



# **Ascension Children's Learning Center**

## **Student/Parent Handbook**

*Supported by  
Ascension Lutheran Church*

*2505 North Circle Drive  
Colorado Springs, CO 80909  
719-447-8658  
Phone & Fax*

**Welcome to Ascension Lutheran's Children's Learning Center. We are glad to have you and your child as part of our family. This handbook will provide you with specific information about our Center. We hope you find it beneficial in making you more familiar with our program and more comfortable with our Center. Please let us know if you have any questions.**

## **ORGANIZATION**

**The Center is a nonprofit organization that is a ministry of and sponsored by Ascension Lutheran Church through the authority of the Board of Parish Education and the Children's Learning Center Cabinet. The Board of Parish Education and the Children's Learning Center Cabinet are comprised of members of Ascension Lutheran Church. The Cabinet establishes policy and approves procedures for the Children's Learning Center.**

**The Center is fully licensed by the state of Colorado Department of Human Services. Therefore, we are inspected annually to ensure a high quality of education and safety. All Children's Learning Center staff meet or exceed the requirements of the state. Our staff is comprised of Christians who provide good leadership for our children and have a sincere concern for each of their students.**

**Ascension's Children's Learning Center admits students of any race, color, national, or ethnic origin. All programs and activities are made available to all students at this center. The Center does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, disability, national, or ethnic origin in the administration of its policies.**

## **OUR MISSION**

**The mission of Ascension's Children's Learning Center is to prepare, equip, and empower the children of our community to live a life pleasing to God by sharing the love of Christ with others. This mission is an extension of the church's mission, which is:**

**The Ascension Congregation is a community of grace called to serve.**

## **OUR PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS**

### **ECCLESIASTES 3:1-15**

The purpose of Ascension's Children's Learning Center is to provide a warm, caring, Christian environment and to facilitate a curriculum in which the children can feel safe while developing socially, emotionally, physically, and cognitively using developmentally appropriate practices. We want each child to grow to his/her full potential by acknowledging and accepting his or her uniqueness and individuality.

Our goals for each child include developing and nurturing the following characteristics:

**Self-concept:** knowing he or she is a valuable person as a Child of God

**Self-esteem:** accomplishing many different tasks successfully

**Independence:** developing the ability to care for his/her needs

**Communication:** learning to get along with people through talking and listening

**Creativity:** exploring new interests and ideas through play and developmentally appropriate activities.

## **OUR PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM**

### **AND WRAP-AROUND ACTIVITIES**

The program of Ascension's Children's Learning Center will be based on weekly themes. We will have science, art, and math activities each week. Our center will target the following key skills/concepts (each is followed by some examples):

**Music and movement:** singing, dramatic play, and dancing (movement to music)

**Math:** sorting and counting, matching numbers, cooking and measuring activities, and graphing

**Science:** growing plants, learning to care for animals, mixing colors, magnets, magnifying glasses, sinking and floating objects

**Creative art:** doing projects with a variety of materials, finger-paints, watercolors, tempera paints, glue, scissors, play-dough, markers, crayons, and pencils

**Language arts:** books, storytelling, puppets, acting out stories, creative writing, pre-reading skills, Spanish, sign language

**Large and small muscle:** climbing, running, balls, building, sand and water play, pouring, puzzles, and others

**Stories and songs every day**

## **DAILY SCHEDULE**

<b>6:30–8:30 a.m.</b>	<b>Arrival-Open play activities, library</b>
<b>8:30-9:15 a.m.</b>	<b>Circle Time (calendar, weather, letters, songs)</b>
<b>9:15-9:45 a.m.</b>	<b>Snack</b>
<b>9:45–10:45 a.m.</b>	<b>Free choice play and art</b>
<b>10:45-11:15 a.m.</b>	<b>Stories and Finger Play</b>
<b>11:15–11:30 a.m.</b>	<b>Music and Movement</b>
<b>11:30–12:00 a.m.</b>	<b>Free Choice/Centers/ Playground</b>
<b>12:00–12:30 p.m.</b>	<b>LUNCH</b>
<b>12:30-12:45 p.m.</b>	<b>Bathroom Break</b>
<b>12:45–2:45 p.m.</b>	<b>Rest time</b>
<b>2:45-3:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Bathroom Break</b>
<b>3:00-3:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Snack</b>
<b>3:30–4:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Outdoor Play</b>
<b>4:00–4:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Daily Activities/ Baking; Science; Art; Exercise; Games</b>
<b>4:30–5:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Stories</b>
<b>5:00–6:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Table Activities, Clean Up, Departure</b>

## **TELEVISION VIEWING**

**Children benefit most from hands-on activities and active play. We may use videos as part of a learning unit or as a treat, especially during inclement weather.**

## **VISITORS TO THE CENTER**

**Visitors are always welcome. A visitor must present picture identification and sign in, stating name, address, and purpose of visit. Parents may visit at any time.**

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

**We believe good communication between home and school will benefit everyone, especially your child. We will keep you informed of Center activities through newsletters, posted notices, and informal conversations. Look for notes in your child's cubby each day.**

**Parent-teacher conferences will be scheduled as needed during the school year. We are willing, at any time, to discuss any questions or concerns you may have about your child. If you know your child is experiencing stress for any reason, please let us know. We are here to help you and your child; knowing something significant has happened will alert us to additional ways we can help.**

## **NUTRITION**

Parents must provide a nutritious lunch each day. According to state regulations if the meal from home does not appear to meet 1/3 of the child's daily nutritional needs, we will provide a supplement to the meal. We supply a mid-morning and mid-afternoon snack. Please inform us if your child has any food allergies.

