TRINITY
GOOD SHEPHERD PRESCHOOL

Parent Handbook
2026-2027

Contact Information

Trinity Lutheran Good Shepherd Preschool
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Trinity Lutheran Good Shepherd Preschool is a ministry of Trinity Lutheran Church and is licensed through the Department of Child and Youth.

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Welcome to Trinity Lutheran Good Shepherd Preschool!

This wonderful program was founded by Lyn Sorenson, our first director. We are delighted to have you join us this year! We take this relationship of trust seriously, but enter into it joyfully. We believe that the family is the child's primary teacher. Family knows the child best and we hope that throughout our relationship we will be sharing information as well as delighting in your child's increasing independence and joy of learning. We cherish the gifts you will be bringing to our program!

This is your Family Resource Handbook. Much of it is required information and confirmation of our compliance with many statutes that protect children and families in Ohio. We welcome your feedback regarding this handbook so it can become useful. Thank you for joining us in this journey!

Blessings,

Trinity Lutheran Good Shepherd Preschool Staff

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Licensing: Trinity Lutheran Good Shepherd Preschool is licensed to operate by the Department of Children and Youth (DCY). Our license capacity (the number of children in each age category we are licensed to serve) is available on the center's license and is posted in the office. Laws and rules governing our program are available for review upon request. The center's licensing record including compliance reports, complaint investigation reports and evaluations from the health, building and fire departments that inspect the center are posted and available upon request from the DCY. The toll free number for DCY is on the posted license.

Philosophy of Montessori and the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd: Montessori principles empower children to learn their place in God's world and toward independence. Young children learn best through sensory experiences and activities. Montessori materials reflect this and support children in becoming independent. The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is an approach to the religious formation of children. It is rooted in the Bible, the liturgy of the church and the educational principles of Maria Montessori. The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is a certificated Montessori Program with planned scope and sequence for the spiritual formation of young children. Many faiths including Catholic, Methodist, Brethren, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Greek Orthodox, Episcopal, Anglican and others include the Catechesis curriculum and materials in their children's programs.

The Montessori Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program inspires wonder and a joy of learning more about God, His world and His Word. The program fosters spiritual growth in the Christian tradition with a focus upon:

- Child-sized depictions of the Life of Christ
- Child-sized environment
- Scripture
- Joy, praise, language development, auditory memory and self-control through music
- Peaceful environment for work with spiritual and Montessori materials
- Lessons in grace and courtesy
- Intergenerational relationships

Curriculum: Before a child begins to read and perform other academic tasks, the child must first gather meaning from the world and develop an awareness of concepts. To do this the child must have many satisfying sensory and sensory-motor experiences. She/he must touch, feel, smell, hear and see. We want each child to grow in an atmosphere that will develop a positive self-concept and a feeling of accomplishment, self-worth and self-respect. An outgrowth of positive self-concept is self-motivation.

Curriculum activities will be from these broad areas of learning and include Montessori-appropriate materials in a Montessori setting:

1. Social-Emotional Development (cooperating, sharing, taking turns, expressing feelings, etc.)
2. Physical Development and Physical Fitness (fine motor, large/small muscle development, balance, locomotion, non-locomotion, senses, body awareness, etc.)
3. Cognitive Experiences (reasoning, problem solving, size/shape recognition, language and communication activities, qualifying, recognizing likeness and differences, etc.)

4. Creative Experiences/Expressions (exploration with a variety of media such as paint, paper, glue, clay, etc., music, music movement and dramatic play opportunities)
5. Religious Development (developing an understanding of Jesus as God's son, growing in love and trust in God, seeing oneself as a child of God and talking to God in prayer (using ' of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd)

Guidance and Management Policy: Staff members assigned to supervise a child or group of children shall be responsible for their guidance and management, which shall emphasize the development of the child through guidance and direction which is positive, consistent in approach and helps the child develop self-control and acceptable behavior.

