

**Little Blessings
4055 S. Book Road
Naperville, IL 60564
(630) 904-9898**

**Parent Handbook
2020-2021**



Little Blessings was established by Alleluia! Lutheran Church to provide children with a developmentally appropriate education in a loving Christian environment where they are nurtured and participate in faithful service to others.

*Our mission is to develop children socially, emotionally,
and academically in a loving, secure Christian environment.*

Little Blessings opened its doors in September of 1996 and is now serving approximately 270 families in the Naperville, Plainfield, Aurora, Oswego, and Bolingbrook areas. Not only do we provide children with high quality, structured, first school experiences, but we also give mom and dad opportunities for parent networking and connections with outside resources available to families.

Little Blessings offers a wide range of programs for children ages two through six. Each program provides the same nurturing care and professional quality that have been characteristic of Little Blessings since the preschool first began.

WE OFFER

- Twos – ages 2 and young 3's; 9:00am-1:30pm
- Preschool – ages 3-5; 9:00am – 11:30am, or 12:30pm-3:00pm
- Kindergarten – ages 5-6; 9:00 am – 11:30 am
- Preschool and Kindergarten Enrichment; 12:30pm – 3:00pm
- Extended Care Club – 7:00am-6:00pm

The building will be open for business during the hours of 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM. We follow the Naperville School District 204 calendar for holiday and vacation schedules.

Temporary COVID-19 policies appear in italics throughout this handbook

PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM

At Little Blessings, we use both an academic and a religious curriculum. Our academic curriculum, based on monthly theme planning, prepares children for kindergarten using the **Illinois State Board of Education Early Learning and Development Standards** as a guide. These learning standards include benchmarks in all the major subject areas that are used to develop specific activities within our lesson plans. Our academic program enables children to learn from participation in guided classroom experiences and in relationship building skills. Children will experience growth in communication; expression through music, movement, drama, art and literacy; responsibility for their own wellness, and caring for others in a classroom community.

The faith curriculum is Jerome Berryman's **Godly Play**, which is designed in a storytelling tradition. Small wooden figures are used as the story unfolds and comes to life in the mind of the child. **Godly Play** encourages children to seek and find answers to their faith questions. **Godly Play** respects the innate spirituality of children, and encourages curiosity and imagination in experiencing the joy of knowing God. Children also participate in monthly Children's Chapel, and classroom devotions.

Throughout the year, we teach children positive attitudes and skills such as empathy, cooperation, anger-management, and problem solving, along with awareness of the environment and international peace. The development of classroom communities is strongly encouraged through the use of specific games and activities. Each child is helped to feel that he or she is a valued and loved member of the group.

Our music program is based on the philosophy of the nationally known *Musikgarten* program and is presented by our music teachers in each of our classrooms every week. The music portion of the monthly Children's Chapel and our annual Christmas pageant, "Little Blessings Shares the Christmas Story," are also led our music teacher.

Little Blessings seeks to implement the above ideals and objectives through the diverse nature of its program, and in the warmth and nurturing care of a professional staff.

THE BLENDED AGE PRESCHOOL CLASSROOM

Little Blessings uses the blended 3, 4 and 5-year-old classroom. Despite chronological measuring sticks, children do not grow at the same rate, talk or walk at the same age, or reach the same social or emotional maturity at the same time. Good teaching requires that we consider each student as an individual. Listed below are some of the findings from research done at the University of Illinois on the multi-age classroom.

1. Older children develop a sense of social responsibility through the willingness to work with younger classmates.
2. The younger children see models of what they will become in the older children.
3. Individual differences are respected and valued. Children progress at their own pace.
4. Teachers emphasize small group and individual instruction.
5. Morale is increased because of the reduction of competition and rivalry.

6. Older children display responsibility for the welfare of the younger children and show an increasing responsibility for their own behavior.

ENROLLMENT PROCEDURE AND FEE PAYMENT

The registration fee, “Application for Admission” and “Tuition Agreement” must be submitted to reserve a class placement. The registration fee is non-refundable. We divide the total tuition into 9 monthly payments that are due prior to the month’s attendance. The first payment is due **September 1**. The next payments are due on the first of each month, October through May. A late fee of \$10 will be charged for payments received after the 10th of the month. Any deviation from this plan must be approved by the director.

