

2025-2026 Parent Handbook



Train children in the way they should go;
when they grow old, they won't depart from it.

Proverbs 22:6

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218.879.3510

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www.stmatthewsesko.org/little-esko-preschool

Little Esko Lutheran Preschool is fully licensed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services. Little Esko Lutheran Preschool does not discriminate on the basis of religion, race, color, or national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship programs, and other school-administered programs.

Our Mission:

Little Esko Lutheran Preschool is committed to providing a licensed preschool program that promotes strong school readiness skills for children ages 3 to 5. Each child will be encouraged to grow in spirit, mind and body through God's grace and the love of Jesus.

Our Goals:

Our staff, with the support of St. Matthews congregation, strives to help children:

- experience God's unconditional love
- build a positive self concept
- practice both fine and large motor skills
- learn to relate to other children and adults
- expand his/her understanding of the world
- develop language skills to effectively communicate
- express emotion through art, music and dramatic play
- channel curiosity and energy into a love of learning
- foster independence

Our Philosophy:

We believe that:

- each child is uniquely created by God
- ability is not based solely on age; every child's needs must be met individually
- a Christ-centered curriculum is beneficial to the overall development of every child
- parent(s) are an integral part of the preschool program
- children need positive Christ-centered relationships with caring adults

***Parents, do not treat your children
in such a way as to make them angry.
Instead, raise them with
Christian discipline and instruction.
Ephesians 6:4 (GNT)***

Daily Schedule

This is a tentative schedule; we make adjustments as necessary.

8:15-8:40	Welcome Sign-in, wash hands, question of the day, manipulative
8:40-9:00	Circle Time/Large Group Calendar, weather, review weekly theme
9:00-9:10	Bathroom Break
9:10-9:30	Small Group Theme exploration at the table, letter and number recognition, colors, shapes
9:35-9:50	Chapel Bible story, prayer, scripture memorization Pastor-led teaching weekly
9:50-10:00	Bathroom Break
10:00-10:20	Snack <i>water is served and available throughout the session</i>
10:20-10:50	Large Motor Activity Outside on the playground when weather permits; running, jumping, climbing, etc. The Family Life Center is available for inside activities when it's too cold or raining.
10:50-11:30	Free Choice of Center Exploration Block play, shelf toys, writing center, puzzles, etc.
11:30-11:45	Closing in the Classroom Clean up, closing prayers, songs, story time
11:45	Dismissal

School Policy Information

- Our school is licensed for 20 children in each class session. Children will be supervised at all times. There is one teacher and one assistant teacher in each morning class session.
- We serve children ages 3 - 5 years. Children must be 3 years of age by September 30 of the enrollment year admitted. Little Esko Lutheran Preschool enrolls students of any religion, race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of religion, race, color, or national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship programs, and other school-administered programs. LELP will work to the best of its ability to accommodate each child's needs, including special needs. In regards to ESL children, LELP has a Spanish-speaking volunteer who can assist teachers. A translation service will be used for other languages.
- Our weekly schedule is Monday through Friday, September through May. LELP follows the Esko Public School Calendar for holidays and emergency closings. If Esko schools have a **scheduled** late start or early dismissal, **we will hold class as usual**.
- Children attend class for three hours and 30 minutes for a two, three or five day session weekly:
 - ◆ 5 days: 8:15-11:45am, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday
 - ◆ 3 days: 8:15-11:45am, Monday, Wednesday and Friday
 - ◆ 2 days: 8:15-11:45am, Tuesday and Thursday

The two-day weekly session is intended for 3-year-olds. The three-day and five-day sessions are geared toward children who will attend kindergarten the following year.

