



Small Discoveries
Preschool

Parent Handbook

Small Discoveries Preschool at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church has been licensed since its establishment of the 4-year-old program in 1968. The program for 3-year-olds was added in 1997.

PURPOSE:

Small Discoveries Preschool provides an educational program in a friendly, relaxed atmosphere to help children in their transition from home to kindergarten. The learning experiences foster the social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development of the child.

Preschool learning experiences include opportunities to:

- Participate in large and small group experiences
- Develop friendships and share experiences and ideas with other children his/her own age.
- Learn to get along with others and develop a respect for others' rights as well as his/her own
- Learn to express his/her own feelings and emotions appropriately
- Recognize the letters and the sounds they make and learn to write them
- Develop a mathematical understanding
- Learn first-hand about the world around them.
- Develop large and small muscle coordination and physical skills
- Discover how things work, change, & grow through various science experiences
- Encourage creative expression and appreciation for the arts
- Learn about appropriate health habits and safety procedures
- Develop a positive attitude towards education and a love of learning

LOCATION:

We are located within the Holy Trinity Lutheran church. Our address is 517 SW Des Moines Street, Ankeny, IA 50023. Preschool students generally use the northeast door (accessible by SW Elm Street) to the church as this directly accesses the preschool wing.

REQUIREMENTS:

- Children enrolling in the 3-year-old program must be 3 years of age by September 15th
- Children enrolling in the Pre-K program must be 4 years of age by September 15th
- All children must be completely potty-trained by the start of school.
- Each child must have a medical examination and provide the preschool with a copy of the medical report and immunization form prior to being admitted each year. Parents must sign a consent form for medical and dental care for use in emergencies. These forms can also be found on the preschool website, <http://www.smalldiscoveriespreschool.org>

STAFFING DAYS/TIMES:

Our preschool complies with the standards by the Department of Human Services and has a State of Iowa Childcare License. Our staffing includes the following:

- A. Director
- B. Teacher, as well as student ratio information per program
 - a. 3-Year-Old Program, 2 days a week
 - i. Tuesday/Thursday 9:00-11:30AM
 - ii. 1:8 Teacher/Child ratio
 - b. Pre-K Program, 3 days a week
 - i. Monday/Wednesday/Friday 9:00-11:30AM
 - ii. 1:12 Teacher/Child ration
 - c. 5-Day Pre-K Program
 - i. Monday - Friday 9:00-11:30AM
 - ii. 1:12 Teacher/Child ration

PROGRAM SCHEDULES:

Small Discoveries Preschool begins after Labor Day each year and ends before Memorial Day. School is recessed for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and spring break. We follow the Ankeny Public School District calendar during the school year so if Ankeny Public schools are not in session, Small Discoveries is also not in session.

DROPPING OFF AND PICKING UP:

Preschool students typically use the northeast door (accessible by SW Elm Street) to the church as this directly accesses the preschool wing. State licensing requirements state that you must bring your child into the building. Please assist your child in hanging up his/her coat and backpack and bring your child to their classroom. The teachers and classrooms will be ready to accept children 5 minutes prior to the start of preschool each day. At pick up time, please wait in the hallway for your child to be dismissed to you. Please don't leave other children unattended in your vehicle during this time.

ARRIVAL:

At 9:00 each day the teachers will open the classroom door to their rooms to greet students. During the first two weeks of school, parents/caregivers are welcome to bring their children into the room to see that they get settled. During the first two weeks of school, please help your child transition to coming into the classroom on their own and saying goodbye at the door. After the first two weeks, students say their goodbyes at the door and they will come into the classroom to get themselves ready for the day. This will keep our morning routine easy so we can start our fun and learning. **The preschool entrance to the building (northeast door of the building) is locked from 9:15-11:15AM for your child's safety.** If you come to the building during this time, you will need to enter through the main church entrance on the north side of the building. Please identify yourself to the office staff and the director or teachers will be notified you are here. Identification is checked for all unfamiliar visitors.

