

Bethel Early Learning Center

Parent Handbook



*All your children shall be taught by the LORD,
and great shall be the peace of your children.*

Isaiah 54:13

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Introduction

Children are a gift of the Lord. Psalm 127:3

Welcome to Bethel Early Learning Center (“Bethel ELC” or the “center”)! Our main goal is your child’s well-being. We believe each child is a unique gift from God. The center offers a friendly and flexible environment which facilitates your child’s transition from home to school. The center is licensed by the Texas Department of Family Protective Services and is staffed by qualified Christian teachers and aides to provide your child personal care, attention, guidance and love. Bethel ELC is governed by an independent Board of Directors which has the authority, power, and responsibility for the general management, control, and supervision of the affairs, business, activities, property and assets of the center. We look forward to a rewarding year working and playing with your child! We consider having your family at the center a great privilege and responsibility and we want you to feel confident and secure here.

Mission

To provide a loving Christian environment that nurtures the child’s spiritual, physical, emotional and social development. To serve all God’s unique children daily.

Philosophy

The center’s purpose is to provide high-quality early childhood education and extended childcare services within a warm and loving Christian environment which will simultaneously offer security and stimulate and challenge your child. We strive to promote the child’s development spiritually, physically, emotionally, socially, and intellectually by providing them with a happy, wholesome, and healthful schedule of activities. We strive to create an environment in which your child will thrive and to give you, the parent, peace of mind. Most of all, we endeavor to be partners with you in the care of your child. We encourage you to share with us insights about your child. We welcome your comments, concerns and questions. We also welcome you to visit the center at any time without notification.

Bethel Early Learning Center is a Ministry of Bethel Lutheran Church

Bethel ELC is an enriching, loving, and Christian environment for your child away from home. We approach every day with imagination, innovation and fun! Every curriculum level includes a variety of intriguing activities that stimulate early brain development with focus on creative play. Activities are designed to enhance children’s total development based on fun and educational thematic units and incorporated with our “Faith Alive” Bible curriculum.

Programs & Eligibility

Our programs are available on a fully non-discriminatory basis without regard to sex, race, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, or material status of the parents. Non-acceptance of a child for enrollment will be due only to limitations resulting from staff/child ratios and space restrictions established by the Texas State Department of Human Services.

Infants: Full Time Only, Starts at 6 weeks old
Lots of attention, conversation and nurturing
Stimulate growth and development throughout the daily routine
Focus on natural curiosity and energy.

Toddler: Full Time Only, 1-2 years old
Promote learning and discovery through play

Use age appropriate literature, music and educational materials
Focus on creativity, curiosity, senses and motor skills

Preschool: Full Time Only, 2-5 years old

Our preschool program is available to all children age 2- 5. Your child must be 2, 3, or 4, as the case may be, by September 1st. Your child's age on September 1st determines the class he/she will be enrolled in.

Preschool 2's:

Enriching circle times and centers
Encouraging an atmosphere of caring, sharing, love and hugs!
Focus on building language, social and motor skills

Preschool 3's: Enriching circle times & centers

Exploration and experimentation
Age appropriate math, science, art and language activities allowing each child to move at their own pace

Preschool 4's: Provide critical skills and experience needed for Kindergarten

Focus on literacy, math, science, social studies, music and creative art
Encourage thinking and problem solving
Develop an appreciation of books and reading
Focus on building a foundation for academic success and lifelong skills, love of learning and friendships!

Chapel

Every Wednesday one of Bethel's staff members, most likely a pastor, leads praise and worship in the sanctuary. The children in the 2-4 classes hear the stories of the Bible coupled with age-appropriate life applications.

Hours, Days, & Months of Operation

Bethel ELC is open Monday – Friday, 7:00 am – 6:00 pm, 12 months a year. A calendar of school closure and holidays will be provided to parents before the start of the academic school year, as well as the summer session.

Enrollment Procedures

At the time of your child's enrollment, you must present the following:

- Completed enrollment application
- Physical examination form and immunization record signed by a qualified physician stating your child is able to participate in the Center's activities. Doctor statements must be updated annually.
- Accident/Insurance Waiver (statement signed on the Enrollment Form)
- Parent's Guide to Day Care Acknowledgement;
- Annual registration fee

Withdrawal

You must give a 2 week notice if you would like to withdraw your child. Failure to give sufficient notice will result in a two week tuition charge with payment due in full on the child's last day.