- Please familiarize yourself with our behavior policy. Children are expected to be potty trained. We understand toilet training is a learning experience for preschoolers in which they develop skills with practice and over a period of time; accidents may happen. Please bring extra clothing for your child in a labeled ziplock bag.
- Children should wear comfortable play clothes that allow freedom to participate in all activities. While every attempt is made to keep clothing clean during art activities, LELP is not responsible for stains. The playground surface is wood chips, which stick to materials like fleece. An extra pair of shoes should be kept at preschool. Please label all outer garments, including hats and boots. The school keeps a small supply of extra clothes; please wash and return anything worn home by your child.
- Snacks will be served during each class session. Should the snack budget become depleted during the year, you may be asked for additional monies. If you would like to bring something special for a birthday or other occasion, please talk to one of the teachers. All special snacks must be store purchased and in original packaging when brought to the classroom. Please bring in a reusable

water bottle each day. Water bottles must be labeled with the child's first and last name. Water will be provided if the water bottle is forgotten.

- Nutrition policy: Teachers will offer a fruit or vegetable as well as a whole grain, protein or dairy serving for snack time, along with water. Preschoolers are offered the snack items that we serve but are not required to take them on his/her napkin. Teachers will display healthy eating habits to preschoolers and frequently talk about good nutrition and its benefits to our bodies.
- Parent-teacher conferences are offered twice during the year. This is an opportunity to meet with the teachers and review documented progress and development of your child's physical, social, emotional, intellectual and spiritual growth. Teachers are unable to have lengthy conversations during class, but are always happy to discuss questions or concerns outside of class time. Please schedule time with one of the teachers.
- The following information must be turned in to secure your child's enrollment:
 - Registration
 - \$30 non-refundable registration fee
 - Emergency and Identification form
 - Immunization form
 - Health Care Summary (completed once by new students) and signed by your doctor
 - Consent form
 - Tuition and Fees Payment Plan form
 - "All About Me" form
- Tuition for the school year is based on actual costs of operating the program including operational costs, salaries, insurance, workers' compensation, social security, equipment, license and expendable supplies. No credit on tuition is given for regularly scheduled school holidays and vacations.
Tuition is due the 1st of each month September-June. A \$5 late fee will be assessed after the 5th of the month. The snack fee is due prior to the start of the school year.
 - 5 days/week: \$320/month and one-time \$90 snack fee (Full year \$2,736)
 - 3 days/week: \$192/month and one-time \$50 snack fee (Full year \$1,641.60)
 - 2 days/week: \$128/month and one-time \$40 snack fee (Full year \$1,094.40)Full year tuition paid at the beginning of the school year will receive a 5% discount (reflected above).
Full year tuition must be paid by check or cash only; no exceptions.
- Monthly payments can be made online via the LELP page on the church website, placed in the payment box in the classroom, or sent via U.S. postal service. When paying with a credit card, please add 3% to cover processing fees (i.e., add \$5.76 to the \$192 tuition). All checks should be made payable to **St. Matthews LELP**. Monthly electronic withdrawals from your bank account can be set up by completing a Simply Giving form available from any teacher or enroll on the church website.

- ➔ Any family who falls behind on tuition will be initially notified by phone and then followed up by mail. Please talk to any teacher immediately if you are unable to make tuition payments. Tuition assistance may be available through St. Matthews.
- ➔ Completed registration implies your intent to remain enrolled for the full year. A 30-day notice is required should circumstances arise that forces you to withdraw enrollment. **You will be responsible for a full month of tuition if you provide less than a 30-day notice.**
- ➔ Pets are welcome to visit the classroom if beneficial to all children. All visits must be pre-arranged with the teachers and written consent given by every parent before any pet visits. There will be no pets in the classroom without prior consent.

