



Preschool Handbook

2024-2025



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Mission, Vision and Objective

Our Mission

Sonshine Preschool exists to reflect the light of Jesus in the community and in cooperation with families, to equip children with the power of God's Word and academic excellence.

Our Vision

In order to carry out its mission, Sonshine Preschool commits itself to the following vision statements:

1. To assist parents in fulfilling their God-given responsibility of bringing up their children in the training and instruction of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4)
2. To help children develop their talents and abilities to use in their life of thankful service to their Lord.
3. To encourage our children and their families to be life-long learners of God's Word.
4. To reach out into our community with the Gospel message.
5. To provide a safe, nurturing environment with high academic standards where children are encouraged to strive for excellence.
6. To provide quality instructional methods, materials, and a comprehensive curriculum all taught in the light of God's Word.
7. To work in close cooperation as teachers, principal, parents, pastors, and support staff in realizing this vision.

Our Objective

Our objective is to work together with parents to help our children grow intellectually, physically, spiritually, and socially.

1. **Intellectually:** Children at *Sonshine* Preschool receive a high quality, well-rounded Christ-centered education that prepares them for a lifetime of service to God and neighbor. All subjects are taught in the light of God's Word. It is made clear that God's Word applies to every aspect of our lives.

2. **Physically:** Recess and free play are ways in which children can grow physically and use their bodies to glorify God. Children learn that their bodies are a gift from God and that they accept responsibility for their health, safety, recreation, and rest.

3. **Spiritually:** Children learn to grow in the knowledge and grace of God, trusting in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior from sin through His suffering, death and resurrection from death. Children learn to live a life of service to Jesus, who lived, died and rose for them.

4. **Socially:** Children learn to recognize all people as God's creation and to show kindness, love, and respect to their peers, family members, pastors, teachers, and government authorities.

Our Philosophy and Purpose

God spoke through Solomon saying, "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." (Proverbs 22:6)

Training children in the Word is primarily the duty of parents. To help parents, Emmanuel Lutheran Church has established a Lutheran Elementary School and Preschool. It exists to provide something that our public school system cannot provide: a Christ-centered education.

Sonshine Preschool strives to teach young minds, and prepare young hearts. We use age-appropriate established methods for developing school and spiritual readiness. We understand that each child is uniquely formed by God and our responsibility is to teach and train each child in the way he or she should go. Our teachers take special care to ensure each child's development through self-guided exploration, hands-on learning and teacher-directed instruction.

Our History

Emmanuel Lutheran School has been serving the Tempe and Phoenix valley for over 40 years. We are a private Christian school, accredited by one of the nation's largest private school bodies (Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod) which has been educating children for over 150 years. The WELS schools system is among the largest private school systems in the nation.

Emmanuel Lutheran School and Sonshine Preschool are part of the ministry and mission of Emmanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church which is a member congregation of the WELS. Our church directly maintains and supports both our elementary school and preschool.

Control and supervision of the school is exercised by the voting membership through its Church Council and the Emmanuel School Board (ESB).

Sonshine Preschool...

...teaching young minds and preparing young hearts.

Our Program

Curriculum

The goal of our preschool is to provide age-appropriate learning experiences that assist children in their comprehensive development to prepare them for kindergarten and beyond. We believe this is accomplished through creating an environment of Christian love and respect. We acknowledge that children are active learners, and we provide an atmosphere that supports children's learning through hands-on activities. Additionally, our teachers support each child's individual needs and abilities.

We provide experiences and stories that encourage children to explore God's world, to solve problems, and to express feelings. Through the implementation of a well-established and research-supported curriculum, our teachers assist children in developing key areas that include: language and literacy, mathematics, social and emotional development, physical development and health, creative arts, and science.

Our ultimate goal is that these learning experiences will assist parents in the nurturing of their children's spiritual, intellectual, physical, emotional, and social development.

