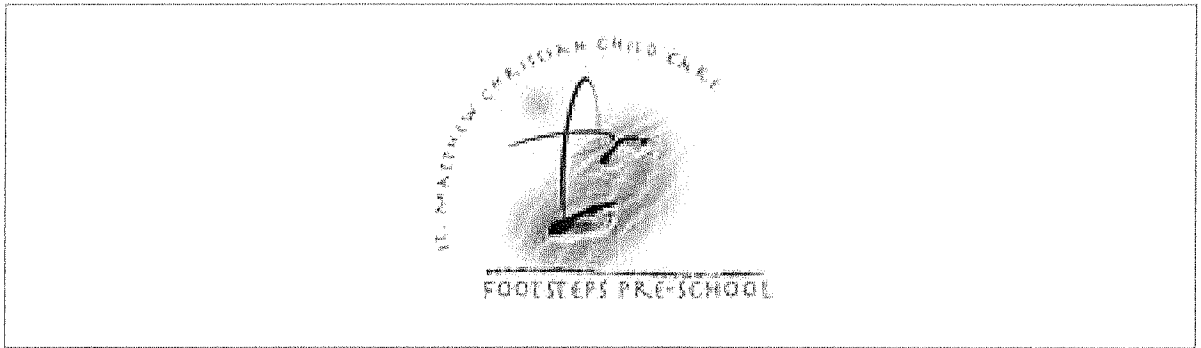


Parent Handbook



15395 Rannes St
Spring Lake, MI 49456
(616) 846-4019

REVISED MAY 2018

Who We Are

As an enrolled family of St. Matthew Christian Child Care with Footsteps Preschool, you are warmly welcomed and encouraged to participate in St. Matthew Lutheran Church by attending Sunday morning worship services, Bible Classes, Sunday School, as well as any/all church and community functions. Thank you for choosing St. Matthew Christian Child Care with Footsteps Preschool as your child's early school experience. We appreciate your trust as we serve as a supplement to your home environment. We consider it a privilege to serve you as a parent in providing high quality Christian child care and preschool. You are a valuable part of our service, and we always welcome your comments and input. Please contact us about any concerns/comments that you have regarding your child. Remember, we are here for your entire family.

- Your St. Matthew Christian Child Care with Footsteps Preschool Staff

Contact Us

15395 Rannes St.
Spring Lake, MI 49456

Phone: 616-846-4019

Email: director.footsteps@gmail.com

Web: www.smslm.org

Table of Contents

Welcome

Philosophy and Goals

Certification/Admission/Enrollment Process/Withdrawal Policy
Discontinuation of Child Care/Anti-Discrimination Statement

Tuition Schedule/Vacation Days/Hours of Operation

Drop off and Pick up/Closings

Special Needs/Child Abuse and Reporting/Discipline/Curriculum
Outdoor Play/Meals and Snacks

Child Rest Period/Infants and Toddlers/Toilet Training/Clothing

Daily Schedules/Health and Medical Policies

Health Care Plan/Medical Procedures/Medication

Emergency Procedures/Licensing Notebook Statement

Welcome

Welcome to St. Matthew Christian Child Care with Footsteps Preschool, a ministry of St. Matthew Lutheran Church. We are affiliated with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, founded in 1847, a system with more than 1800 early childhood centers, 900 elementary schools, about 100 high schools, 10 universities and 2 seminaries throughout the United States.

We are licensed by the Michigan Department of Human Services and inspected on an annual basis. This handbook explains our philosophy, goals, policies and procedures. Please read it carefully and save it for future reference.

We're looking forward to providing a positive learning experience for your child and your family.

Philosophy

St. Matthew Christian Child Care with Footsteps Preschool provides the families of our community with a quality Christian preschool and child care program in a joyful, loving environment. Our purpose is to help build a strong spiritual, intellectual, emotional, physical and social framework of reference for living and to create a foundation for later, more formal education. Most importantly, we feel that each child needs to feel good about themselves and know that God loves them. Their view of themselves and others dictates how they react to experiences that life presents to them.

