated with love and respect. They will be dealt with in a gentle and loving way by our dedicated staff. We will seek to impart timeless Christian morals, values and ethics to equip the students to face an ever-changing world. We consider ourselves partners with the parents in the training of their children. All this will be done in a stimulating environment conducive to learning.

Goals and Objectives

Our goals:

- To serve the families in the community by giving their children a Christ-centered quality education program.
- To share the Gospel with the children and their families.
- To have a qualified staff and maintain a low teacher to pupil ratio, and use our members' talents and gifts to enhance our preschool.
- To be flexible, yet firm with the children as they learn in a safe and loving environment.

Although parents have been given the primary responsibility for the training of their children, our church wants to assist parents in the training of their children. Therefore, it shall be the objective of the Little Lambs Learning Center...

To help each child:

- grow spiritually in his/her relationship to Jesus by teaching the truths about God's wonderful plan of salvation for all people.
- grow in Christian management of his/her time, talents and treasures.
- learn to express, that is, live his/her faith in relationships with others, especially at home and school.
- develop academically to their potential through new learning experiences via supervised hands-on discovery.
- develop emotionally as he/she grows in self-confidence, concern and respect for others, cooperation in work and play and a spirit of sharing.
- develop physical dexterity, strength and coordination to their fullest potential.
- develop socially and help him/her to acclimate to the school environment in preparation for kindergarten.

To communicate to you the parents:

- our love for your children and our joy that you have enrolled your child.
- our desire to help your child get a good start.
- our curriculum and ideas for home use through a monthly newsletter, the *Christlight* parent leaflet, teacher/professional presentations, and parent/teacher conferences.
- our willingness to be of help to you whenever it is possible.
- our love for our Savior.

To encourage you as parents:

- if you don't already have a Christian church home, to visit our church either for regular or special services and to attend our church's Bible information class.
- to visit Little Lambs Learning Center whenever you desire.
- to read God's Word.
- to be active Christian role models for your children.
- to be active participants in your child's education at home and at school.

Goals for Each Child

Spiritual Goals:

- to know God is real.
- to understand that God loves each one of us no matter what.
- to know that God loves me because He is God, not because I am good.
- to know the Bible is God's Word and is true.
- to become familiar with and understand Bible stories.
- to know that God is the creator and sustainer of all things.
- to know that Jesus is God's own Son, our Savior from sin.
- to learn to pray.
- to know God answers prayer according to His purpose.
- to know that God is in control and has a purpose for everything.
- to know the true significance of Easter and Christmas.
- to show remorse (repentance) for willful wrong behavior (sin).
- to joyfully receive the assurance of forgiveness and God's continuing love and be willing to share that same assurance when he/she has been hurt or wronged.

Emotional Goals:

- to develop a positive self-esteem.
- to develop responsibility for self and possessions.
- to begin growing in self discipline, decision making and problem solving.
- to be able to make choices, plans and carry out their own ideas.
- to express emotions in a controlled fashion.
- to know true happiness as a member of God's family.

Social Goals:

- to be able to take turns, share, compromise, and respect others.
- to be able to interact with adults and peers in an acceptable manner.
- to be able to join in both group and individual activities.
- to be able to obey rules and follow directions and see their necessity.
- to be able to recognize how one's behavior affects others.

Academic Goals:

- to develop reading readiness skills of visual and auditory discrimination, memory, and sequence.
- to use appropriate oral and written language.
- to have experience with color, shapes, numerals and number, the alphabet and phonics.
- to gain pre-math experiences with patterns, matching, classifying, comparing, and sequencing (ordering).
- to develop an appreciation for music and art through many creative activities.
- to gain a greater understanding of self, family, and community.
- to love learning!

Physical Goals:

- to develop dexterity, coordination, and strength to their fullest potential.
- to develop and encourage good health, grooming, safety and nutrition habits.

Animals

On occasion, animals may be brought into the program for exhibit. Since parents will need to be notified about these special visitors, please plan ahead and ask the director in advance. We also appreciate knowing if your child has any allergies to animals. Be sure you have filled in the Enrollment Form accordingly.