- Rules and directions shall be clear and concise, so they are easily understood by the child.
- Positive reinforcement, direction and redirection will be emphasized.
- The staff will be consistent in the application of necessary rules.
- Positive, acceptable behavior shall be recognized and encouraged.
- Children will be helped to seek alternatives to unacceptable behavior, resulting in self-control.
- No child shall discipline another child.
- Staff members will not punish an entire group of children due to the unacceptable behavior of one or a few children.
- The staff attitude in guidance and management shall reflect respect for the child.
- Techniques of guidance and management shall not shame, humiliate or frighten any child.
- Separation (when used as guidance and management) shall be brief in duration and appropriate to the child's age/circumstances and the child must be within hearing and sight of a staff member in a safe, lighted, well-ventilated space.
- The center will not neglect or abuse children and will protect children from abuse and neglect while in the center's care.
- The administrator and each employee of the child care facility is required under Section 2151.421 of the Ohio Revised Code to report their suspicions of child abuse or neglect to the local public children's service agency.
- Prohibit center employees from exposing children to inappropriate language, media or behavior from staff.

Staff Information: Listed below are those who will be working with your child this year on a regular basis. We all have the required information on file needed under the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services.

Mrs. Jenny Pence - Director/Lead Teacher — Hours: Monday-Thursday
Bachelor's degree from Heidelberg University

Mrs. Kari Emmons – Teacher's Assistant — Hours: Tuesday-Thursday mornings

Mrs. Melissa See - Teacher's Assistant — Monday and Tuesday mornings; Wednesday and Thursday afternoons
Bachelor's Degree from Otterbein University

Miss. Shelby Jordan – Office Assistant — Hours: Tuesday and Thursday
Bachelor's Degree from Ashland University

Ms. Paula Watson – Substitute — Hours: As needed
Bachelor's Degree from Ashland University

Tuition and Fees: Tuition payments are made through an online program. You will receive paperwork to complete your payment information before school starts. Monthly tuition is as follows:

4 half days	$ 190.00
4 full days	$ 370.00

A payment returned due to insufficient funds may result in a $30.00 fee.

No refund or credit in tuition for school closings for any reason other than billing errors. (Force Majeure)

Families will be charged $5 for each 10 minutes that children remain after their scheduled pick-up time.

Example: If your scheduled pick-up is 11:30 and you arrive at 11:40, you will be charged $5. Money is due before the child returns to school the next scheduled day.

**The center's tax ID number will be provided to parents/guardians upon request.

Nursing Mothers' Space: Space is available for mothers to nurse younger siblings in the Infant Nursery. Exit out of the Montessori classroom, walk the length of the hallway (including the first set of steps) and enter the last door on the right.

Enrollment Policy: We enroll bathroom independent children ages 3 to 5 years old. The state requires that we have no more than 24 children in the classroom at any given time and regulations are stricter with children under 3 years of age. Classroom openings are filled based on this rule and will be filled first-come, first-serve for families on the waiting list pool with consideration to proper age demographics. When wanting to enroll a child or re-enroll a child, parents or guardians need to fill out a registration form and submit a $50 non-refundable registration fee to be added to the waiting pool.

Staff/Child Ratios: Young Preschoolers (at least 3 years and less than 4 years = 1:12, maximum group size 24. Older Preschoolers (at least 4 years and not enrolled in or eligible to be enrolled in kindergarten) 1:14, maximum group size 28.

Registration Forms: There are several required forms that we must have on file for each child at the start of the school year, some of which must be updated periodically.

- Registration Form
- Child Enrollment Form and Health Information
- Authorized Pick-up Form
- Immunization record - In line with state regulations, we require children to be immunized with the exception of those with a physician's signature of approval not to immunize, or a statement declining immunization on the grounds of conscience or religion that must be signed by the child's parents.

A child's immunization record is valid for one year. It is your responsibility to keep the school updated. The state does not allow children to attend without a current immunization record on file.