Goals

Based on the preceding philosophy, we seek to accomplish the following goals:

1. Children will learn to know Jesus as their Savior and Friend.
2. Children will explore a variety of developmentally appropriate learning centers and activities.
3. Children will discover, manipulate and experience hands on activities in creative ways.
4. Children will tend to their own physical needs in the areas of eating, cleanup and toileting.
5. Children will interact with adults and other children in cooperative settings.
6. Children will be given and have opportunities to express their feelings through the many learning activities in the classroom including: dramatic play, art, literacy, music and movement, worship, math and science.
7. Children will use appropriate words to express their feelings and needs.
8. Children will develop cognitive and physical skills, which are appropriate to their age and ability.
9. Children will be encouraged to express empathy toward other people.
10. Children will see their teachers as supportive and loving caregivers.
11. Children will develop a sense of perseverance, responsibility and independence.

Certification

St. Matthew Christian Child Care with Footsteps Preschool is fully licensed by the State of Michigan Department of Human Services. We are staffed by teachers specializing in Early Childhood Development and qualified teachers' assistants.

Admission

Enrollment is open to children 6 weeks through 12 years of age.

Enrollment Process

1. Visit the center, both parent and child.
2. Meet with the director for answers to questions and to discuss policies.
3. Complete the necessary paperwork: child registration, child immunization records, physical form, and emergency card.
4. Sign Parent/Center agreement and submit \$65 non-refundable registration fee.

To meet state licensing regulations, it is mandatory that all forms be completed and returned by the first day of attendance. If you move, change telephone numbers, begin a new job, add someone who can pick up your child or in any way change the data you have given us in these forms, please notify the Child Care office. Because we use this information to reach you in case of emergency, it is extremely important that we have accurate information at all times.

Withdrawal Policy

When withdrawing a child from the center, written notice to the director is required two weeks in advance. If two weeks' notice is not given, you will be responsible for paying tuition two weeks from the time the notice is given. If a prolonged illness or a move deems it necessary to withdraw, we request that you notify the director two weeks in advance, if possible. If the director feels that a child should be withdrawn from the center, the following steps will be taken: The director and staff member who work with the child will meet and discuss the reasons they feel the child should be withdrawn. A meeting of the parent or parents and the director will be held to discuss the child's school readiness or behavior.

The director, teacher and parents will decide what would be beneficial for the child and the center.

Discontinuation of Child Care

We reserve the right to discontinue care to any child due to safety concerns for other children enrolled or for staff members.

Anti-Discrimination Statement

St. Matthew Christian Child Care with Footsteps Preschool admits students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin. All students are entitled to the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the center. We do not discriminate based on race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of our policies, admission policies, scholarship programs, athletic and other school-administered programs.

Tuition Schedule

We offer preschool rates, as well as full and part time child care rates, depending on your need. Please refer to the current Tuition Rate Sheet for the most current rates.

Child Care tuition is due each Wednesday by 6:00pm for the current week.

Preschool tuition is due by the 5th of the current month.

Please make checks payable to St. Matthew Christian Child Care

Please put the date of the week or month your check is for on the memo line.

Your account may be assessed a late fee for payments not received by the deadline. An additional fee may be assessed every 7 days until payment is received.

Due to recurring late or nonpayment of preschool/child care tuition, child care services may be discontinued.

If your school aged child does not need a full am/pm week of care, then school age drop in care rates will apply.

There will be a service fee of \$25 for each returned check.

There is no reduction in tuition for absences. Your fee pays for operating costs (staff, materials, food, etc.). When enrolling, you are reserving time, space, staffing, and provisions for your child whether or not he/she attends.

Registration Fee - \$65 per child. This non-refundable fee is due at the time of registration or when placing a child or children on our waiting list.

15% Discount for St. Matthew Lutheran Church Members

5% Multiple child discount given to oldest child/children for families with 2 or more children enrolled.

Vacation Days

Children enrolled in the child care program will be allowed one free vacation week **each year** after 6 months of participation in the program. A week is considered 5 consecutive calendar days. Written notice is appreciated at least two weeks in advance.

Hours of Operation

We are open Monday through Friday year-round. The center is open from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

The center observes all major holidays. If the holiday falls on a day your child is scheduled to attend, you are still responsible for paying the tuition for this day.

The holidays we are closed are as follows: Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and the day after. We are also closed for a Christmas break from Christmas Eve Day through New Year's Day. We reopen the next business day after New Year's Day. You will not be charged for this week.

Footsteps Preschool runs September through May. We follow the Spring Lake Public Schools schedule. If the Spring Lake Public Schools have a scheduled day off, the preschool has the day off as well.