School Safety Policies

- ❖ We expect timely arrival and departure. The preschool door will open at 8:15 am; we offer a staggered drop-off time of 8:15-8:30 am; class begins at 8:30 am. It is always in the best interest of your child to be on time. If a child is not picked up within 10 minutes of class end, we will call the parent and emergency contacts. A \$10 late charge will be imposed; after 15 minutes the charge will increase to \$15. In the event that none of the contacts can be found, Human Services and/or Esko police will be called to take care of the child until an authorized adult can be found. At no time will any child be left alone.
- ❖ The front doors to the church will be unlocked from 8:15-8:30 for drop-off. The doors will then be locked. If you are later than 8:30, press the button and the office staff will buzz you in. The doors will be unlocked for pickup just before 11:45.
- ❖ No child will be released to a person not authorized by a parent. Any changes in authorization must be provided by written instructions. If an unauthorized person, an incapacitated person, or a person suspected of abuse attempts to pick up your child, teachers will refuse to release the child and parent(s) will be contacted immediately. When a parent cannot be reached in these situations, LELP will call emergency providers. It is the parent(s) responsibility to ensure that a current phone number is in the child's file.
- ❖ Notify the school when your child will be absent. Email us at lelpreschool@gmail.com or call 218-879-3510.
- ❖ Medical and immunization forms are required by the Minnesota Department of Human Services when preschool begins in September. The health form must be signed by a physician. If applicable, please submit a signed statement of parental objection to immunization or a medical exemption.
- ❖ Children must arrive healthy each day. All children will be given a visual health check upon arrival at school. Do not send your child to school if he/she exhibits the following symptoms of illness:

A fever of 100 or higher	Vomiting
Abdominal pain	Diarrhea
Conjunctivitis (pink eye)	Strep throat
Undiagnosed rash	Chicken pox
Impetigo	Ringworm
Scabies	Head lice
Significant respiratory distress	Significant nasal drainage
Unexplained lethargy	Positive COVID-19 test

A sick child should not return to school until 24 hours after the symptom or condition has subsided and/or has been treated with prescribed medication. Children must be fever-free for 24 hours, without fever reducing medication, before returning to school.

- ❖ Any child who appears to have symptoms of illness during the day will be separated from the group. The parent(s) will be contacted and asked to pick up the child. Until the child is picked up, he/she will stay in a supervised isolation area equipped with a cot and blanket to wait for the parent's arrival. If a responsible adult cannot be found, we will contact the health care source stated on the enrollment form. If necessary, we will call 911.
- ❖ Communicable diseases — including but not limited to — COVID-19, strep throat, head lice, pink eye, 5th disease, roseola, chicken pox, ringworm, scabies and impetigo, **require notification**. Parents must notify the school within 24 hours if the child has a communicable disease. The school will notify all families if any child comes to school with a communicable disease.
- ❖ All allergies must be clearly documented on the school forms and verbally communicated to teachers. This includes food allergies, insect bites, medications and animals. Please provide detailed written information regarding the child's reaction and necessary treatment to any allergen.
- ❖ LELP teachers are unable to administer any medication without a completed Medication Administration Record sheet. All prescription medication that will be administered at school must be in its original prescription container and be accompanied by a note from the parent/guardian. All non-prescription medication must be accompanied by a note from a physician with written instructions.
- ❖ Teachers are mandated by state law (Minnesota Statute 626.556, Subd.3) to report child abuse. Please refer to the policy on maltreatment of minors mandated reporting policy for DHS licensed programs that was distributed at the start of the school year.
- ❖ The classroom will be inspected daily for potential hazards. It is our primary concern to provide a safe environment for children and teachers.
 - All electrical outlets are capped. Open flame or any heat source that could injure a child will not be used within his/her reach.
 - Cleaning supplies are kept in a cupboard with a child-safety lock.
 - Chewing gum is prohibited. Children must be seated when eating food.
 - Any potential suffocation objects, such as plastic bags, are kept out of reach of children.