Payments may be made by Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT), check or credit card or automatic credit card debit. There is a 2.75% service charge for credit card usage. If using EFT or automatic credit card debit, please obtain an enrollment form in the preschool office, or on our website at <http://www.littleblessings.org>. Payments will be deducted on the first day of each month, September through May. If you are using checks, payments may be mailed or dropped in the tuition box in the preschool office. There are no coupons or notification of tuition due other than posting on the first day of the monthly calendar in each newsletter. **PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO “LITTLE BLESSINGS PRESCHOOL”** and put your child’s name and class days in the memo column.

Families with more than one child enrolled will pay full tuition for the child paying the higher tuition and receive a 10% discount for any additional children.

Any check returned for any reason is subject to a \$20 bank charge; and future payments may be requested in cash or credit card. No refunds will be made for vacation days, sick days, school holidays or emergency closings. An extended absence from the program requires payment of monthly tuition. If the monthly tuition is not paid, Little Blessings cannot guarantee class placement upon the child’s return. Tuition will be pro-rated for children who begin classes during the school year.

INSURANCE COVERAGE

All children enrolled at Little Blessings are covered under a \$25,000 accident medical expense policy, and a \$10,000 accidental death and dismemberment policy. This plan is secondary to all other plans.

ADMISSION INFORMATION

- ◆ Our preschool program is for children 3 to 5 years old.
- ◆ Our Twos program is for children 2 to 3 years old.
- ◆ Our Kindergarten program is for children 5 to 6 years old
- ◆ We encourage faith, ethnic, and cultural diversity. Children do not have to be Christian.

- We encourage preschool children to be toilet trained, but we work with children according to their developmental abilities.

Our school is designed to accommodate a wide range of learning styles, behaviors, and developmental levels. However, this school functions as a general educational facility and our teachers are not certified in the areas of special needs with regard to learning, development, or behavior. If your child has needs that require constant individual attention, that may limit our ability to safely supervise the other children in the group, we may not be able to provide the specialized learning environment that your child may need. In such cases we may ask that you seek outside help for your child's specialized needs and/or that your child exit the program.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Little Blessings does not provide transportation to or from the preschool for any of the children. Transportation must be arranged by the parent/guardian or in a carpool. Children may not enter the classroom area any earlier than 5 min. before class begins.

Little Blessings will use a temporary drop off procedure until it is safe to use a car line. Parents will park their cars and walk their child to their designated door. At the door, staff will take the temperature of both the child and parent. The child will not be admitted if either the child or parent has a fever of 100.4 or greater.

At pick-up time, your child must be signed out by the parent/guardian picking up the child. We only release the children to a parent/guardian or other person authorized on your application. If anyone else is expected to pick-up your child, the preschool must be notified in writing by the parent. A person unknown to the staff will be required to show a photo ID in order for us to release the child to them.

For pick up, parents will line up at their designated door as Little Blessing's staff members walk each child to the door. ID's will be checked, and the authorized person will sign out the child.

All non-essential visitors are restricted from entering the building. Parents and authorized persons are permitted entrance at drop off and pick up (one person, wearing a mask) but are not permitted access to the classrooms.

Parents and authorized persons dropping off and picking up should not engage in hand shaking or physical contact.

If something happens which delays your arrival to pick-up your child, the preschool must be notified. Any parent who arrives 10 minutes past dismissal will be charged a \$5.00 overtime fee for every 5 minutes of tardiness. If you are going to be late, please call. The late fee can be waived up to 3 times per school year. We will keep your child in the preschool office for one hour after dismissal. During that hour the director will continuously try to reach the parents and/or the emergency contacts using the telephone numbers listed on the application. After one hour, if no one can be reached to pick up the child the police will be contacted for assistance. It is crucial that

your emergency contact numbers are up to date. It is Little Blessings' responsibility to keep your child safe until either the parents, emergency contacts or outside authorities arrive. As always our staff will be reassuring and sensitive to the child's feelings at this time and will never hold the child responsible for the situation.