Our Daily Activities Include:

- Devotion: Bible stories, songs and crafts
- Circle and Story Time
- Activity Time: Teacher directed, small group and free exploration
- Outside Play
- Quiet Activity Time
- Snack
- Music Exploration: Exploring the joy of music through instruments and song
- Movement: Develop coordination skills, balance and physical fitness

Staff

The preschool staff consists of dedicated Christian teachers who are members of Emmanuel Lutheran Church or another church congregation in fellowship with Emmanuel. Teachers have their certifications or degrees in education or a closely-related field and all have experience caring for and teaching young children.

Class Size

We strive for a small teacher/child ratio to ensure a high level of care and attention to each child. The recommended teacher/child ratio for 3 year olds is 1:13 and the ratio for 4—5 year olds is 1:15. A floater assistant is shared between the two classes. The aide offers extra assistance during special class projects, potty accidents

and offers an extra set of hands when needed. If the class size exceeds the recommended ratios, additional assistant staff will be utilized.

Bible Information Class

The Christian faith is taught in our school therefore, we warmly invite and highly encourage all parents, who are not members of our congregation or another WELS church, to take our **Bible Information Class (BIC)**. The class is offered several times throughout the year. We would like all parents to become familiar with what is taught in our classrooms.

These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children.

Deuteronomy 6:6-7

Preschool Policies

Admissions

Children ages 3-5 are welcome to attend *Sonshine* Preschool.

All children enrolling in the 3-year-old class must be 100% potty trained and must be 3 years old before his/her first day of school. Enrollment desired after the beginning of the school year is subject to the preschool director's discretion.

To enroll in our Pre-K class (4-year-old), your child must be 4 by September 1 and must be potty trained.

Our preschool is operated on a non-discriminatory basis and no one shall be excluded from enrollment because of race, color, religion, national and ethnic origin.

Children with Special Needs

We strive to offer a program that will nurture and facilitate the growth of each child to his/her highest potential. Therefore, after evaluation between teacher, Director and parent, we will determine if our preschool can meet the needs of the child. All children must be able to participate in a group setting without one-on-one help from a teacher.

Preschool services are provided by all school districts for children ages 3-5 who qualify for special education in the

areas of speech/language delays, vision handicaps, hearing handicaps, and mental or physical handicaps. Districts provide screening to assist in identifying children for special services.

Registration

Registration materials will be available by the first week in March and registration will continue until classes are full.

A non-refundable registration fee and your child's

Immunization Schedule are due at the time of enrollment.

Priority of registration will be given in the following order:

1. Children whose families are currently enrolled
2. Children whose families are members of Emmanuel Lutheran Church
3. Children whose families are members of other WELS/ELS churches
4. Children whose families have no church affiliation
5. Children whose families are members of other Christian churches

Tuition

All families are required to enroll into FACTS, our tuition management company. Once enrolled, you may check your personal account or make payments online from the convenience of your home or office anytime. You may choose from the following:

1. Single payment plan - full tuition payment on or before **August 1, 2024**.
2. Two payment plan - $\frac{1}{2}$ tuition payment due on or before **August 1, 2024** and the remaining tuition due on or before **January 1, 2025**.
3. Monthly payment plan- Families may choose to make payments on either the 1st or 15th of each month with the first payment due in August.

Incidentals such as Lion's Den can be paid directly to Emmanuel. Any unpaid balance of tuition or other school fees over 30 days will be subject to late fee or monthly finance charge. We have every desire to work with families when hardships or changes occur. *Because Emmanuel is the final authority in overseeing any changes, it is very important that you contact our Bookkeeper, Darcy Meyer, or the Principal if such situations arise.*

Class Schedule

| Time | 2 Day Program (T/Th) |
|-------------|-----------------------------|
| 8:15-11:30 | Half Day |
| 8:15-12:15 | Half Day WITH Lunch Bunch |
| 8:15-3:00 | Full Day |

| Time | 3 Day Program (M/W/F) |
|-------------|------------------------------|
| 8:15-11:30 | Half Day |
| 8:15-12:15 | Half Day WITH Lunch Bunch |
| 8:15-3:00 | Full Day |

| Time | 5 Day Program |
|-------------|---------------------------|
| 8:15-11:30 | Half Day |
| 8:15-12:15 | Half Day WITH Lunch Bunch |
| 8:15-3:00 | Full Day |

Attendance

Please contact your child's teacher when your child will be absent from school. Please be aware that there will be **NO make-up days or tuition adjustments** made for closed holidays, school breaks or days off due to illness and/or personal reasons. If you wish to change your child's preschool schedule, Sonshine Preschool requires that you notify your child's teacher and the preschool Director two (2) weeks prior to the change. This will help avoid extra fees.