Arrival/Departure

It is IMPERATIVE that your child **not** arrive at school more than 10 minutes prior to the time class begins. Teachers and assistants need this time to prepare for the day's activities. Consequently, they cannot be responsible for children before 8:50.

FOR YOUR CHILD'S PROTECTION, PLEASE OBSERVE THE FOLLOWING:

Upon arrival (8:50 – 9:00) children are to be brought into the classroom by an adult and signed in. The adult must put their signature next to the child's name in the sign in/out log.

If someone other than the designated person(s) will be picking up your child, please indicate who it will be by noting it in the right hand column of the sign in/out and tell the teacher or aide as well. Please inform this person that they will be required to allow us to copy their driver's license and keep it on file. We will not release your child to anyone we cannot verify as the authorized person.

Pick up times must be strictly observed. Late pick-ups will cost \$2.00 for each minute after a five minute grace period.

We want all parents to get to know each other. Feel free to visit in the church welcome area, away from the hallway and classrooms in order to eliminate congestion and noise at the beginning and end of the school day.

Chapel (Devotion)

One day each week (TBA) the students of Little Lambs Learning Center will gather in the sanctuary of our church for a brief devotion. The devotion may include some spiritual songs that the children have learned or are learning. There will also be a brief message from the pastor or a member of the staff. Parents are welcome, invited and encouraged to join the children for these informal devotions.

Class Size

At all times, there will be sufficient caregivers available, so that there will be no more than six/seven children per adult and twelve/fourteen children per class. (The lower numbers apply to the 3 year old class, though exceptions may be made.) Parents who wish to visit the programs are encouraged to do so.

Clothing

We will be supporting the Christian concept that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. Children will be expected to be dressed in accordance with good Christian principles and practices, and yet, allow for comfort and agility to participate in all types of activities. If we judge that a child's dress/personal appearance is not consistent with Christian principles, the parent(s) will be informed and counseled. Following are some suggestions to assist parents:

1. Each child must have a change of indoor clothing to be left at the school. Please include **underwear, socks, pants, and a shirt in a large zip lock bag to be kept in the child's backpack** which should accompany him/her each school day. This will make it easier to change out clothing to be seasonally appropriate.
2. Please label each item of clothing with the child's name or three initial, especially jackets and hats. Label the backpack also.
3. Please allow your child to wear clothing that he/she will not be afraid to get dirty. They will naturally avoid activities if they are worried about getting their 'best' clothes dirty.
4. No shirts or tops with drawstring. (Can be dangerous on young children)
5. No long skirts or dresses. These present a tripping hazard.
6. No flip-flop or wedge sandals. Regular sandals allowed, however tennis shoes are preferable.
7. No cowboy boots or dress shoes. These tend to cause accidents and injuries inside and outside, as well, trying to use the playground equipment.
8. No one piece jumpsuits or overalls.
9. Try to avoid pants and jeans with zippers and snaps and "grown-up" type belts. It's sometimes hard to get these all undone, especially when in a hurry! Plain elastic waist pants might be preferable especially for three year olds to help avoid accidents.
10. Keep in mind that crayons, markers, and paints and glue will be used frequently by your child. Even though we provide all 'washable' products, experience has taught us these do not always wash out completely.
11. Weather permitting, the children will spend sometime outdoors on a daily basis; please dress your child appropriately. For colder weather, be sure to remember **mittens, hats, coats, boots, etc.**

We do not have the staff to have some children inside, while others are outside. This also applies if a child has been ill, he/she should not return to the program until able to participate in all of our activities.

Comments / Conflict Resolution

Questions, comments or suggestions are welcome, if they pertain to your child's class they should be addressed to his/her teacher. Questions of a more general nature or that pertain to the whole school should be addressed to the Director.