Bethel ELC has the right to dismiss any student at any time if there are discipline problems, payment issues or they do not have current shot records.

Tuition

Registration Fee: All children must register each fall and each summer and pay the appropriate nonrefundable fee.

Payment is due on Monday each week. A \$20.00 late charge is assessed on Tuesday morning and each subsequent day until payment is made in full.

Extra Activities

Parents may choose to sign their child up for extra activities during the Bethel hours like gymnastics and etc. Bethel will release the children to the instructor and upon return from the activity sign the children back into Bethel's care.

Procedures for Release of Children

Bethel ELC doors remain locked at all times. At the time of enrollment, parents will set up a special code to the keypad outside the ELC entrance. This code will be specific to their family. Teachers will release students ONLY to their parents or regular pick-up person as designated by the parents. Each pick up person must be 18 years of age or older. If an individual other than the parents or regular pick-up person will be picking a child up from school, parents should notify the office. This person must present their ID to the staff, before the child will be released.

As long as children are in the building or on the playground they must follow the center's rule even if they have been signed out by a parent.

Your child needs to be picked up before 6:00. If your child is left in the center after closing, the staff will take the following measures:

1. Try to contact the parents and then the emergency contact
2. If unsuccessful after 15 minutes, the Bethel ELC Director will contact the appropriate authorities.

There will be a late charge of \$1.00 per minute after 6:00 until the child is picked up. Payment is due before the child may return.

Staff & Training

Each staff member has passed a criminal background check as well as FBI fingerprints. Caregivers must complete 24 training hours per year, be certified in CPR/1st Aid, and receive annual SIDS/Shaken Baby Syndrome instruction.

Holidays

Please refer to the school year calendar for exact dates.

The center will be CLOSED on the following holidays:

Christmas Week Labor Day Memorial Day
New Year's Eve Good Friday Easter Monday

New Year's Day 4th of July (W-F) Thanksgiving

Payment is still due on holidays except when the center is closed the whole week of Christmas.

CLOSED for two staff development days, usually Columbus Day and MLK Day or Presidents Day.

Inclement Weather

In the case of inclement weather, Bethel ELC generally follows the Dallas Independent School District regarding school closures. Closures will also be communicated by the Bethel ELC Director via email and/or app.

Illness & Exclusion from School

Children may not attend school or will be sent home from school for the following reasons:

- a. Oral or ear temperature of 100.5 degree or higher
- b. 2 episodes of vomiting within a 24-hour period
- c. 2 episodes of diarrhea within a 24-hour period
- d. Fever associated with Coxsackie Virus (Hand, Foot & Mouth Disease)
- e. Symptoms associated with Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)
- f. Lice, rashes, or other skin irritations which require medical attention.

Students may NOT return to school until they are symptom free WITHOUT medication for at least 24 hours and/or have started antibiotics and receive physician approval. The Bethel ELC Director will make the final decision whether or not the child is ready to return to school. Generally, the center adheres to the Communicable Disease Chart and Notes for Schools and Child-Care Centers as supplied by the Texas Department of State Health Services. Parents may also reference the "Healthy Child Care Texas" website for information on childhood illnesses and suggested quarantine lengths.

If a student becomes ill at school, he/she will be kept in the front office until the parents are able to pick the child up.

Procedure for Dispensing Medication

Bethel ELC staff is happy to administer medication to children while they are at school under the following guidelines:

1. Prescription medication must be in the original pharmacy container with the child's name and dosage on it.
2. Over the counter medication can only be administered if the instructions include the child's age or weight group. If the instructions state "Consult a Physician" the medication cannot be administered unless accompanied by a note from a physician stating the dosage to be given.
3. The parent must completely fill out the medication log, labels, and notifications each day the medication is to be administered.