- ❖ Minor injuries will be washed with soap and water, and covered with a band-aid; a cold pack will be applied as necessary. In case of serious injury, we will immediately contact the parent and then the emergency contact. If we cannot reach any of them, we will call the child's source of medical care listed on the emergency form. If necessary, we will call an ambulance; parent(s) will assume responsibility for all expenses. A signed consent form agreeing to this provision will be kept on file at the school. Any injuries requiring care beyond staff abilities will be documented. All LELP teachers are trained in CPR and First Aid.
- ❖ If a child is missing from the classroom, the following procedure will be followed:
 1. Alert and utilize church staff to search entire area inside and out.
 2. Teacher will contact parent, followed by alternative contact.
 3. Teacher will contact authorities, if child remains missing.
- ❖ Staff are trained in fire prevention, the use of fire extinguishers, and other procedures to follow in the event of a fire. Teachers and children will leave the preschool room via the outside exit door. If this door is not accessible, teachers will lead the children out the front door. Teachers will take attendance once the class has reached a safe location. Children and teachers will remain in this location until given the "all clear" sign. Safety drills are conducted monthly to familiarize children with the procedure.
- ❖ Safety and security: There is a camera in the classroom above the classroom door. The church office staff is able to see what is going on in our classroom but nothing is recorded during the school day.
- ❖ When Esko schools are closed or have a delayed start due to weather, LELP will be closed. Closings are announced on local radio and television stations. If Esko schools close early due to weather, call the church (218-879-3510) for LELP pick up information. We will make every effort to contact you if you have not first contacted us. A staff person will wait with any children until parent(s) arrive.
- ❖ Tornado drills are conducted monthly in September, April and May as required by law. Our shelter for tornadoes and other natural disasters are the bathrooms on the east side of the church near our classroom.
- ❖ LELP may opt to take walking field trips occasionally. LELP does not transport children. Written parental permission will be obtained from each family prior to any field trip.
- ❖ Each child's birthday is acknowledged in class on the date selected by the parent(s). Distribution of birthday party invitations are allowed only when the entire class is invited to the party. A class list of all families who have consented to release address, phone and e-mail information will be sent home in September. The consent form is part of the parent packet.
- ❖ Pictures are periodically taken to publicize LELP activities in local media, St. Matthews publications, LELP Facebook page, or LELP brochures/flyers. Any such photography is supervised by teachers. Only those children whose parent(s) have signed the consent form will be photographed.

Behavior Policy

The Little Esko Lutheran Preschool approach to discipline follows the Golden Rule: **Do Unto Others as You Would Have Them Do Unto You.** Children and adults will be respectful to each other and their surroundings. Specifically, this means:

- ✓ Listen quietly during designated times
- ✓ Self-control of hands and feet
- ✓ Use appropriate language (no rude words, name-calling or back-talk)
- ✓ Be aware of how individual actions affect others
- ✓ Participate fully in preschool activities

Our goal is to help young children develop safe and appropriate ways of interacting with others and the environment. At the preschool level, acceptable behaviors take time to learn. We do NOT expect children to be perfect; rather we give each child opportunities to follow guidance and correct any negative behaviors. These include:

- positive modeling of appropriate behavior
- providing choices for acceptable alternatives
- redirection to a new activity with clear explanation of the misbehavior
- temporary separation of child from conflict

The health and safety of children and staff are of utmost importance. Any situation that impacts health and safety will be handled with immediate teacher intervention, and use of natural and logical consequences. Consistent, willful misbehavior will result in a related consequence and discussion with the child regarding how to correct the behavior.

LELP strives to keep parents updated on their children's progress in school. In addition to twice yearly conferences, LELP staff may send notes home, visit with parent(s) at arrival/dismissal and /or randomly award "Good Behavior" notes.

Persistent Unacceptable Behavior

Any persistent misbehavior that requires an increased amount of staff guidance and time will be documented in a separation log. Information about the behavior and the staff response to the behavior will be included. LELP staff will arrange a meeting with the parent(s) to discuss the behavior and develop a resolution. Upon parental permission, LELP staff may request the Special Education teacher from the Esko School District to observe the child and provide guidance. If the behavior is unable to be modified despite school, parental and outside resource efforts, LELP reserves the right to dis-enroll the child from the preschool.

Prohibited Actions

Corporal punishment will never be used as a disciplinary technique. Such actions include, but are not limited to, rough handling, shoving, hair or ear pulling, shaking, slapping, kicking, biting or pinching, hitting and spanking. LELP believes these actions are not acceptable forms of discipline and will never use any of them.

Children will not be subjected to emotional stress. LELP will not allow name-calling, ostracism, shaming, making derogatory remarks about a child or child's family, or using language that threatens, humiliates or frightens a child.