DISMISSAL:

At 11:30AM each day, the teachers will open the doors of the classroom and begin dismissing their preschoolers to parents/caregivers waiting for them in the hall. To ensure the safe departure of the students, the teachers will dismiss individual students as the teacher sees and recognizes each person that has come to pick up the child.

IDENTIFICATION:

If at any time your child is going to be picked up by someone other than the usual pick-up person, our teachers are **REQUIRED** to ask for photo identification, at least the first time, even if the person picking up is on the list of persons permitted to pick up your child. Please understand this is only for the safety of your child. Please, if at all possible, let your child know beforehand if someone different is picking up. Please call the preschool or let a teacher or the director know so that we can tell your child when the school day is over. If there is someone LEGALLY not allowed to pick up your child, please let the director know.

FEES/TUITION INFORMATION:

A \$50 non-refundable registration fee is collected with the enrollment form. Tuition is due the first day of each month. September's tuition will be collected in June. The 3-Year-Old Program tuition is \$110 per month. The Pre-K Program tuition is \$130 per month for the 3 day program and \$200 a month for the 5 day program. There is a \$10 discount on monthly tuition per additional child enrolled if you have siblings enrolled in the same academic year.

TUITION PAYMENT:

Tuition for all programs is due on the first of each month. Tuition is considered late if it is not received by the 10th of the current month. **Tuition received after the 10th of the month will have a \$20 late fee added. Returned checks will also incur a \$20 fee.** If a parent is delinquent with fee payments by the 10th of a **second** consecutive month, the parent(s) will be notified in writing and/or by telephone, and if necessary, the child will be withdrawn from the program. Refunds for days missed because of illness, appointments, or vacations are not possible since our operating costs continue and we save space for your child. Any child who has continual absences without a valid reason will be replaced by a child on the waiting list. If you find it necessary to withdraw your child from preschool, please notify us in writing 2-4 weeks in advance or you will be required to pay that month's tuition fee.

PAYMENT IS DUE THE FIRST OF THE MONTH.

**Make checks payable to:
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church**

Please write preschool as well as your child's name on the memo line of your check

MAIL TO:

Small Discoveries Preschool
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
517 SW Des Moines St.
Ankeny, IA 50023

OR

HAND DELIVER TO:

Preschool Director or place in one of the black mailboxes in the church. One is located by the preschool entrance, the other is near the main church office.

OR

SUBMIT ELECTRONICALLY through our website

****Please note: The teachers are NOT responsible for this payment process****

ABSENCES:

A phone call or email to the preschool before school starts would be very much appreciated when your child is ill or will be absent for several days. We'll be concerned if your child is not present. Email: hbrandell@holytrinityankeny.org or call the preschool room at 515-964-4348 ext. 209

TERMINATION (BY CHOICE):

We request two weeks written notice when your child will no longer be attending Small Discoveries.

TERMINATION (BEHAVIOR):

Small Discoveries reserves the right to end services for children with severe disciplinary issues. Small Discoveries will work with families and outside partners (such as Heartland AEA) in an attempt to curb negative and harmful behaviors. It's the desire of every preschool staff member to meet the needs of every child; however, if it is determined that our preschool cannot meet the needs of a child, enrollment can be terminated.

TERMINATION (INABILITY TO ADJUST):

If your child is not yet ready for preschool experiences, or if his/her needs are not met best in the preschool setting, we may ask for a confidential conference with you. We do not believe the child should remain in our preschool unless deriving some benefit from the program and therefore together we may decide to postpone this educational experience. If you decide that your child's needs are not being met by his/her experience in our preschool, please feel free to request a conference.

A child may be discharged from our preschool due to the inability of the child to adjust to the preschool experiences, or by being a threat to other children, to staff members, or to self. The child would be discharged only if there is an inability to remedy the situation after numerous attempts and conferences with the family.

OTHER TERMINATION:

There are several reasons for termination of services, although Small Discoveries makes every effort to avoid these situations. Some examples are failure of the family to follow preschool policies, threatening a staff member or another child by a parent, or physical injury to a staff member or another child by a parent. If any of these events occur, the parent will be asked to attend a meeting with the Director of Small Discoveries Preschool, the Preschool Committee, and the Pastor of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church. At that time, the matter will be discussed and a decision will be made on how to resolve the situation even if that concludes termination.