Procedures for Handling Medical Emergencies

In the event of a medical emergency, Bethel ELC staff will utilize the following guidelines:

1. Ensure safety and security of child and situation as much as possible.
2. Seek guidance from the Bethel ELC Director.

3. If necessary, call 911.
4. Call parents and notify them of the situation and status.

Required Immunizations

Age at Enrollment	Required Immunizations
By 16 months	Three doses DTaP/DT/DTP Two doses each of polio and Hepatitis B Four doses PVC with one dose after 12 months of age One dose of MMR, Hib, and varicella on or after their 1 st birthday
By 19 months	Four doses DTaP/DT/DTP Three doses each of polio and Hepatitis B Four doses PVC with one dose after 12 months of age One dose of MMR, Hib, and varicella on or after 1st birthday
By 25 months	Four doses DTaP/DT/DTP Three doses each of polio and Hepatitis B Four doses PVC with one dose after 12 months of age One dose of MMR, Hib, and varicella, on or after 1st birthday One dose of Hepatitis A
By 43 months	Four doses DTaP/DT/DTP Three doses each of polio and Hepatitis B Four doses PVC with one dose after 12 months of age One dose of MMR, Hib, varicella on or after 1st birthday Two doses of Hepatitis A

Audits of student files are conducted periodically. You will be contacted by Bethel ELC staff if your child is late on any necessary vaccinations.

Immunization Exemptions

The law allows (a) physicians to write a statement stating that the vaccine(s) required is medically contraindicated or poses a significant risk to the health and well-being of the child or any member of the child's household, and (b) parents/guardians to choose an exemption from immunization requirements for reasons of conscience, including a religious belief.

Instructions for the affidavit to be signed by parents/guardians choosing the exemption for reasons of conscience, including a religious belief can be found at www.ImmunizeTexas.com. For children needing medical exemptions, a written statement by the physician should be submitted.

Immunization Provisional Enrollment

All immunizations should be completed by the first date of attendance. The law requires that students be fully vaccinated against the specified diseases. A student may be enrolled provisionally if the student has an immunization record that indicates the student has received at least one dose of each specified age-appropriate vaccine required by this rule. To remain enrolled, the student must complete the required subsequent doses in each vaccine series on schedule and as rapidly as is medically feasible and provide acceptable evidence of vaccination to the school.

Employees are recommended however, not required to have any vaccines at this time.

Hearing & Vision Screening

In accordance with the Texas Health Department, Bethel ELC will perform a vision and hearing screening on all students enrolled in the 4 year old classes during the spring of the school year. You will receive a letter and permission slip stating the cost and time or parents must present a copy of the screening results from pediatrician's office.

Procedures for Parent Notifications

Infant and Toddlers will have written daily reports. Individual parent/teacher conferences will be scheduled as needed. We encourage you to talk to the teacher regularly.

All parents will be emailed a weekly reminder, monthly newsletters and menus to keep them apprised of school activities. Parents will also receive emails about important events and reminders. In addition, parents will receive hard copies of various items in the child's folder located in the entrance hallway. Parents are encouraged to check their cubbies and parent files.

Discipline & Guidance Practices

Discipline must be:

1. Individualized and consistent for each child;
2. Appropriate to the child's level of understanding; and
3. Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control.

A caregiver may only use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, which include at least the following:

1. Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior;
2. Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements;
3. Redirecting behavior using positive statements; and
4. Using brief supervised separation or time out from the group, when appropriate for the child's age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age.

There must be no harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child. The following types of discipline and guidance are prohibited:

1. Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment;
2. Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training;
3. Pinching, shaking, or biting a child;
4. Hitting a child with a hand or instrument;
5. Putting anything in or on a child's mouth;
6. Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child;
7. Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language;

8. Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet with the door closed; and
9. Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age.

Most importantly, the LOVE and FORGIVENESS of Jesus Christ will be shared and emphasized in ANY discipline situation. Failure to adhere to the recommended measures may result in the dismissal of the student from the center.

Bullying

Bullying of children and/or adults is defined as repeated, targeted, aggression conducted by an individual (aggressor) or group (aggressor) against other(s) (targets). It is unwarranted and purposeful written, verbal, non-verbal or physical behavior (act or gesture) that has the potential to create an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment. Cyber bullying is willful and repeated harassment and intimidation of a person through the use of digital electronics. Bethel ELC has an anti-bullying policy and is committed to creating a school culture that encourages students, teachers and parents to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behavior, both experienced and witnessed. Bethel ELC is committed to addressing these incidents, and empowering students to be part of the solution. Students who are unable to cease bullying behavior after a reasonable period of counseling will be asked to leave the center at the discretion of the Bethel ELC Director.

Meals and Food Service Practices

Bethel provides a morning and afternoon snack for students in addition to a well-balanced lunch. Children should eat breakfast before coming to school. NO FOOD IS ALLOWED IN THE GYM.

If you choose to bring a lunch from home it needs to be healthy well balanced meal. Bethel is not responsible for parents not meeting FDA Childcare food guidelines if they chose to bring their child's lunch.