If you have a concern or complaint, please bring it to the attention of the classroom teacher if it involves her class. If you feel the matter has not been resolved please speak to the Director. If, after a conference with all of the parties involved (director, teacher, parent and possibly aid) you feel the issue is still not resolved to your satisfaction then speak to the

President of the Preschool Board of Education. (See back of handbook for whom to contact) If the complaint is of a general nature that applies to the whole school, then please speak to the Director first.

Curriculum

The children will participate in **structured and unstructured** activities each day. There will be a specific Bible Story Lesson and Theme each week. Many weekly activities will reflect the letter or theme of the week.

In Large Group Time or Circle Time - The children will learn about Christianity through Bible stories, Bible verses and Christian songs. The children will learn of God's great love for us through Jesus!

The children will develop listening, sound recognition/differentiation, emergent literacy and comprehension skills through stories, and teacher led activities and discussions that match the theme(s) for the week.

They will also develop a sense of time, order, counting, numerals and patterns as they use the calendar to record days, months, and seasons.

Other large group activities include experiences with rhythm and movement, nursery rhymes, finger plays, singing games/songs, and problem solving.

Children's Choice – Center Work Time: In the different (sometimes rotating) centers of the preschool the children have many opportunities to learn through active involvement and social interaction. Center areas include Housekeeping, Workshop, Blocks, Puzzles – floor and table, Legos, Books, Table games, Art, Listening Center, Water Table, Rice or Bean Tub, Cars and Trucks and other Manipulatives, Puppet Theatre and others that change periodically to match the theme of the week.

Snack - Children have a daily snack. Birthday treats may be shared during snack time.

Outside - On the playground or other supervised play areas and/or organized activities (ball throwing, parachute play, chalk...) daily whenever the weather is agreeable. We will use bad weather opportunities to learn exercises, practice balance, hopping, skipping, jumping and other movement fun!

Teacher's choice - To give more individualized/small group instruction in many areas. The teacher will use a variety of planned lessons to guide/teach hands/on activities toward fine motor development and other educational skills!

Discipline / Behavioral Management Policy

Discipline is derived from the word disciple meaning, "to teach." Therefore at *Little Lambs Learning Center* we do not think of discipline as punishment, but rather as teaching self-control and Christian attitudes and behaviors. Teachers will deal with each child in accordance with the teachings of Christ. *Under no circumstances will physical punishment be used.* We prefer to give encouragement and praise of good behavior.

We will try to anticipate the problems and redirect children's activities. We will narrow choices if necessary. Positive words will be used to encourage positive behavior. We will encourage children to use words to express themselves.

Children exhibiting inappropriate behavior will be told to stop, given an explanation why the behavior is unacceptable, and helped to see and choose reasonable alternatives. Logical and natural consequences as well as age appropriate *time outs* (temporary loss of privileges – 1 min per year of age) may be used as a reasonable alternative and to help the child to gain self-

control. If the inappropriate behavior persists, the parents will be consulted. In extreme situations, at the director's discretion, temporary suspension or removal from the program may become necessary.

Understanding that each child is loved by God, made in His image, and redeemed for His service, LLLC views discipline as a process of developing appropriate behaviors. Positive reinforcements for "good" behavior in a loving, supportive environment promotes the child's self-confidence and leads to increased desirable behaviors. A challenging environment that allows experimenting, learning, physical activity, and quiet times prevents boredom and promotes good behavior. We will use both indirect and direct guidance technique

indirect guidance techniques:

- We give previous warnings: "Five more minutes to play before it's time to clean up."
- We give choices: "You may paint with the others or read a book in a quiet corner."
- We have regular routine: "We always wash our hands before lunch."
- We avoid nagging: We tell the child what we expect just once, follow it by asking if he/she remembers what we asked, and then offer to help the child do what was asked.
- We're consistent: We do things the same way each day so the children know what to expect and learn to trust and feel safe in their environment.

direct guidance techniques:

- We use affirmative: "We use walking feet indoors" rather than "Don't run!" or "Use your words to tell us you're angry" rather than "Don't hit!"
- We get the child's attention by crouching down to his/her level, making eye contact, speaking quietly, and asking the child to repeat the directions.
- We try very hard to be fair. We examine our expectations to make sure they are age appropriate, and we don't make rules just because an activity is too noisy or messy.
- We avoid arguments by following through with solutions that address the problem, but also offer the child a way to exit gracefully from the problem: "You can choose a quiet place to calm down or I can choose one for you."