****We must have this record within 30 days of the first day of school. After the 30 days, if we still have not received the form the child is not able to return back to school until we receive it.****

- Direct Debit form
- ODJFS Field Trip Permission
- Directory Sharing Information
- Photo Release
- Handbook Statement of Agreement

Withdrawal Policy: If the parent or guardian chooses to withdraw a child from the program, they shall notify the director in writing two weeks in advance of the child's last day. Failure to notify the center two weeks in advance will result in you being charged for that monthly period. For withdrawals occurring after March 31st, the parents are still responsible for the full year's tuition amount.

We embrace ALL children and families, and while we will make all reasonable efforts to work together to ensure a successful experience, there are occasions when a family might be asked to leave the program. Suspension or expulsion is at the discretion of the Director with a written document of the reason.

Such occasions are as follows:

- A child's needs cannot be met in the program at that particular time
- A child's behavior is not being managed despite a documented intervention plan and accommodations
  For example:
  * A child is unwilling/unable (following intervention) to handle materials according to their intended use
  * A child is unwilling/unable (following intervention) to interact with staff and/or peers with care and respect, especially if harming another individual
- Parent/guardian/child non-cooperation with administration/staff
- Tuition nonpayment, including failure to pay on time
- Children will not be accepted if parents/guardians refuse to grant consent for transportation for emergency treatment

DAILY OPERATIONS

Hours of Operation:	M-TH	8:30am to 11:30am for morning half days
	M-TH	12:00pm to 3:00pm for afternoon half days
	M-TH	8:30am to 3:00pm for full days

Daily Schedule:

Morning

8:30 – 8:50	Arrival
9:00 – 9:15	1st Circle time (Calendar/Weather/Letters/counting/Nursery Rhyme)
9:15 – 10:30	Works Time
10:30 – 10:50	2nd Circle time (Birthdays/Story/Song)
11:00 - 11:30	Playground/Morning Dismissal

Afternoon

11:40-12:10	Lunch
12:20 – 1:45	3rd Circle time & Works
1:30-2:00	Special Activity (Science/Art/Cooking etc..)
2:15 – 3:00	Final Circle time then playground & afternoon dismissal

Outdoor Play: When children are taken outside, or elsewhere as a group, a notice is left on the door of the classroom. We will provide outdoor play as long as the temperature is above 25 degrees or below 95 degrees fahrenheit each day for any child in attendance for more than four consecutive daylight hours. Considerations may include, but are not limited to temperature, humidity, wind chill, ozone levels, pollen count, lightning, rain or ice. When children are unable to go outside, we will participate in indoor gross motor/large muscle activities. Please make sure you send your child with weather appropriate clothing and footwear at all times.

Weather-related Closings: We are open from the beginning of September to the end of May, with the schedule varying slightly each year. **We follow the weather closings of Ashland City Schools.** Should the program close due to inclement weather, WNCO 101.3 (Ashland/Mansfield) will carry the information. WMFD also offers closings online and a text message service by signing up for "Ashland City Schools" and the messages will be sent directly to your phone. **When Ashland City Schools have a two-hour delay, we will begin at 10:15 am. If you choose to attend on these days, please bring your child to the classroom. Departure time remains the same.*

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES: FAMILIES

Parent Involvement: Parents and guardians are encouraged to be involved in our preschool community and to participate in center activities whenever possible. Throughout the school year, families may be invited to participate in special events and classroom activities with invites being sent a few weeks in advance.

Parent/Teacher Communication: We will be introducing a new (and hopefully simpler than our previous app) classroom communication app called "Class DOJO" to help communicate to families/parents as needed. This will include reminders of scheduled school closings, snow days and delays, upcoming events and scheduling conferences.

Over the summer we will be sending out invites to create an account and join our classroom on this app.

ClassDojo

Attendance-related Communication: If your child will be absent please call the preschool office at (567) 261-0670, message us on ClassDOJO, or send an email to montessori@trinityashland.org. We maintain an open-door policy and welcome parents to inquire about the care their child is receiving or to check progress that is being made.

If your child is consecutively absent for more than 10 days with no notification, we will begin the withdrawal process. You will be notified when this process begins.