Dress Code

Bethel ELC students are NOT required to wear a school uniform. We do ask that parents observe the following guidelines when dressing their child for preschool:

1. Wear clothing that is easy for the child to work with on their own. Clothing with difficult snaps, buttons, and clasps do not help to encourage independence in the children.
2. Jewelry of any kind (outside of stud earrings) is not allowed as it is a safety hazard during outdoor play and a potential distraction in the classroom.
3. Closed-toe shoes are required due to outdoor play. However, alternative footwear, such as sandals with straps, may be worn for certain specified activities, as communicated by Bethel ELC staff. At a minimum, students should have an extra pair of closed-toe shoes on hand at the center.

Transportation

Bethel ELC does provide transportation for students in the 4-year-old classes and summer school aged children to field trips located off the Bethel ELC campus via the Bethel ELC School Bus. Parents must sign the transportation permission section of the enrollment agreement. Parents will be notified well in advance of any upcoming field trips that are planned. Parents are invited and encouraged to attend field trips.

Water Activities

Bethel ELC does not have a swimming pool on campus. The only water activities that may occur are limited to sprinkler play, wading pools, water slides, or water tables. If a field trip includes some type of water play, parents will be notified of this activity in advance.

Field Trips

Only the children in the 4's classes, as well as summer school-aged children attend field trips off campus. Parents are notified of ALL field trip details weeks in advance of the trip. Field trip transportation is provided via the Bethel ELC School Bus.

Animals

Bethel Lutheran Church may have animals on campus. The ELC students do not have direct contact or interaction with these animals.

Birthdays

Students are invited to celebrate their birthday or half-birthday during the school day by bringing a special snack to share with the class.

Birthday party invitations can be distributed at school. We do ask parents to observe the following guidelines with regard to invitations and guest lists.

1. It is not a requirement to invite the whole class.
2. If you DO invite the whole class, feel free to place the invitations in the student cubbies.
3. If you are unable to invite the whole class, please mail, email, or hand deliver the invitations to the parents of the specific children you will be inviting.

Toys

You may bring a toy/lovie to ease your child's transition from home to center, however we ask that you leave them in your child's cubby. Bethel ELC is not responsible for lost toys.

Parents

Parents are always welcome at the center. We are in partnership with you to ensure the best early learning experience possible for your child. However, parents must check in with Bethel ELC staff upon arrival.

Parent participation and involvement is especially critical in the administration and promotion of the center's various fundraising efforts. It is only through parental support, both in terms of volunteer hours and monetary donations, that the center is blessed with successful results each year.

A parent may not use any form of behavior or action to a student, teacher, fellow parent, school administrator, or other school personnel that is violent, profane, abusive, or disruptive. Any such behavior or action by a parent is in violation of the rules and regulations of the center. The Bethel ELC Board of Directors may declare the parent in breach of contract and may vote to terminate the enrollment of any child whose parents engage in such violent, profane, abusive, or disruptive behavior or action. The decision of the Bethel ELC Board of Directors on such matters is final.

Should a question or concern arise, please do not hesitate to speak with the Bethel ELC Director. You can stop by the office, call 214-348-8375, or email elcdirector@betheldallas.org to set up a time to talk. If for any reason a question or concern needs to be escalated, a listing of contact information for the Bethel ELC Board of Directors may be acquired by contacting Bethel's Director of Business Operations.

Cell Phones / Parking Lot

Parents are STRONGLY encouraged to keep Bethel ELC a cell phone free zone. Please complete your call/ email/ text before entering the parking lot so that you may give your full attention to your child and your surroundings when dropping off or picking up. Exercise extreme caution when entering and exiting the parking lot to ensure the safety of children. Children should never be left unattended in a vehicle or the parking lot.

State Licensing

Bethel ELC is a licensed child care facility by the State of Texas. A copy of the State Minimum Standards for Licensed Child Care Facilities is available at the front office. In addition, a copy of the ELC's most recent Licensing report is posted on the bulletin board outside the Bethel ELC Director's office.

To contact our local licensing office, please call the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services 8700 North Stemmons Freeway, Dallas, TX 75247 (214)583-4047 or visit their web site at www.dfps.state.tx.us.

Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-252-5400

Emergency Preparedness Plan

Bethel ELC practices required regular fire drills, severe weather drills, campus lock-down, and campus evacuation drills. In the event of any emergency, the first responsibility of the staff is to move the children to the designated safe area or alternate shelter which is known by all staff and teachers. The following locations are the designated safe areas for specific types of emergencies:

FIRE – parking lot on both sides of the building

SEVERE WEATHER – Toddler Classroom and Nap Room

CAMPUS LOCKDOWN – Return to or remain in current classroom location and close door. Close blinds and cover all windows as possible. Children and teachers shall remain silent until a senior member of the center staff opens the door and tells them the situation is “all clear.” Teachers shall not make this judgment on their own.

CAMPUS EVACUATION – Walk to Lowes (11333 E NW Hwy, 972-246-1447) or Highland Meadows Elementary (8939 Whitewing Ln, 972-502-5200) and, if being transported, Zion Lutheran Church and School (6121 E. Lovers Lane, 214-363-1630)

In any emergency where the children need to evacuate the classroom and relocate, the staff will lead the children according to one of the designated exit routes for that particular classroom as outlined on the diagram in each classroom. Teachers will count children to ensure ALL have exited, as well as bring their class rosters and emergency books with them and personally escort the children to the designated safe area to recount students once the class has arrived at the safe place. In addition, office staff will assist with student evacuation and will double check through each classroom before exiting the building to

ensure ALL have exited safely. The front desk staff on duty will grab the official Emergency Contact Information Notebook and bring it to the safe place. The Bethel ELC Director and/or Bethel's Director of Business Operations will contact the appropriate local authorities.

Child Abuse & Neglect

Child abuse and neglect are horrible and serious issues. Bethel ELC employees receive annual training on recognizing signs of abuse and neglect. Posters are located on the parent bulletin boards with information about reporting abuse and neglect.

If you suspect abuse or are a victim of abuse, please contact the following immediately, The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services or law enforcement at **1-800-252-5400** to make confidential reports.

Breastfeeding

Bethel ELC supports mothers in their efforts to breastfeed. Human milk is the best source of milk for Infants. Mothers have the right and opportunity to provide breast milk to their child while the child is in care. Bethel ELC provides a private, comfortable place in our Infant Room with a rocking chair where mothers may breastfeed their child if they desire.

Gang Free Zone

The Texas Penal Code states that certain gang-related criminal activity or engaging in organized criminal activity within 1000 feet of a Licensed Child Care Center is a violation of the law and is therefore subject to increased penalty under state law.

Supply List

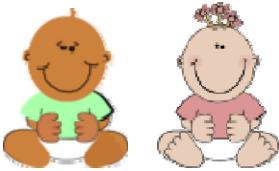
Please bring the following supplies for your child on or before their first day of school.
Please replenish the necessary items as needed. Thank you!

Infants



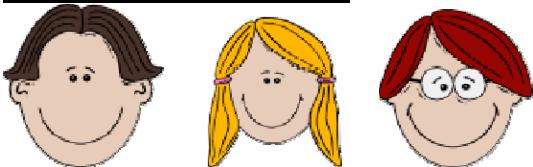
1. Baby wipes- 3 boxes per month
2. Diapers (as needed)
3. Formula/ Breast Milk, juice, Baby food & snacks according to your infants eating habits as needed (school snacks provided when age appropriate)
4. Bottles & sippy cups (when needed) labeled with name
5. 3 Bibs for the classroom supply or personal if you prefer
6. Multiple changes of clothes & socks labeled with name/ change out as needed with bigger sizes and for various seasons
7. 4 boxes of tissue/ Kleenex
8. Baby Lotion if needed
9. Diaper Rash Ointment/Cream * Replenish as needed

Toddlers



1. Baby wipes- 4 boxes per month
2. Diapers as needed
3. Pillow and Blanket for nap time labeled with name
4. Multiple changes of clothes & socks (change out for seasons & bigger size as needed)
5. 5 LARGE bibs/ Towel style preferable (for classroom supply)
6. 4 boxes of tissue/Kleenex
7. Diaper Rash Ointment/cream *Replenish as needed

Preschool (2's, 3's & Pre K)



1. 1 SMALL pillow and blanket for nap time (labeled with name) * washed & returned weekly
2. Change of clothes/socks & shoes labeled with name
Multiple changes for children who are accident prone and/or are potty training in the 2's/
pull ups for nap time only if needed
3. 2's class only- 5 pair Potty training pants (extra thick cotton) & 2 pkgs. of wipes per month