Children must be picked up from the center no later than 11:30 a.m. from the preschool program and no later than 6:00 p.m. from the child care program. **A late fee of \$1 per minute may be charged if your child is not picked up by your assigned contract time.**

Drop off and Pick up

Michigan State Licensing requires that each child be signed in and out each time the child attends. Parents are required to clock their child in at the check in computer located at the main child care secured door.

If your child will be absent, please call the office as soon as possible to let us know of the absence and the reason for the absence.

If you are unable to pick up your child, please keep in mind that your child will not be released to a person who is not listed on your emergency information card. If you have arranged for someone else to pick up your child, we must have this information in writing from you. You may write that person's name on your child's emergency card or write a separate, dated note to the teacher. This note should include:

1. Child's name
2. Date of note
3. Date on which this person will pick up your child
4. Name of person authorized to pick up your child
5. Your signature

The person picking up your child will be asked to show proper photo identification. We cannot release your child into any other person's custody without your prior permission.

If a noncustodial parent is not allowed to pick up your child, we must have a copy of official court documents or other legal documents.

Closings

All closings, be it preschool or child care, will be listed on local TV stations.

Preschool

Preschool closes for all scheduled holidays, breaks, and school closings due to weather that Spring Lake Public Schools observe. A yearly calendar will be available for you during the first week of school. If we are closed due to inclement weather, please stay tuned to local TV stations.

Child Care

If at any time the Preschool Program is closed, the child care will be open for children regularly scheduled for that day. Children enrolled in Preschool only will need to seek other accommodations. In the rare event that extreme weather is being forecasted (such as: blizzards or severe ice storms) and the state police are encouraging people not to travel except in emergency situations, the child care will close in the interest of safety. Notification of this will be put on the local TV stations.

Special Needs

Upon enrollment of a child with special needs, we will meet with the family to gather information about the child's specific needs and how we can accommodate them. We also work with any specialists that may be needed in

providing care for the child. All staff are encouraged to attend trainings regarding caring for children with special needs

Child Abuse and Reporting

Members of St. Matthew Christian Child Care with Footsteps Preschool staff are mandated, under penalty and in accordance with Michigan law, to report to Child Protective Services or to local law enforcement any reasonable suspicion of abuse. In this very serious and legally narrow area the school will not contact parents in advance of making a report to the legal authorities. If it does become necessary to report, please be assured such action is taken only in the spirit of what is best for your child and your family. The goal is to obtain help and support where it is needed.

Discipline

Part of early childhood development is learning self-control and learning how to use words to express feelings. The children will be encouraged to respect the feelings and property of others. We promote the development of self-control through positive guidelines and actions, redirecting negative behaviors will be done whenever possible. If extra discipline should become necessary, we will give the child a few minutes of quiet time away from the other children. Under no circumstances will physical punishment, humiliation, embarrassment, judgmental words, nagging, scolding or withholding food take place. A teacher may need to talk with a parent, so that the home and center can work together for resolution. If this does not solve the behavior issue, the director will request a meeting with the teacher and parents to work on possible solutions. If this does not prove successful, after an appropriate time, we will ask for help from an outside source which may result in suspension or expulsion.

Curriculum

We use the One in Christ curriculum, distributed by Concordia Publishing House, which is Christ centered and theme-based. Our focus is to contribute to the spiritual, intellectual, creative, emotional, social and physical development of your child. The curriculum is:

*Creative * Relevant to today's living * Flexible * Fun

Our daily schedule may include: dramatic play, math, science, cooking, art, literacy rich activities, music and movement, faith development, learning centers, and much more!

Outdoor Play

We encourage large motor development, sharing and cooperation through active play. Each day, weather permitting, all children have an opportunity for outdoor play. Please be sure to send needed coats, hats, boots, as we do play outdoors **year-round**.

Meals and Snacks

Breakfast and two snacks are served daily. These are balanced meals, following USDA and Child and Adult Care Food Program guidelines, in child-sized portions. Lunch is to be provided by you every day. Any items that need to be refrigerated may be placed in a classroom refrigerator until lunch time. All food needs to be labeled with the child's first and last name as well as the date. Each classroom has a microwave if there are items that need to be warmed. Please send items labeled with child's name and date in microwave safe containers. If a child forgets his/her lunch, one will be provided. Lunch is a relaxed social time when morning activities are discussed, and the children and teachers sit down together for a family-style meal. Conversation centers on interests of the children.

Please keep us informed about any special dietary needs that your child may have. We do adjust based on special needs.