Parent Communication and Conferences: Teachers will communicate with parents on a regular basis regarding their child. During drop-off and pick-up times, communication will likely be brief. If a situation requires more than a few minutes to discuss or is private in nature, teachers will work with parents to schedule a separate meeting time. Call, text, or email if you need to schedule a meeting outside of school hours. There will be regularly scheduled parent/teacher conferences with each family a minimum of once per year.

Assessments: We monitor and record children's activities and progress. We maintain ongoing records and informal assessments. Details will be given to parents as requested and at scheduled conference times. There are times that we make recommendations for further evaluation to assist a child with their development or to help discover more information about a child's learning style. Any such formal screening or assessment will be undertaken through the parents' initiative. Parents will determine whether results will be provided to Trinity Lutheran Good Shepherd Preschool or to any other agency. Child level data are not reported to DCY.

Visiting the Classroom: Children may be visited throughout the day by their parents or guardians. During the visit the child must remain with his or her class at all times. If the child is removed from the class, he/she must be signed out by an approved individual and would not be considered under our supervision. Since we are mainly a student-led environment, it is important that visitors be silent observers in the classroom and be careful not to interrupt the learning that is happening around them.

Late Arrival/Early Departure: Late arrival and early departure should not occur unless absolutely necessary. We require the teachers to be able to attend to each child in the classroom in particular ways that support their development. Once a session has begun, teachers are not immediately free to attend to those outside of the classroom. As you arrive, please text the teacher and wait in the hallway for a reply. Another option is to notify the secretary or receptionist in the main office. Someone in the main office will then make a phone call to the classroom. We will come as soon as we are able to do so without disrupting the children.

Pick up/Drop off: All children are to be checked in by the person bringing them upon arrival. Do this by speaking to the staff person who is recording attendance.

She will mark the time your child is arriving and departing. We suggest that you drop your child off as close to 8:30 as possible.

All children must be checked out and picked up by a parent or person designated on their authorized pick up form and this person must be at least 18 years of age. If someone picking up the child is unfamiliar to the staff (including parents and guardians), he/she must have

picture identification. Staff must also verify the person's identity on the enrollment and/or authorization form.

Bathroom Independence: Children must be considered *bathroom independent* and able to toilet and dress independently before being admitted into the program. We realize toileting accidents happen, especially with very busy, young children. We will work with families to achieve independence, but it is the responsibility of the family to practice these skills at home, including (but not limited to): choosing a proper amount of toilet paper, proper wiping, proper hand-washing with soap, dressing and undressing, etc. Please supply a change of clothes (including underwear and socks) in a large, labeled ziplock bag for your child(ren), as well as periodically monitor the clothing for size and season appropriateness.

Clothing Suggestions: The Montessori environment works best when non-distracting, simple, comfortable play clothes are worn. The focus will then be on the materials/activities. The child must be able to manage his/her clothing independently. ***Indoor/Classroom Clothing****:* We suggest indoor shoes/slippers with rubber soles and closed backs. These will be kept in the child's locker when not being worn. ***Outdoor Clothing:*** We will be outside on most days. Please dress your child appropriately for Ohio's changing weather. These items include: rain boots, snow boots, snow pants, heavy coats, hats, mittens, etc. Boots are required for your child to be in the snow.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES: LEGAL

Custody Agreements: The center requires a court order by the judge determining custody. However, any custodial parent or guardian of a child enrolled in a child care center shall be permitted unlimited access to the school during hours of operation for the purposes of contacting their child(ren), or evaluating the care of the premises. A parent of a child enrolled at the school who is not the child's residential parent shall be permitted unlimited access to the school and be afforded the same rights as the residential parent unless there is court documentation limiting access and conditions of the nonresidential parent. Upon entering the school, the parent or guardian shall notify the administrator or designee of their presence. All documentation of custody needs to be provided to the center as soon as it is available. Information regarding a child(ren) enrolled will be provided to the residential parent. This includes illness, emergencies and general information. It is the responsibility of the residential/custodial parent to contact the non-residential/non-custodial parent. In the event that a domestic or family dispute interferes with the functioning of the school and the well-being of the staff and other children, we reserve the right to discontinue enrollment of your child(ren) at any time.