There will be no separation of any child from the group, except within rule requirements specifically when less intrusive methods were ineffective.

LELP also prohibits

- punishment for lapses in toilet training;
- withholding food, light, warmth, clothing or medical care as a punishment for unacceptable behavior;
- the use of physical restraint, other than to physically hold a child where containment is necessary to protect a child or other from harm; and
- the use of mechanical restraints, such as tying.

If prohibited actions are observed by staff, the employee involved will be immediately terminated.

Separation From the Group

A child will only be separated from the group if other less intrusive methods of guiding the child's behavior were ineffective. Separation will also be used in the event a child's behavior threatens the well-being of other children or staff. If separation is deemed necessary, the child will remain in an unenclosed part of the classroom where the child can be seen and heard by staff. The child's return to the group is contingent upon the child's stopping or bringing under control the behavior that precipitated the separation.

Children with Developmental Disabilities or Related Conditions

For children with developmental disabilities or related conditions, or children under the age of five as specified in Minnesota Rules, parts 9525.0004 to 9529.0036, the standards governing the use of aversive and deprivation procedures in Minnesota Rules, parts 9525.2700 to 9525.2810 apply.

Grievance Policy

In the event of a grievance concerning behavior techniques at LELP, these are the steps that will be taken to address the situation.

1. Arrange a meeting outside of class time with the LELP director to discuss the situation and develop a plan of action.
2. The LELP director will discuss the agreed-upon plan of action with LELP staff and possibly LELP board members.
3. If the grievance is not resolved to the parent(s) satisfaction, the parent(s) may request to meet directly with the LELP board. LELP board members will conduct research as necessary to peaceably resolve concerns.

LELP is committed to maintaining open communication with parent(s). Please keep LELP staff apprised of any situation outside of preschool that may impact your child's behavior. When LELP staff and parent(s) work together, many (if not most) behavior issues can be resolved without filing a grievance.

Additional Important Information

- ★ Each teacher is qualified for her position as required by law. Teachers attend yearly in-service training in various aspects of child development; abusive head trauma and maltreatment; and periodic CPR/First Aid training. Although LELP maintains a roster of substitute teachers, it is not

always possible to secure a trained teacher. It is allowed by law to use an unqualified substitute on occasion. Interested parents are encouraged to volunteer as substitute teachers.

- ★ LELP carries required Minnesota insurance policies based on code 8868 (Professional Employees and Clerical).
- ★ Please review the consent form in the parent packet. Permission is specifically needed for:
 - a. Field trips
 - b. Pictures taken for publicity purposes. No permission is needed if the picture is taken by a newspaper.
 - c. Authorization to transport your child to a doctor or hospital, and the treatment of your child in the event of an emergency.
 - d. Release of your address, phone, and email to other families at school.
 - e. Allowing pets in the classroom.
 - f. Use of hand sanitizer.
 - g. Use of sunscreen provided by LELP.
- ★ Parents are expected to read and retain this information for future reference. Supplemental notes and newsletters sent home monthly should also be regularly read. We welcome your suggestions, comments and constructive criticism, as well as financial and moral support. It is our hope that, as you learn what and how we teach, you will find opportunities to follow up and incorporate these concepts at home. Parents are invited to visit at any time.
- ★ Volunteers are a tremendous asset to LELP. Assistance is needed for planning field trips, programs, public relations, recruiting future students, fundraisers and other activities. The LELP Board meets monthly. Please consider joining the board; LELP bylaws dictate the board have a minimum of six members. Volunteers are also welcome in the classroom to help with projects or snacks, read a story, or just lend an extra hand! We would greatly appreciate knowing ahead of time when you intend to join the classroom.

Important Phone Numbers

Carlton County Department of Human Services	218.879.4511
Community Memorial Hospital, Cloquet	218.879.4641
Minnesota Department of Human Services	651.431.6500 (Licensing Division)
Raiter Clinic, Cloquet	218.879.1271
St Matthews Lutheran Church	218.879.3510