We, as a staff, pray for the children and families in our program. We use prayer with the children, asking God for His guidance in all of our daily activities. One-on-one prayer is used with children during difficult times, asking God to open our hearts to His will.

Discipline has as its goal educating and redirecting children. It emphasizes cooperation. In contrast, punishment has as its goal hurting, shaming, or scaring children. Punishment, as defined in the previous sentence, is an inappropriate form of discipline and will have no place in our preschool.

By law, program philosophy and policy, the following forms of discipline are forbidden: hitting, spanking, shaking, scolding, shaming, isolating, labeling (words such as: bad, naughty, etc.), or any other negative reaction to the child's behavior. All forms of corporal (physical) punishment are strictly forbidden.

Enrollment Requirements

1. ELIGIBILITY

Children ages 3 to 5 are eligible for entrance into *Little Lambs Learning Center*. Class assignment is based on the Sept. 1st cut off date used by the public school system. The Director may make exceptions. All children must be completely toilet trained, preferably for a full six months prior to enrollment. All children of the proper age can attend our Christ-centered program regardless of sex, color, race, ethnic origin or religion.

2. REQUIRED FORMS

- **Application / Enrollment Form**
- **Emergency Authorization Form**
- **Financial / Policy Agreement Form**
- **Developmental Health History Form**
- **Alabama Immunization Record (the “Blue Card:”)**

*** Note: If there are any apparent medical conditions that would restrict participation in routine activities, the Medical Provider should state so in an attached statement. The Medical Providers signature or stamp is required!**

Continual updates of immunizations will be required while attending our preschool. The Card shall be returned to the parent upon request when the child leaves the center.

Insurance

Little Lambs Learning Center is covered with liability insurance in the amount required by the State of Alabama.

Learning or Physical Disabilities

Little Lambs Learning Center cannot meet the needs of all children, especially those with severe disabilities. If the staff cannot adequately meet the child’s needs, we will suggest agencies through which parents can receive help.

Items from Home

The following items are not to be brought to school by children unless requested by the teacher: **toys, balloons, real or toy weapons, candy, gum, or other foods, expensive jewelry, money, glass containers, pets** (not first cleared with the teacher). Teachers and assistants may use discretion and confiscate until the close of the day any items deemed inappropriate. Please use discretion when selecting items for show and tell. Any breakfast foods or drinks should be consumed before entering the classroom or taken home by the parent.

Lunch Bunch

Lunch Bunch is an optional program made available to the 4 year-old classes from October through mid-May. For an additional \$5.00/week fee, children are given an extra hour

on Wednesdays (12:00-1:00) in which they meet in the fellowship hall and eat the lunch they've brought from home and enjoy extra play time. Tickets are available in the office.

Medical Information

Preschool children will not be given medication of any type unless it is an emergency (such as severe allergic reaction requiring immediate medical attention in which case you would need to provide the epipen, for example), nor will we apply sunscreen or insect repellent. Parents must apply these before bringing the child to school if they wish the child to have them. Parents must come to the school to give their child any needed medication during school hours. This is in accordance with the current State Law for under aged children.

No medication will be given your child, but in the event of minor scrapes and abrasions the caregiver will administer first aid by cleansing with peroxide and covering with a band-aid or gauze and tape or given ice as appropriate. Parents will be contacted if it appears that an accident or illness requires medical attention. In a life-threatening emergency, 911 will be called for help and ambulance transportation. One staff member will accompany the child, taking with them the Emergency Authorization form so that medical personnel may begin treatment before the parent's arrival. The child's parents will be called to meet the ambulance at the hospital. Cost will be the responsibility of the parents.

