

Bethel Lutheran Educational Services



**Preschool Program
2009 - 2010**

Parent Handbook

BLESS Preschool is thankful for the grant received through Alberta Children's Services *Making Space for Children: Child Care Space Creation Innovation Fund*. This grant has enabled BLESS to purchase the play centers, equipment, and furniture necessary for offering a quality preschool program for the families of Sherwood Park and area.

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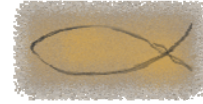


Jesus said, "Let the little come to me..." and (He) blessed them.

Mark 10: 14, 16

Who Are We?

Bethel Lutheran Educational Services (BLESS) Preschool is a ministry of Bethel Lutheran Church.



It is a joy to welcome God's children and partner with their parents in providing a loving, Christ-centered learning environment during the children's early years.

BLESS believes that each child is created by God in His image, with a unique personality and special gifts. It is our desire to provide a preschool program that will meet the children's spiritual, physical, social, emotional, and academic needs. Nurturing the children in these areas is important for future growth and development in all aspects of their lives.

Admission

Children who are 3 years old by Dec. 31, 2009 and are toilet trained, are eligible for enrolment in our program.

It is our desire to welcome all children to the program, provided we are able to accommodate their needs. If your child has a special need, please speak with the Director of Children's Ministry prior to registering.

Admission is first granted to returning families and families whose children have previously attended BLESS Preschool. Following this, admission is open to new families based on the order the registration form and fee is received. Once a class is full, a waiting list will be started.

Registration

There is a \$50 non-refundable/non-transferable fee per child required at the time of registration. This fee is only refundable to families on the waitlist who are not granted admission by the first day of classes.

Tuition

Tuition fees for September 2009 – May 2010 are:

M/W/F class: \$130/month

T/Th class: \$110/month

All classes: \$50 Activity fee (one time)

Payment for monthly fees is by automatic withdrawals, on the 1st of each month, September 2009 through May 2010. A \$50 cheque for the activity fee (payable to Bethel Lutheran Church), dated Sept. 1, will be required at the time of registration.

BLESS Preschool is an approved program for qualifying families to access the *Stay-At Home* bursary through the Alberta government. For more information, contact the Children's Services Parent Information Line at 1-866-714-5437.

Tuition is non-refundable for absences or holidays.
NSF cheques or withdrawals will be charged \$20.00

One month's written notice is required for early withdrawal. Failure to provide notification will result in a forfeit of one month's tuition fee. There will be no refund of tuition for withdrawals after April 1st.

BLESS Preschool does not participate in fundraising activities.

Daily Activities

Young children are active learners. It is important for them to wear clothing that allows them to move freely in the classroom, gym, and at the playground, as well as possibly be stained by paint or other liquids.

Appropriate footwear is required. At the beginning of the year, please send a pair of shoes with non-marking soles, labeled with your child's name, which can be left at the school.



Each day, please send the following items with your child:

- Nutritious snack (please see p. 9 for more details)
- A change of clothing
- Appropriate outer clothing for playing outside

Daily Schedule

Morning Class		Afternoon Class*
9:00 – 9:15 am	<i>Settling Time</i> 15 minutes	12:30 – 12:45 pm
9:15 – 9:35 am	<i>Gathering Time</i> 20 minutes	12:45 – 1:05 pm
9:35 – 10:35 am	<i>Learning Time</i> 60 minutes	1:05 – 2:05 pm
10:35 – 10:55 am	<i>Snack Time</i> 20 minutes	2:05 – 2:25 pm
10:55 – 11:15 am	<i>Gym Time</i> 20 minutes	2:25 – 2:45 pm
11:15 – 11:30 am	<i>Bible Time & Closing</i> 15 minutes	2:45 – 3:00 pm

* Please note: This class will be offered if there is sufficient enrollment.

Settling Time: Quiet centers will be set up at the tables (puzzles, colouring sheets, manipulatives, books, etc.) to welcome the children each day.

Gathering Time is when the children come together for large group learning: calendar, weather, introduction to the letter and/or number of the day, show and tell, birthday celebrations.

Learning Time: The *Saxon Early Learning* curriculum will be the basis for *Learning Time*, which includes age-appropriate activities related to Language development, Math, Science, Social Studies, Music, Art, and Centers. Learning through play will be the focus of the Tuesday/Thursday program.

There will be more emphasis placed on Kindergarten-readiness skills and concepts during the Monday/Wednesday/Friday program.