Concealed Weapons Policy: Employees, parents or guardians may not possess or use any weapon regardless of whether a person has a concealed weapons permit (CCW) or is allowed by law to possess a weapon on the property of Trinity Lutheran Church. Weapons include (but are not limited to) guns, knives or swords with blades over four inches in length, explosives or any chemical with the purpose to cause harm to someone.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES: HEALTH AND SAFETY

General Emergencies: We are committed to making our environment a safe and healthy place for your child(ren). Our program operates in an open church. During the operating hours, other members and groups of the community use the church to conduct meetings and other functions.

For this reason, the following policies are set forth:

- No child shall be left alone or unsupervised by his/her parents prior to school.
- No child shall be left alone or unsupervised by his/her teacher during school hours or until the child is picked up by the parent/guardian.
- Our school will conduct monthly fire drills and periodic tornado drills.
- Our school must conduct Emergency Lockdown Drills.
- Staff members shall immediately notify a local public children's service agency if they suspect that a child has been abused or neglected.
- Staff members have access at all times to a telephone in the prechool classroom and office.
- A fire emergency, place of refuge and weather alert plan are posted.

Security and Controlled Access Plan:

- All exterior doors will remain secured when the center is in operation.
- Parents and guardians will enter and exit through the designated entrance.
- Children may only be released to a parent, legal guardian, or an individual who has been authorized by the parent or guardian and is listed in the child's enrollment records.
- Staff will verify the identity of an unfamiliar individual before allowing access to the center or releasing a child.
- Individuals who are not parents, guardians, authorized caregivers or center staff will not be permitted to enter the classroom.
- In the event of an emergency or security threat, staff will follow the center's emergency response procedures and prioritize the safety and supervision of the children.

In the event of general emergencies, staff and children will exit the building via the nearest posted safe exit and proceed directly next door to The Good Shepherd Manor House, 622 Center Street. Our secondary site is Ashland Theological Seminary, 910 Center Street in the building Gerber on High Street. If loss of power, heat or clean water occurs and inhibits the provision of the children's basic needs and state licensing requirements, parents will be contacted and all children will be sent home.

Accidents/Injuries: In case of an accident or injury, medical or dental, the parents and 911 (if necessary) will be contacted immediately. (1) If the school is unable to contact parents, the teacher will follow the contact procedure on the emergency sheet in the child's file. (2) The child's medical records shall be transported to the source of medical assistance with the child. (3) An incident report will be given to parents on the day of (a) an accident or injury and/or (b) if emergency transportation is required.

Procedures for medical and dental emergencies are posted in the classroom and office. *If any of your child's medical or contact information changes, please let us know so we can make the necessary changes in your child's files.*

An Incident/injury report will be completed by the center for:

- an illness which requires first aid treatment or parent notification

- an accident which requires first aid treatment
- an injury which requires first aid treatment
- emergency transporting
- an unusual or unexpected event which jeopardizes the safety of children or staff

Illness/Communicable Disease: A child with any of the following symptoms will be immediately isolated and discharged to the parent/guardian:

- Temperature of at least 100 degrees F (auxiliary), when in combination with any of the following signs or symptoms of illness: lethargy, vomiting, extreme tiredness, severe coughing or difficulty waking up
- A child with a temperature of 101 degrees F or above
- Three cases of diarrhea within a 24-hour period
- Severe coughing that causes the child to become red or blue in the face or a cough that makes a whooping sound
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Redness of the eye, obvious discharge, matted eyelashes, burning or itching
- Untreated skin patches, unusual spots or rashes
- Unusually dark urine or grey/white stools
- Stiff neck with an elevated temperature
- Evidence of untreated lice, scabies or other parasitic infestation
- Vomiting
- Sore throat or difficulty swallowing

Any child demonstrating signs of illness not listed above will be isolated, carefully observed for symptoms and the parent will be notified. If a child does not feel well enough to participate in activities, the parent will be called to pick them up. Anytime a child is isolated they will be kept within sight and hearing of a staff member.
If your child contracts a communicable disease, please advise a staff member. Children will be readmitted to the program after being fever free for at least 24 hours *(without the aid of Tylenol/Motrin)*. If they are not symptom free, a doctor's note will be required stating that the child is not contagious. Sanitizing shall be performed daily according to the sanitizing schedule.