SCHOOL CLOSING:

If the Ankeny Public Schools are closed or delayed because of bad weather, it is our policy to close preschool for that day. Please check local radio and TV or go to www.ankenyschools.org to check for school closing information. As a general policy, cancelled days will not be made up or reimbursed.

TRANSPORTATION:

We do not provide transportation to and from preschool. A class list will be provided to facilitate the arrangement of carpools. Parents must list persons authorized to pick up children from preschool and the relationship to the child, including phone numbers. An authorization form must be on file when children are in attendance and updated by a parent/guardian if changes occur.

SNACKS:

Children will take turns bringing snacks for their class on a rotating schedule. Snacks need to be nutritious such as cheese and crackers, prepared fruits and vegetables, muffins, etc. **Snacks containing peanuts or other types of nuts are NOT allowed.** An approved list will be provided to you at the beginning of the year. The preschool will provide milk and water to drink.

PRESCHOOL VISITS:

Feel free to visit preschool at any time. Calling to let us know of a visit is not necessary, but is sometimes helpful. Children not enrolled at Small Discoveries Preschool and not accompanied by an adult are not permitted to visit preschool. A copy of a court order must be on file with the preschool if any biological parent is to be denied access to a child.

ARTICLES NEEDED:

Each child needs a bag in which to carry things home. No rolling backpacks please. PLEASE MARK WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME and make sure it's large enough to hold a standard two-pocket folder.

Play clothes are appropriate dress. Remember we will be playing with play dough, painting, using chalk, playing outside, and engaging in water play. Tennis or rubber-soled shoes will work best.

PLEASE BE SURE TO MARK YOUR CHILD'S NAME on all sweaters, jackets, caps, boots, mittens, etc. Teachers will assist children in keeping track of their belongings; however, we cannot be responsible for lost, stolen, or broken articles.

HEALTH POLICY:

All students are required to have a **current** physical on file. Physicals are valid for one year from the date of the exam. Please file an updated form with the Preschool as soon as your child's physical has been completed. Students are also required to have a valid immunization on record. This means their records must meet the requirements of the STATE OF IOWA.

Teachers greet the students upon their arrival each day; one reason for this is to detect any signs of illness.

Children who exhibit the following symptoms will not be allowed to remain at the preschool or will be sent home if they become ill during class time:

Swollen glands	Fever (100)	Diarrhea
Unexplained rashes	Lice	Pink Eye
Vomiting	Severe continuous coughing	

If your child has exhibited any of these symptoms within 24 hours prior to their preschool day, please keep them home until they are symptom free. If your child is taking antibiotics for a contagious illness, please keep them home until they have been on antibiotics a full 24 hours.

Parents must complete a Medication Authorization form if a child is to receive medications during their preschool day. This includes prescription as well as over-the-counter medications. Medication must be provided in its original container. Prescription medication must be accompanied by the doctor's directions.

Parents should notify the preschool if their child contracts a communicable disease.

The preschool will post notices on the parent board and/or send written notice of known exposure of children to a communicable disease such as, but not limited to, the following examples:

Scabies	Head Lice	Roseola
Pink Eye	Chicken Pox	Impetigo
Fifth Disease	Ringworm	Strep
Bacterial Meningitis		Hand, Foot, & Mouth Disease

ACCIDENTS/INJURIES:

Incidents involving a child, including minor injuries, minor changes in health status, or behavioral concerns, shall be reported to the parent on the day of the incident. Parents are asked to sign a copy of the written report to be put into your child's file and then also will be given a copy of the report for themselves. This helps ensure an open and honest line of communication between parents and staff and eases concerns.

Incidents resulting in serious injury to a child or significant change in health status shall be verbally reported to the parents/guardians immediately, as well as 911 if necessary.

DENTAL EMERGENCIES:

In case of a dental emergency, first aid will be administered immediately to any child. Parents will be notified immediately. Using the dental information provided by the parents, a dentist's office may be contacted in extreme cases. An accident report will be filled out for dental emergencies.