Cancellation of Enrollment

If you would like to withdraw your child from our program during the school year, the school will require a 2-week written notice to the office. All tuition and Lion's Den balances need to be paid in full with your withdrawal notice.

If your child is withdrawn before the 15th of the month your account will be credited for half the month. If your child is withdrawn after the 15th of the month, you will be charged for the whole month.

Families who withdraw during the school year and wish to return at a later date will be charged a re-enrollment fee of \$150.

We also reserve the right to cancel enrollment for the following conditions:

- Failure to pay tuition and late fees. (Please contact Director and/or Bookkeeper if special circumstances or concerns arise.)
- A child demanding excess amounts of staff or administration energy and time at the expense of other children. Examples include frequently occurring potty accidents or placing another child at risk because of inappropriate or uncontrolled behavior.
- Failure to comply with AZ State Immunization requirements in the time-frame stated.

Parents will be initially informed of the situation with a phone call by the teacher and/or Director. Next, a conference will be held to discuss documented concerns. Additional meetings will be set with the teacher, Director and/or Principal regarding any cancellation of enrollment prior to cancellation.

Arrival and Dismissal

All enrolled children must be escorted to and from the classroom by a designated adult. Our preschool day begins at 8:15 a.m., however our classroom doors will be open at 8:00 a.m. for your convenience. To maximize the learning environment of the classroom it is essential to arrive at or before 8:15 a.m. to minimize the amount of distractions

and disruptions. Upon arrival please follow the teacher's opening day procedures and do not leave your child in his/her classroom without the teacher present.

Morning session children are dismissed at 11:30 a.m. and Lunch Bunchers are dismissed at 12:15 p.m. Children need to be picked up promptly at their dismissal time, or a late fee will be charged to your family account. Any child picked up 10 or more minutes after their dismissal time will have a \$25 late fee charged to their family account.

All children remaining at 3:15 p.m. will be sent to Lion's Den.

A child can only be released to the parent or adult listed on the **Blue Emergency Card**. In the event where the adult is unknown to the teacher or office staff, a picture ID will be requested.

If you wish to have your child picked up by someone other than yourself or an adult **not** on your Blue Emergency Card, written permission or phone call is required. ***Please have your password ready for permission over the phone.*** These procedures follow the AZ State requirements and help ensure the safety of your child. ***Please inform your teacher or school office of any drop-off or pick-up changes.***

Sign-In and Sign-Out

Each classroom has an attendance sheet located beside the classroom door. Please sign your child in and out on the attendance sheet provided. **Use your first initial and full last name as required by state law.**

Transportation

Sonshine Preschool does not provide transportation of any kind to its preschoolers.

Field Trips

Off-campus field trips are not taken by our preschool classes. Instead, we schedule in-house field trips, where a person(s) of interest or event comes to our classroom/school.

Regulations

Our facility is regulated by the Arizona Department of Health Services located at 150 N. 18th Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85007. Their phone number is 602-364-2536. Our license # is CDC16840.

Our facility health and safety inspection reports are available for public viewing upon request. They are located in the school office.

Pesticide Application

Parents will be notified by way of posted notice on the Preschool Bulletin Board, located outside the preschool classrooms, 48 hours before a pesticide is applied on the school campus.

Insurance

Sonshine Preschool maintains the minimum liability coverage requirements set forth by the State Health Department. A copy of the liability coverage is available for review in the school office.

Sonshine Preschool cannot be held responsible for damage or loss of personal items.