HEALTH AND MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

Children who exhibit the following symptoms should not be sent to preschool:

- *fever of 100 degrees or more within the past 24 hours
- *diarrhea or vomiting within the past 24 hours
- *runny nose and/or cough/cold
- *sore throat, ear, stomach or muscle aches
- *skin rash, with fever or behavioral change
- *head lice
- *any known communicable disease
- *seems tired, lethargic, and not ready to play

COVID-19 Policy:

*Children who exhibit fever of 100.4 or more, and symptoms of respiratory illness such as cough, sore throat, or shortness of breath must stay home until fever free for three days without the use of fever reducing medicine and related symptoms have resolved. If there has been direct contact with a person with COVID, they must stay home for 14 days. **Children suspected of, or having been diagnosed as having COVID-19, may return to school with written documentation from their physician that they are no longer communicable. Parents must notify Little Blessings immediately if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in their immediate family.***

Little Blessings staff will perform daily temperature checks upon arrival for all students, teachers, and other persons entering the building. Anyone with a fever of 100.4 or greater will be excluded.

Children must wear face masks when tolerable except when eating, playing outdoors, and napping. Parents must supply three extra masks in their child's backpack. Extras will be available, if needed.

Please notify the Preschool (EXT 228) if your child will not be in attendance for any reason. Any communicable disease should be reported to the director so that other parents in your child's class and the Health Department may be notified. *Families must notify Little Blessings if someone in their home or a close contact tests positive for COVID-19. This information will be reported to IDPH, the CDC, and DCFS.. If a Little Blessings' child or family member tests positive for COVID-19, the school will close for three days. After a 24 hour wait period, deep cleaning will begin. The school will reopen following the direction of the Will County Health Department.*

In the event of any minor injury, basic first aid will be administered by the classroom staff. This includes the following: care for bumps or bruises, cuts, scratches, splinters and nose bleeds. The preschool staff will complete an accident report for the parent's review. If a child's injury is more serious, requiring emergency medical treatment, 911 is called and the child's file is pulled. The preschool staff will try to contact a parent/guardian and the child's physician. If a parent/guardian

or other authorized person cannot be reached an emergency representative will be designated by the director. If necessary, the child will be transported by ambulance to the emergency room (Edward Hospital is closest). The parent(s)/guardian(s) are financially responsible for costs incurred as a result of medical treatment.

LITTLE BLESSINGS IS CERTIFIED IN BASIC FIRST AID AND CPR.

If there are religious grounds for you refusing emergency medical treatment for your child, you must supply the director with the name of a certified practitioner who can be called in case of an emergency.

Little Blessings staff will administer medication only if the parents/guardian provides the medication in the original container with the pharmacy label showing the child's name, the date, the physician's name, the instructions, and the need for refrigeration. A "Permission to Administer Medication" form must be signed and renewed with any new medication. The staff person administering the dosage will initial the authorization and indicate the time each dosage was given.

Pest Management: Whenever possible, non-chemical methods (sticky traps and baiting) are used to control pests. Chemical methods **will not** be used when children are present, and if it becomes necessary to use chemical methods, parents will be notified at least two days prior to the weekend application.

FIELD TRIPS

For both safety and security reasons, rather than take the children off the Alleluia! campus for field trips, we invite special guests into the classroom. Police officers, dentists, nurses, storytellers and recording artists are just a few of our past guests.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

We request that all toys and personal belongings from home remain at home unless you are notified we are having a sharing time. During the transition time of the first few weeks of school, you may find it helpful to send your child with his or her favorite toy or "lovie." However, Little Blessings cannot be held responsible for lost or broken items from home.

Please dress your child in comfortable, easy-to-manage clothing for play. All clothing and belongings should be labeled with the child's name. Please see that your child has appropriate outdoor clothing for outdoor playtime, because we will be spending time outdoors everyday, weather permitting. Again, please label all mittens, hats, scarves, boots, etc. Children should keep a change of clothing (complete with underwear) in their backpacks in case an accident occurs. We do have a supply of clothing to loan should the need arise. If your child comes home wearing "borrowed" clothes, please remember to launder and return them to the preschool.

Children should have a pair of shoes at the school for their exclusive use while at Little Blessings.