STATEMENT ON DISCIPLINE AND ABUSE:

At Small Discoveries Preschool, we believe the best way to handle problems is to prevent them from happening in the first place. Therefore, the physical environments and the programs are set up so that as few problems will take place as possible. Below are some of the discipline strategies used by Small Discoveries Preschool staff members when necessary

- Maintain realistic expectations of children
- Provide clear and simple limits
- Plan an environment that facilitates a caring atmosphere
- Keep children busy to prevent problems from occurring in the first place
- Model appropriate behaviors
- Redirect inappropriate behaviors toward desired outcomes

- Give children choices between two appropriate alternatives
- Encourage children to work together to solve problems
- Encourage children to use their words to solve problems or to elicit peer cooperation
- Provide logical and natural consequences for children's actions
- Remove children from the situation until they can discuss the problem and calm down.
- Help with conflict resolution

If a child's behavior continues to be a concern after employing the strategies listed above, the following steps will be taken:

1. Parents will be consulted
2. Recommendations for outside help will be made to the parents
3. A plan for the child's behavior will be established
4. Child will be removed from preschool if unacceptable behavior persists.

Small Discoveries Preschool does not spank children as a disciplinary measure. It is also not the policy of our preschool to humiliate, embarrass, or frighten a child. A child will never be deprived of basic needs such as food, restroom use, and attention as punishment. We will not tolerate mental, physical, or sexual abuse.

BITING POLICY:

The biter is immediately removed from the group with a firm NO. The bitten child is consoled and the bitten area washed with soap and water. If necessary, ice is applied to reduce any swelling or bruising. The biter is not allowed to return to play and is talked to on a level that he/she can understand, then redirected.

A written incident report is given to the parents of all children involved when they are picked up that day. The name of the biting child is not released because it serves no useful purpose and can make an already difficult situation more difficult. Every effort will be made to contact via telephone the parents of the child that was bitten before pickup that day so he/she is aware of the situation before pickup time.

We look intensively at the context of each biting incident for pattern, to prevent further biting behavior. We work with each biting child on resolving conflict or frustration in an appropriate manner. We try to adapt the environment and work with parents to reduce any child stress. We make special efforts to protect potential victims. We try to make every effort to extinguish the behavior quickly and to balance our commitment to the family of the biting child and to that of the other families. Only after we feel we have made every effort to make the program work for the biting child do we consider asking the family to withdraw the child.

FIELD TRIP POLICY:

Field trips are often taken to enhance our curriculum. Field trips may or may not include, and are not limited to: pumpkin patch, police station, fire station, grocery store, library, farm, and parks.

Written parental consent is required prior to each trip. **Due to Iowa Department of Human Services requirements regarding volunteers, parents will be responsible for transporting their own child to and from the field trip destination.** Additionally, we are not allowed to have siblings or other children accompany us on field trips.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES:

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled in the fall and again in the spring. Teachers are always available for conferences throughout the year as needed. Feel free to share your questions or concerns.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS:

Please notify the preschool immediately if you have a change of address or telephone number. This information must be kept up-to-date, particularly in the case of an emergency. Please notify us if your family experiences change – e.g. a new sibling, new job, serious illness, or any traumatic change. We can better meet your child's needs if we are aware of what they are experiencing. Our staff will keep any confidential information as such.

Small Discoveries Preschool

Emergency Evacuation Policy

Fire:

- Monthly fire drills are practiced in each class.
- When a fire emergency is detected, we will evacuate according to the fire drill instructions posted in the rooms to vacate the building.
- Teachers will take the emergency files binder, the first aid kit, and the emergency supply kit.
- Children and staff will assemble in the back of the parking lot.
- Teachers will do a head count to make sure all children are accounted for and notify parents of the situation.
- If weather is inclement, or the fire department decides children and staff will NOT be permitted to re-enter the building, children and staff will move to the church's property next door, 531 SW Des Moines Street, until parents can pick up.
- Staff will remain with children until all parents have picked up.