Monthly menus are posted on the parent communication board near the childcare entrance. Any substitutions will be noted on the menus.

Child Rest Period

Children enrolled in the child care program have a scheduled daily rest period. We ask that you provide a crib sheet to put on the rest cots as well as any other nap time items that your child may want or need (small pillow and blanket) to use during this time. Bedding may be left in your child's classroom but must be taken home weekly for washing.

Infants and Toddlers

We provide infant bedding, cribs, burp cloths, etc. We ask that you supply prepared bottles daily labeled with the date, contents, and child's full name. We also ask that you supply diapers, wipes, as well as any baby food needed, and a few changes of clothes.

In the toddler room, we ask that you provide a lunch for your child, your own rest time sheets and blankets for nap time. In addition, we require diapers and wipes, as well as an extra set of clothing for your child.

Children will not be moved to the toddler room unless they are eating table food. A menu is posted at all times to which you may refer. Please make your child's caregiver aware if you are supplying alternate food. You will receive a daily report including diaper changes, meals and snacks, naps, and any other important information.

Toilet Training

When you feel your child is ready to begin toilet training, please plan to meet with your child's caregiver. This meeting will give you an opportunity to work together to form a plan that will be used at home and at the center. The center will not train your child unless an interest is stated by you and your child. We do not punish any child for having an accident and ask that you provide extra clothing for these emergencies. Toilet training is a cooperative effort started in the home and carried through while the child is at the center. This consistency between home and the center will make toilet training an easier process for you and your child.

Clothing

We encourage children to come fully clothed to child care/preschool prepared for any kind of play. This includes messy art and outdoor play. **We are required by the State of Michigan License guidelines to go outside every day.** Clothing items include coats, boots, hats, mittens, etc. depending on current weather conditions. Please label all removable clothing items. Some classroom activities can and will be messy. Keeping that in mind, please send children in appropriate clothing. Also, please dress toilet trained children in clothing that is easy to take down and pull up to make independent toileting possible. Suspenders, leotards, belts and bib overalls are difficult for small hands to manage on their own. Preschool activities such as climbing and running require sure footing. We ask that children wear only soft soled shoes. Due to safety concerns, we would prefer that children not wear open toed sandals or flip flops.

Since accidents do happen, we ask that you keep an extra set of clothing at the center at all times. Remember to change clothing as sizes and seasons change.

Daily Schedule Toddlers

6:30-8:30 – Arrive, Free Play, Centers
8:30-9:00 - Breakfast
9:00-10:00 – Bathroom, wash hands, teacher directed activities
10:00-10:30 – Snack
10:30- 11:00 – Circle time, teacher directed lesson plan activities
11:00-11:30 – Outside/gross motor activities
11:30-11:45 – Bathroom, wash hands
11:45-12:15 – Lunch
12:15-12:30 – Bathroom, wash hands
12:30-2:30 – Quiet/ rest time
2:30-3:00 – Wake up, Bathroom wash hands
3:00-3:15 – Snack
3:15-6:00 – Outside, afternoon activities, free play

Daily Schedule 3-5 year-olds

6:30 -8:30 - Arrive, Free Play, Breakfast
8:30 -9:00 - Bathroom, wash hands
9:00 - 11:00 - Structured Preschool time (check with your child's teacher for specific activities)
11:00-11:30- Outside/gross motor time
11:45-12:00- Bathroom, wash hands
12:00-12:45- Lunch
12:45-1:00- Bathroom, wash hands
1:00-2:45- Quiet/rest time- book and quiet table toys for children who do not sleep
2:45-3:00- Bathroom, wash hands
3:00-3:15 - Snack
3:15-6:00- Outside, afternoon activities, games, free play

Health and Medical Policies

Keep your child home if he/she:

- **Has a fever or has had one during the previous 24-hour period.**
- Has a cold.
- Has heavy green or yellow nasal discharge.
- Has a constant cough.
- Is vomiting.
- Is fussy, cranky, and generally not himself/herself.
- Has an undiagnosed body rash. A note from a doctor is required to return.
- Is unable to play outside
- Has a doctor's appointment for a suspected illness; please do not bring your child to class prior to the appointment.
- Has Head Lice. Child should remain home until treatment is completed and all lice and nits are gone.
- Has ringworm. (Ringworm should be treated by a doctor and is contagious until 24-48 hours after treatment or unless covered by clothing.)
- Is over tired. Rest at such times may prevent the development of an illness.
- Has symptoms of possible communicable disease. (These are usually sniffles, reddened eyes, sore throat, headache, and/or abdominal pain, plus fever).