Snack Time is an opportunity for children to talk to their friends, and learn about nutrition and appropriate table manners. Prior to the children sitting down to eat, there will be a washroom break.

Gym Time: BLESS Preschool has access to a large gymnasium for the children to participate in movement activities, games, and dance, all with the focus of developing large motor skills, cooperation, and listening skills.

Bible Time is learning about God's Word through Bible events, songs, crafts, and lessons.

During the *Closing*, children review a new concept, read a story or sing a song, share about a special time during the day and say their closing prayer.

Arrival and Pick Up

Please accompany your child into the building each day. Help them hang up their coat and backpack in the designated area and put on their indoor shoes. Upon arriving at the classroom, you will be required to complete the attendance sheet. Quiet learning centers will be set up to assist your child in making the transition to being at school. Please do not leave your child unsupervised in the room.

Please arrive no earlier than 5 minutes before class to accommodate the teachers' needs to prepare for the day.

You are invited to greet your child in the classroom at the end of the day. Please wait in the hallway until the BLESS staff opens the doors following closing prayer as the children will become distracted by your presence.

Your child's safety is of the utmost importance. Children will not be permitted to leave the classroom until their parent, or designated individual, have arrived and signed them out. If your child is being picked up by some one other than the parents, written notification must be provided to the BLESS staff.

Extreme Weather



In the case of extreme weather resulting in a school closure, families will be called by a member of the BLESS staff informing them of this decision. Parents can also check for information on the website: www.bethelchurch.com or contact the office: 780 - 417-7775. It is the parents' discretion as to whether or not their child comes to school during inclement weather.

Snacks

Due to the number of food allergies and dietary restrictions that children have, parents are required to provide snack for their child each day. We ask that children be given healthy nutritious snacks, with two items from Canada's Food Guide, in appropriate containers labeled with the child's name. Peanut or nut-based products are not permitted. Any food the child does not eat will be sent home so the parents are aware of how much the child has eaten while at school.



In the event that a child does not bring a snack to school, a supply of nutritious snacks and unsweetened fruit juices will be kept in the classroom, to ensure that no child goes without. When the child is picked up, parents will be informed of what the child was given to eat.

Families are invited to send treats to celebrate special occasions, such as birthdays. Parents are asked to talk to the teacher prior to bringing in any foods to ensure it is appropriate for all children to eat.

Special Events

Chapel: Parents and siblings are invited to join the children for a special chapel service. Check the monthly calendar for specific dates and times.

Theme Days: During the school year, there are special days planned around a particular theme.

Ex: Western Day, Pajama Day, Camping Day.

“In School” Field Trips: Special guests will be invited to the class to share with the children.

Holiday Celebrations: There will be special Christmas and Spring programs in which families and guests are invited.

Library: The library is open the first and third week of each month for BLESS families. There are books, movies, and music for the entire family to enjoy. Check the monthly calendar for days and time.



Behaviour Expectations

The children will learn the behaviour expectations and classroom routines through a variety of methods. Positive behaviours will be reinforced using verbal recognition and ‘mini-celebrations’ (ex. High 5). The goal of the positive reinforcement will be to guide the children to self-correction of behaviour using minimal intervention from the teaching staff.

When a disagreement between children occurs, they will be encouraged to work through the situation using their words, rather than actions. A staff member will assist the children in coming to an amicable resolution when necessary.

When a staff member must intervene in a situation, the child behaving inappropriately will be given a warning, along with a quick explanation of the desired behaviour. Redirecting the child to another activity often helps to refocus his/her attention.

Our Heavenly Father forgives each of us for our wrong doings. At the end of any conflict or discipline situation, forgiveness will take place between children or the child and teacher, with the reassurance that they are loved and cared for.

Sickness and Medication

Due to the limited hours the children are at BLESS Preschool, the staff will NOT administer any medication to children. The only exception to this is emergency medicine for severe reactions, such as an epi-pen. This medication must be in the original container, labeled with the child's name and directions for administering the dosage.



On days when your child is sick and will not be attending class, please contact the church office (780-417-7775) to let us know of your child's absence.

Out of respect for the other families in BLESS Preschool, we request that children who are ill be kept at home in order to avoid passing along viruses and communicable diseases. This includes (but is not limited to): fevers, vomiting, diarrhea, body rash, chicken pox, measles, mumps, pink eye, strep throat, and head lice. Please contact your family doctor or the Strathcona County Health Authority as to when it is appropriate for your child to return to class.