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Personal information on Little Blessings and their families is kept confidential, and access is limited to staff designated by the director unless the parent(s) of the child has granted written permission for its disclosure. Staff includes teachers and any member of the preschool board. Parental permission in writing will be requested for your child to be included in any publicity or public relations photographs.

In compliance with the Missing Children's Record Act, we are required to review and photocopy a copy of your child's birth certificate or other reliable proof of the identity and age of your child. If a parent fails to provide this information Little Blessings is required by law to notify local law enforcement.

From time to time, parents request phone numbers and/or addresses of other children as friendships develop. If you do not want this information shared within the Little Blessings family, please notify the director so we can keep it confidential. It is our policy that staff phone numbers and addresses are not given out, except by the teacher herself. Teachers are, however, accessible through the director if you should need to reach them.

The Little Blessings Preschool staff is mandated by law to report or notify the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services of any suspected case of child abuse or neglect. All reports will be recorded and kept on file in the director's office.

DISCIPLINE

At Little Blessings, discipline operates in the context of forgiveness, with the understanding that God loves us even when we behave unacceptably. The preschool staff communicates this message by saying, "I don't like what you did just now, but I still care about you."

Developmentally appropriate discipline operates on an understanding of the whole child. Discipline does not mean punishment. It is positive guidance to encourage appropriate behaviors and to redirect children from negative and harmful practices into helpful positive ways of acting. The root word for discipline is the same as that for the words DISCIPLE and DISCIPLESHIP. Discipline is based on love, nurture, care, comfort and support. Its aim, ultimately, is self-control with God's help in a community where both expectation and forgiveness operate.

Expectations of appropriate behavior will be clearly defined, consciously taught, and modeled by the preschool staff. When children know what to do and are given guided practice in how to do certain things, they are more likely to exhibit positive behavior. Classroom routines will be explained and demonstrated. In helping children learn how to handle situations in a positive manner, the preschool staff will:

- provide a positive role model of acceptable behavior;
- tailor discipline techniques to the development level of the preschool age child;
- provide reinforcement for positive behavior;
- offer choices and affirm when a good choice has been made;
- redirect children away from problems toward constructive activity;

- include children in resolution of the conflict; and
- protect the safety of children and the staff.

In a classroom situation where a child demonstrates behavior not in keeping with our guided expectations of living, playing and working together, the teacher will remove the child to a chair away from the classroom activity, but still within the room. In most cases, this is quite effective because children are anxious to rejoin their community of friends.

In the event of persistent unacceptable behavior, the preschool staff will (1) observe and record the behavior of the child and the staff response to the behavior; and (2) develop a plan to address the documented behavior in consultation with the child's parent(s) and with other staff persons and professionals when appropriate. If a child is unable to adhere to acceptable behavior, the child may be asked to leave the program.

SNACKS, LUNCH BUNCH, AND BIRTHDAY TREATS

All snacks are chosen for nutritional value as Little Blessings strives to serve only healthy snacks. Parents will be used as grocery shoppers for their child's class on a rotating basis. Little Blessings teachers will provide the parents with class grocery lists one week prior to their week. Our Lunch Bunch meals are prepared on-site, in our commercial kitchen. Our menus utilize whole grains and fresh fruits and vegetables, and avoid processed and fried foods. Monthly menus are posted outside of the Enrichment classrooms, and can also be found on our website.

Birthdays are very special at Little Blessings. Birthday treats are welcome but **MUST BE UNOPENED COMMERCIALY PREPARED FOODS**. Parents are also invited to be present for their child's snack time celebration. Because of the increasing number of children sensitive to peanut products, Little Blessings is a "Peanut Free" preschool. We ask that you remember this when selecting special celebration snacks for your child's class, and when it is your turn to be the snack shopper. If you're ever in doubt about a snack being free of peanut products, please consult your child's teacher or the preschool office.

COMMUNICATION

On a daily basis, you may always communicate with the preschool by phone/voice mail or fax.

Phone: (630)904-9898

Fax: (630)904-8683

Director: Stephanie Smith, ext. 222

Assistant Director: Laurie Kabe, ext. 229

Administrative Assistant: Mary Ann Kondry, ext. 228

You may email the director (Stephanie Smith) at ssmith@alleluia.church.