Please notify us at once if the child does have a communicable disease. If your child becomes ill while in our care, we will notify you to make arrangements to pick the child up. After picking up a sick child, we ask that he or she remain home until 24 hours after the symptoms have stopped or after doctor's approval. The management will consult with a registered nurse as needed.

Health Care Plan

Staff wash hands as necessary and at the following times: upon arrival, after toileting, after assisting children in toileting, after diapering, before eating and before serving food or drink. Children are instructed to wash hands after toileting, diaper changes, and before and after eating. Infants' and Toddlers' hands are washed for them by staff.

Staff follow universal precautions when handling bodily fluids. The surface is washed with warm water and detergent. The surface is then rinsed with clean water and sprayed with a sanitizing solution. The surface is left to air dry. Equipment, toys, and other surfaces are cleaned and sanitized using the same three step method. Tables are washed after each use. Floors and carpets are mopped or vacuumed and bathrooms are sanitized daily.

Medical Procedures: In case of serious accident, injury or illness:

Basic first aid will be applied, and parents will be notified. If parents cannot be contacted, the emergency contact on the child's information card will be notified. If the above persons cannot be contacted and the child needs medical attention due to a life-threatening situation, the child will be transported via ambulance to the hospital of choice as indicated on the child's information card. All children are covered by a limited accident insurance policy.

There is a staff member certified in CPR and First Aid present at the center at all times. If a child is injured while at the center, the injury or wound will be properly cared for. If the caregiver feels that the injury is such that the child cannot remain at school, the parents will be notified immediately. When a child is injured, the teacher on duty will fill out and sign an accident report. The parents of the child will be asked to sign this report and will be given a copy, if requested.

Any child that becomes severely ill while in care will be moved away from the main group of children, either into the child care office or in their classroom. You will be notified of the situation and instructed to pick up your child.

Medication

Staff may administer medication to a child only after a medication form is filled out and signed by the parent. The medication must be in the original container. A prescription must be clearly labeled with the child's name, physician's name, instructions, and the name of the medicine. Staff will record the time and amount given as directed. If your child is taking a new medicine, we ask that you please administer the first dose at home. Medicine is stored in the child care office or, if it needs to be refrigerated, in a locked container in the refrigerator.

Please note: This includes sunscreen, bug spray, and diaper cream (diaper cream will be kept with the child's diapers).

Emergency Procedures

St. Matthew Christian Child Care with Footsteps Preschool practices emergency evacuations for natural or man-made emergencies, such as fire, tornado and dangerous situations where we would need to lock-down the building. Because the children's safety is our main concern, all staff are trained on our emergency procedures. In the event of a true emergency you will be notified from us or emergency authorities and instructed at that time where and when to pick up your child. You will be notified as soon as the situation is deemed safe.

A minimum of 4 fire drills are held each year and documentation for these drills are kept on file in the child care office. In the event of a fire, all the children will be evacuated to the tractor shed across the parking lot. Once the situation is safe, this is where you would pick up your child.

A minimum of 2 tornado drills are held between the months of April and November. In the event of a tornado all children are moved to the basement of the building. Once the warnings have expired, parents may pick up their child/children.

Man-made emergencies, such as an intruder or dangerous situation, are causes for a lock down of the building. As soon as the situation is deemed safe, you may pick up your child/children at the center.

In the event of a lost child or child involved with inappropriate contact, the parents, emergency personnel or protective services will be contacted immediately. The director will notify all appropriate authorities and provide written documentation of the incident. In the event of inappropriate contact, the child will be separated from the situation until the parents can pick up the child. The individual accused of inappropriate behavior will be removed from the center by proper authorities. All incidents will be documented in writing to the Department of Human Services.

Any child who needs special accommodations will be assisted by the director, the child's teacher or another staff member.

Licensing Notebook Statement

We are mandated by the State of Michigan Department of Human Services to provide access to a licensing notebook. This notebook is in the center, just outside of the child care office, and is available for review during regular business hours. This notebook contains all licensing inspection reports, special investigations and all related corrective action plans. All inspections and reports from at least the past two years are available on the Bureau of Children and Adult Licensing website at: www.michigan.gov/lara.