Tornado:

- Monthly tornado drills are practiced in each class.
- When a tornado drill is sounded or other determination of danger is verified, children will be moved to the lower level of the church, Room #104.
- Teachers will take emergency files binder, the first aid kit, and the emergency supply kit.
- Children will be counted and instructed to cover their heads in a sitting/crouching position.
- If there is a loss of power and the Director decides an early closing is necessary, parents will be notified.
- If structural damage occurs, police will be notified. Parents will also be notified. Children and staff will walk to the house next door, 531 SW Des Moines Street until parents pickup.

Blizzard:

- Parents are to follow procedures for cancellations or delays as described in the parent handbook "School Closing" section.
- Parents will be contacted to pick up children
- If a child is not picked up, staff will stay with the child until the parent or other designated adult arrives.
- If more than an hour has passed and parents have not picked up their child or contacted the preschool about pick up, the police will be called for emergency assistance.
- If seven or fewer children are present, only one staff member is needed to remain until all children have been picked up.

Power Failure:

- Children will remain in the room during power failures if the entire building is affected.
- If there is an area with power, children will be taken to that area if necessary.
- Staff will check with the church office for information on the duration of the outage.
- If heat is affected, attempts will be made to keep the children warm by exercising and wearing their coats.
- Staff will maintain a calm, safe environment. If the power failure will be for an extended period of time, parents will be notified to come pick up their child.

Intoxicated or Drug-Influenced Parent:

- A staff member will attempt to distract/detain the parent.
- Another staff member will contact another person from the emergency contact list and request pickup.
- Staff will inform intoxicated parent of the pick-up plan.
- If unable to contact another pickup person, child must be allowed to leave with parent. Staff will inform the parent that the police will be called.
- Staff will call the police and inform them of the situation.
- If possible, the description of the vehicle and license plate number will be noted. Also clothing and pertinent description of the child and parent will be noted to police.

Intruder:

- If possible, staff will lock classroom doors before an intruder enters the classroom.
- If an intruder enters the classroom, attempts will be made to get the individual to leave the premises.
- Staff will not use force if the person is attempting to remove a child from the preschool. Staff will try to detain them while another staff member contacts police and the church office.
- If the individual leaves with a child, the staff will contact police immediately. They will include a description of the vehicle and license plate number if possible.
- If determined necessary, staff members may be instructed to take the children away from the preschool to safety (if the situation becomes volatile or as instructed by police)
- If children are moved, staff members will count them. Staff members will communicate with each other via cell phones.
- Parents will be contacted.

Lost or Abducted Child:

- Staff will immediately assemble the children and do a head count.
- One staff member will remain with the children in the classroom while another searches the immediate area and the building.
- Staff will alert the church office and enlist help in searching the building and immediate area.
- If the child is not found in 10 minutes, staff will contact the police and parents
- Police will be called and parents contacted.
- Staff will proceed as instructed by the police.

Bombs:

- Any staff informed of a bomb threat will communicate with all other staff members in the building through telephone or personal contact.
- All children will be taken next door to 531 SW Des Moines Street. Children will be counted. Emergency file binders, first aid kit, and emergency supply kit will be taken.
- Police will be contacted and further evacuation procedures will be followed under police direction.
- Parents will be contacted.

Chemical Spills:

- Staff and children will leave the area immediately. Children will be counted.
- Staff will contact the Ankeny Fire Department and follow their directions.
- Staff and children will evacuate the building if necessary and they will walk to the church's neighboring property, 531 SW Des Moines Street.
- If a further distance evacuation is required, teachers will transport children in teacher/church staff vehicles to Kirkendall Public Library, 1210 NW Prairie Ridge Drive.
- The emergency file binder, the first aid kit and the emergency supply kit will be taken.
- Staff will call parents for pickup.

Earthquake:

- At the first indication of the ground shaking, the children will be instructed to crawl under heavy tables and remain until the tremors stop. Children will be counted
- Staff will assess the immediate area for danger.
- If there is structural damage, staff will walk the children to 531 SW Des Moines Street.
- The emergency file binder, the first aid kit, and the emergency supply kit will also be taken.
- Parents will be contacted to pick up children.