If a child should become ill while at BLESS Preschool, he/she will be kept comfortable and supervised until parents can be contacted to make arrangements for pick up. If the staff is unable to reach the parents, the emergency contact names will be phoned.

Accidents

While every effort is made to provide reasonable supervision for the children, it is not possible to prevent accidental incidents as children are active learners. Therefore, the staff of BLESS is trained in first aid. If a child incurs an injury while participating in the BLESS preschool program, the BLESS staff will survey the situation and make a decision to proceed with one of three first aid treatments:



1. For minor injuries (scratches, minor cuts, bumps), the BLESS staff will provide first aid to the child, along with lots of TLC. An accident report will be completed by the teacher and signed by the parent at the time of pick up. The report will be kept on file.
2. If the injury requires immediate medical attention, but is non-life threatening, the teacher will provide initial first aid and comfort the child until the parents can be contacted and arrive at the school. If neither of the parents can be reached, the individuals listed as emergency contacts will be phoned.
3. If the injury is life-threatening, an ambulance will be called and the teacher will accompany the child to the hospital. The parents will be contacted to proceed to the hospital. If neither of the parents can be reached, the individuals listed as emergency contacts will be phoned.



Emergency Evacuation Procedures

Ensuring the children know the appropriate procedures for evacuating the building is essential. Fire drills and safety procedures will be taught to the children and regularly practiced throughout the school year.

When the fire alarm is heard:

1. Children form a line at the classroom door.
2. Classroom teacher collects the attendance book.
3. Following the teacher, the children exit the building through the doors at the north east corner of the building.
4. The classroom aide will check play areas, centers, washrooms, close windows, turn off lights, and then follow the class.
5. The class will proceed to the designated meeting area where attendance will be taken.
6. The class will return to the building once permission has been granted by the appropriate authorities.
7. In the event that the children are unable to return to the building, they will proceed to *The Sierras* condominium complex (200 Bethel Drive). Parents will be contacted to pick up their children at this location.

Parental Involvement

Parents are invited to come to class and participate in the activities. Some specific ways in which parents can assist are:

- Reading with the children
- Helping with special projects, such as holiday crafts
- Cooking/baking
- Sharing about their career
- Assisting with in-school field trips
- Helping with holiday programs



Parents will be required to complete a volunteer information sheet, sign a volunteer confidentiality form, and submit a current RCMP criminal record check prior to becoming involved in the classroom. More information about how to be involved will be provided at the parent orientation session and during the first week of school.

Communication

Keeping the families of BLESS Preschool informed of classroom activities and events is extremely important. There will be a monthly calendar and newsletter sent home to share upcoming events and celebrate learning experiences.

Open communication between BLESS staff and parents is necessary. Following Matthew 18:15 – 17, parents are asked to speak directly with the teacher if there are any concerns. If an amicable solution can not be reached, please contact the Director of Children's Ministry. In the same way, BLESS staff will make arrangements to meet with a parent if there is any concern regarding a child's behaviour.

School Calendar

(Check monthly calendar for changes)

Sept. 8 & 9: Children's Exploration Time
Sept. 9: Parent Orientation Session at 7:00 pm
Sept. 10 & 11: Classes begin (staggered entry)

Oct 12: Thanksgiving: No school
Oct. 23: No school

Nov. 11: Remembrance Day: No School

Dec. 21 – Jan 3: Christmas Break

Jan. 4: Back to school
Jan. 29: No School

Feb. 4 & 5: No School
Feb. 15: Family Day: No school

Mar. 26: No School
Mar. 29 – April 5: Spring Break: No school

Apr. 2: Good Friday: No school
Apr. 5: Easter Monday: No school
Apr. 6: Back to school

May 21: PD Day: No school
May 24: Victoria Day: No school
May 27 & 28: Last day of classes

*BLESS Preschool follows the calendars of the Elk Island Public and Catholic School Systems as closely as possible to accommodate families with older children.

BLESS Preschool is located at:

Bethel Lutheran Church
298 Bethel Drive
Sherwood Park, AB
T8H 2C5
Phone: 780-417-7775
Fax: 780-417-7779
www.bethelchurch.com



Bethel Lutheran Church
Mission Statement:
Sharing the love of Jesus with a hurting world.

Should you and your family be looking for a church home, we would be pleased to have you join us at Bethel. For a list of programs and activities, please stop by the office to ask for a "Fall Flyer" or check out our website at www.bethelchurch.com