Care of Children without Immunizations: Parents and guardians are responsible for providing the preschool with current immunization records or appropriate documentation of an exemption. Children who are not immunized may attend the center when permitted under applicable Ohio requirements. If an outbreak of a communicable disease occurs, children who are not immunized may be excluded from the center when required or recommended by the local health department. The center will communicate with affected families regarding any required exclusion, return-to-care requirements and other health and safety measures.

Administration of Medications: Our staff can administer medication required for a specific, approved medical plan when trained to do so by the parent.

In the event a child needs such a medical plan, it will be the responsibility of the parent to train staff in its administration. However, staff will not administer medication that is not a permanent, approved medical plan. Any topical creams, vitamins, chapstick, lotion, sunscreen, etc that are in the original container can be administered by staff or children with proper documentation.

Items must include a handwritten and signed note from the parent/guardian with the child's name, date, product, when to administer and how much, symptoms to watch for, start and end date, and attach physician's directions if applicable.

Emergency Medical Devices and Medications: Emergency devices and medications may include, but are not limited to, an AED, naloxone (Narcan), epi pen, rescue inhalers, LifeVac, or other emergency medications or other devices authorized for use by the preschool.

Staff members will receive appropriate training in the use of emergency medical devices and medications that they may be expected to administer.

Parents with children who may require epi pens should arrange with the staff to have an epi pen on hand at all times. We ensure that ADA requirements are followed in our procedure for administering medications and care to children with disabilities.

Food Supplements or Modified Diets: If your child requires a food supplement or a modified diet, we must have written documentation from your physician. Information must be submitted on the appropriate physical and medical forms from the Department of Children and Youth.

Field Trips/Special Activities: Field trips off-premises and routine trips on-premises are taken throughout the year to expose children to a variety of experiences. A person trained in first aid as well as a first aid kit will be available on all field trips. An emergency transportation authorization and health record for each child is also taken. A separate field trip form is required for each trip off-premises; routine trips on-premises are covered by one form. In order to ensure the safety and adequate supervision of children traveling off the premises of the center, the adult/child ratios will change. Attendance will be taken throughout our trip.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES: CHILDREN

Newsletter: We will keep parents informed about activities as well as provide information on activities, important dates, etc. in a monthly newsletter.

Social Media: Current information will be posted on our closed Facebook page, *Trinity Lutheran Good Shepherd Preschool Family and Friends.* Written parental/guardian consent will be obtained before a child's photograph or video is used in the preschool's social media pages or newsletter. Parents/guardians may choose whether or not to give permission for their child's image to be used. Choosing not to provide permission will not affect the chld's enrollment or participation in preschool activities. The preschool will not publically share a child's full name, address, phone number, personal contact information or other private identifying information.

Birthdays/Gifts: We believe that each child's birthday is special and should be celebrated. If you wish, you may bring treats for the entire class to celebrate your child's birthday. Birthday treat must be individually wrapped. Please let a staff member know when you will be bringing treats in. Please do not hand out party invitations at school.

Snacks and Lunches: We do not serve meals or have food service as part of the program. Please provide a daily snack for your child/children. Snacks must be individually prepackaged portions, and we ask that you choose low-sugar options.

- Children who eat lunch should bring their own, well-balanced lunches that do not need to be refrigerated or heated.
- It is beneficial if your child can open packages independently.

- Please do not send candy or pop in their lunch.

- Staff will discourage children from sharing lunch items with others.

- Trinity Lutheran Good Shepherd Preschool Staff