Parents are requested to inform the school when a child will be absent for any reason, but particularly in the case of illness, especially if it is contagious. When advisable, a release form from the physician will be necessary for a child to re-enter the program. Parents will be advised of any communicable diseases to which the children may have been exposed.

You will be notified if your child shows / develops any of the following symptoms: listlessness, nausea, runny nose, sore throat, flushed appearance, abnormally irritable, rash, watery inflamed eyes, fever, diarrhea or vomiting. When appropriate you will be expected to pick up your child as soon as possible. Please, do not bring your child to school if s/he is exhibiting any of these same symptoms.

We do not have the staff to have some children inside, while others are outside. A child who has been ill should not return to class until able to participate in all activities.

Snacks

Your child will be given the opportunity to provide snacks for his/her class throughout the year. The monthly calendar includes a listing of the day(s) your child will need to bring a snack for the class. A beverage may be provided, but is not necessary, since we will serve water during snack time. Please observe the following guidelines for sending snacks.

- **No** snacks containing **peanuts or peanut butter** for allergy reasons – check labels please.
- Send nutritious snacks only such as fresh fruits or vegetables with or without dip, muffins, cheese crackers, crackers and cheese, cookies, pretzels, graham crackers, banana bread, finger sandwiches, pudding, yogurt or applesauce cups (with plastic spoons) etc.
- Please send the snacks prepared to eat (e.g. fruit, vegetables, breads) already cut into serving sizes
- No fruit cups with metal lids
- Snack can be a learning experience for the children. Plan fun and interesting snacks. Consider planning a snack that coordinates with your child's curriculum.

While we understand some children do not care for breakfast, try to get them to eat something nutritious before coming to school. We have noticed that children who do not eat

breakfast are quite sluggish in the morning until snack time. It affects their attention span and keeps them from getting the most from class time.

School Calendar

The school year will begin the Tuesday after Labor Day. We will generally follow the Madison City schools calendar with few exceptions. See addendum for current year calendar.

School Closings and Emergency Procedures

Procedures for fire, tornado or bomb threats are posted in each classroom as well as the offices. In addition we will conduct monthly fire drills and regular tornado drills during the appropriate seasons. We have a weather alert radio in the office.

We will be closed anytime Madison City schools are closed due to bad weather. During times of inclement weather, local radio and TV stations are notified when schools close. Announcements are usually aired around 6 a.m. In the event that a delay is 10 a.m. or later the school will be closed for the day.

Tuition

Payment is due on or before the first scheduled day of school each month for each class. If payment is not received by the end of your child's third class day each month a \$15.00 late fee will be charged. There is **no prorating of fees if your child is absent for vacations, sickness etc. or for holidays or weather closings.** Continuing to pay the monthly tuition ensures your child's place in the program. Your cooperation is appreciated! You will be billed any fees associated with insufficient funds.

Receipts will be provided for cash payments only. Make checks payable to *Little Lambs Learning Center* or *LLLC*.

Ways Parents Can Help

1. Teach your child independence. Encourage him to do things for himself (coats, food...)
2. Confer regularly with the teachers about your child, but refrain from discussing the child in his/her presence. Report any upsetting experiences at home that may affect him/her.
3. Take an interest in the school and whatever your child brings home.
4. Take time to listen to your child's daily experiences and discuss them with real interest. Ask specific questions like, "What did you build with blocks? Who helped? Avoid broad questions like, "What did you do today?" Help your child anticipate happy experiences in relation to his/her school.
5. It is VERY NORMAL for a child to feel distressed when he is separated from the parent. Crying is a very normal reaction for most children at some time or another. A quick exit after settling the child in his room is the best remedy. If the crying persists after an abnormal amount of time, you will be notified.
6. Come and assist at preschool for a day! It would be a great help to our school and it would also provide parents with an opportunity to show interest and become involved in their child's education. **YOU CAN HELP YOUR CHILD AND US!**
7. Talk to the classroom teacher if you have any questions or concerns!

Nondiscriminatory Policy

Little Lambs Learning Center admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admission policies or other school administered programs.

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