Parent Involvement

Parents have full access to all areas on campus where their child is attending. The teacher will communicate the need for parent involvement if the opportunity arises.

Snacks

Parents are asked to provide a nutritious snack, which represents two food groups, for their child. A healthy snack idea list will be provided for each family and will be posted on our Preschool Bulletin Board. On special days or occasions our classes may provide the snack.

Birthdays and Special Occasions

Parents may send in a treat to celebrate their child's birthday. We encourage you to bring in your child's favorite healthy food. **The treats need to be individually wrapped and store bought.** This is a County Health Department requirement. The treats do not have to be a food item (for example, stickers or small toys). Please be sure to coordinate plans with your child's teacher.

Dress Code

Parents are asked to ensure that their children will observe a modest, God-pleasing attitude in matters of dress and hairstyles. Washable, comfortable play clothes and strapped shoes (no flip-flops) are best for outdoor play. Children's clothes should also be easy for them to manage by themselves in the bathroom. **All removable articles such as jackets and sweaters should have the child's name clearly marked on them.** If dresses are worn, shorts should be worn underneath.

Emergency Information

Current emergency information is required for each student. Information is provided by the parent for each child at the beginning of every school year. In case of emergency or accident, our procedure will be to contact the parent at home or work and contact medical professionals if the situation requires. In the event of an emergency which necessitates the closing of school,

parents will be notified by text and/or email. We will send a text to your phone through *REMIND*.

Off-site dismissal - in these cases (e.g. gas leak, police or fire evacuations) students will be led as a class through the back field gate and assemble at Dwight Park. The park may be reached by driving south on Roosevelt Ave (east of the school) at the traffic light on Southern Ave. Children will then be supervised until an all clear is given to return to campus or the child is signed out by the parent or authorized adult.

The school should be notified if any changes occur (address, telephone number, physician, dentist, work telephone number, etc.) during the school year.

Mandatory Reporting of Suspected Abuse

The teachers and staff of Sonshine Preschool and Emmanuel Lutheran School are required by law to report incidents of suspected sexual, emotional, physical, or other abuse and neglect to the proper authorities. Under this law, parents are not to be notified of the report.

Discipline and Guidance

The ultimate goal of our program is to teach children how to be self-disciplined. When teachers or the Director discipline students, they are showing that they care too much for them to let them behave in a way that is not God-pleasing and want to take the time and effort to help

children learn how to behave in a God-pleasing manner. This is done in partnership with the home. Certainly it is critical that school and home cooperate in helping the child learn self-discipline. Teachers are encouraged to partner with families to address specific discipline issues within the classroom.

Generally speaking, discipline is part of classroom management and is handled by the teacher. The exceptions to this are probations, suspensions, and expulsions, which involve the school administration and/or ESB. Under most circumstances, discipline follows a progression until the desired outcome is reached. This progression would include discussions with the child, teacher, parents, Director, Principal, Pastor, and ESB as appropriate.

Disciplining is a teaching or leading process. *Sonshine* Preschool's discipline program is based on the proper application of Law and Gospel. The law condemns and curbs a person's sinful nature as it shows the undeniable need of the Savior. But it is the gospel (good news) of Christ which changes the heart and motivates a person for true discipleship. Simply put, the discipline program at *Sonshine* Preschool is reflected in these three objectives:

1. To teach and model appropriate behavior
2. To stop inappropriate behavior
3. To promote personal responsibility and accountability

In efforts to teach and model appropriate behavior, intervention before a problem exists is one of our goals. Positive guidance and techniques which involve being sensitive to the classroom environment and situations that arise are a critical aspect of prevention. More specifically, preschool staff members focus on:

1. Prompting appropriate behavior by talking about expectations
2. Positively reinforcing children's behaviors by calling attention to children's appropriate behaviors

However, if a child with inappropriate or uncontrolled behavior (i.e. biting, hitting), demands an excess amount of staff or administration energy and time at the expense of other children, the following steps will be followed:

1. Parents will be initially informed of the situation with a phone call by the teacher.
2. A conference will be held to discuss documented concerns. (parent, teacher(s) and Director if needed)
3. Additional meetings will be set with the teacher, Director and/or Principal regarding any cancellation of enrollment prior to cancellation.
4. Failure to correct inappropriate behavior(s) will lead to dismissal of child (cancellation of enrollment).

All children are expected to obey and show respect to all those in authority. Hebrews 13:17 serves as a guide:

"Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you...Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you."

Children are also expected to be considerate, kind, and courteous toward each other at all times. Matthew 22:39 states, "Love your neighbor as yourself." 1 John 1:9-10 tells us, "Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness. Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble."

Sonshine Preschool and Emmanuel Lutheran School are committed to making our campus a safe and caring place for all children. Everyone is to be treated with respect, and bullying of any kind will not be tolerated at our school. We will encourage God-pleasing behavior which displays Christian love and concern for everyone.

Immunizations, Illness and Medications

Immunizations

The State Department of Health Services requires a complete and documented immunization record and health record card before your child may attend class. By law, a child can NOT attend classes if his/her record does not show the month and year (month, day, year for MMR) of

each required dose. Inadequately immunized children must have at least one current dose of each vaccine to be admitted. Additional doses must be received when they are due for the child to continue attendance. If there is a medical contradiction, both the parent and physician must sign the ADHS exemption form provided by the school or health department. For more information call 602-506-6900 or visit their website <http://azdhs.gov/>

Illness

Please keep your child home from school if ill. A child with any kind of rash, lesions, or any suspected contagious disease should be kept out of school until diagnosed by a physician. Please inform the school office if your child has been exposed to a contagious disease. **Your child should be fever, vomiting, and/or diarrhea-free for 24 hours before returning to school.** A child needs to be on an **antibiotic for 24 hours** before returning to school. If your child becomes ill at school we will place him/her in a quiet area away from the other children and notify you. After you have been notified we ask that you make arrangements to pick up your child immediately.

Medication Policy

Whenever possible, we recommend that medication be given to students at home. Any medicine brought to school will be kept in a locked box in the classroom or school office and dispensed by the Director or designee. Written authorization from a parent/guardian must be received

before any medication can be administered. Prescription medication must be provided in the original prescription bottle with the pharmacy label. Non-prescription (over-the-counter) medication must be supplied in the original labeled and sealed container. Please note: this also applies to any student requiring an inhaler. New medication authorization from parent and doctor is required if there is any change in the dose or time of medication, or if there has been a change in the medication. The school will not administer any medication without written permission and directions. The school does not keep a supply of over-the-counter medication for student use.

Communicable Disease Policy

In the event of an outbreak of a communicable disease, parents will be notified by phone, special note, or newsletter announcement. Parents are asked to keep children at home and consult a doctor if their child shows symptoms of pink-eye, chicken pox, flu, COVID, and the like.

When a child of *Sonshine Preschool* or *Emmanuel Lutheran School* is a carrier of a life-threatening communicable disease, parents of that student may be required to give permission to the Principal to notify the parents of another student who has experienced an exposure.

Children are encouraged to regularly wash hands as well as practice other good personal hygiene. *Sonshine Preschool*

and Emmanuel Lutheran School are in compliance with all federal and state legislation regarding blood pathogens, asbestos, hazardous chemical exposure, sexual harassment, and the like.

Closing Thoughts

Sonshine Preschool is operated as a mission arm of Emmanuel Lutheran Church. Through the school, children are taught the precious truths of God's Word across the curriculum on a daily basis. The school does not take the place of the family's role in educating children; rather the school exists to assist parents in this important responsibility. It is the desire of the entire staff to create a culture of cooperation, high expectations, and mutual respect as we work together to carry out the task our Lord has placed before us. May God bless us in our endeavors.

Revised and approved by ESB - June 2024.



I have read the *Sonshine Preschool Handbook*.

I agree to follow the guidelines, policies, and schedules provided.

Please sign, detach and return upon enrollment.

Parent Signature

Date

Print Child's Name

Notes