## **Transportation**

We transport children to and from Audubon school by walking with them across the street and back before and after school. We follow all rules of the road when we walk and teach the children the importance of the colors of the light, why we wait for the signals, etc. We also transport some children to and from the Charter School in the staff's vehicles. Children will use car seats or seatbelts as mandated by Colorado State Law.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

We take occasional driving trips during the year. Field trip forms are included in the enrollment packet for the whole school year. Parents will receive information about any trips in advance. We may ask parents to drive on these trips. Parents who drive must provide proof of insurance. Children will use car seats or seatbelts as mandated by Colorado State Law. We may also walk to nearby parks, and if we do so, we will post notices to inform parents. During the summer the City Transit System may be used. When on field trips, the staff will have cell phones, emergency kits, and all emergency contacts for every child.

If we are away from the center for a field trip and a child arrives late, we will leave the name and address of the place we are going, as well as a cell phone number so that we be reached.

## **PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

Each child has an assigned cubby and a folder for artwork, treasures, etc. Please check your child's cubby and folder daily. Money is not allowed at school, and we discourage children from bringing toys from home. Children may bring books to read if they are not required to nap. Mats for naptime will be provided by the Center, and your child may bring a special stuffed animal for naptime. Please send a fitted crib sheet and a small blanket for your child to use during naps. We will send them home weekly for laundering. **Additionally, please send a change of clothes (in case of accidents or spills) in a zip-locked bag, labeled with your child's name.**

## **WHAT TO WEAR TO SCHOOL**

Children should be comfortably dressed in simple, washable, easy-to-manage clothing suitable for tumbling, climbing, and crawling on the floor, as well as for messy play with paint, markers, play-dough, glue, and water. Please

keep in mind that clothing may become stained – do not send your child in any “special” outfits. All outdoor clothing, especially boots, mittens, and hats, should be labeled or marked with your child’s name. We will go outside as often as possible, so please dress your child appropriately and take into account the constantly changing Colorado weather. In case of inclement or excessively hot weather, we will remain inside. We will go outside if it is below 90 degrees and if it is above 35 degrees. They need to be dressed appropriately for whatever the weather is that day.

## **ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE**

A parent or adult guardian must accompany each child into the Center. Please enter through the doors on the southeast side of the building and sign-in via the electronic sign in pad that is located inside these doors.

Each child must be signed in at arrival and signed out at departure using the Keypad in the hallway. Parents must inform a staff member when the child arrives or departs from the Center. Please inform other persons dropping off or picking up your child of these procedures. The Children’s Learning Center is not responsible for any child not properly signed in. Upon arrival and again at departure each child will be given a visual check for health.

No child will be released to anyone other than the individuals listed on the Enrollment and/or Emergency Information forms, or an individual authorized by a signed note from the parent or guardian. Persons not known by the staff will be asked to show identification and will not be allowed access to the children until the identification is shown.

If a parent or authorized person comes to pick up a child and is visibly under the influence of drugs or alcohol, we will not release the child to this person. If the individual is not a parent, we will attempt to contact the parent. If the individual is a parent, we will offer to call a cab at our expense.

Parents picking up children after 6:00 p.m. will be charged a late fee of \$1.00 per minute. If a parent does not arrive by 6:00 p.m., we will call persons listed on the Emergency Form to pick up the child. If we are unable to reach anyone, the Police Department will be called at 7:00 p.m. and a note left on the door notifying the parent of the situation.

## **Admission Procedures**

We accept applications for children ages 2 ½ to 5 for preschool and all-day care, and up to 12 years of age for before- and after-school care and all day during school breaks. All children attending the Center must be potty trained.

Our definition of potty trained means your child is able to communicate the need to use the restroom facilities, knowledge of how to flush the toilet and wash their hands. All children should be able to wipe themselves after using the restroom.

To determine if the Center is able to meet your child’s needs, and so that we fully understand your goals for your child, please meet with the Center Director before enrolling. At this meeting, you will receive information about the

Center's policies, fees, curriculum, and services. Upon enrolling your child, the State of Colorado and the Children's Learning Center require the following items to be completed:

- Registration form and fees
- Emergency information form
- TV Viewing Policy Form
- Field trip permission form
- Physical form and copy of current immunization form
- Sunscreen Policy Form

### **TUITION RATES**

Tuition rates are adjusted annually, effective September 1<sup>st</sup>. Parents will receive a separate tuition schedule.

### **REGISTRATION FEES**

Each family pays an annual registration fee of \$60 per family. The fee is due at registration and covers registration processing and educational materials. The registration fee is non-refundable.

### **PAYMENT POLICIES**

Tuition is due at the beginning of each month, unless special arrangements have been made with the Director. If a child enrolls mid-month, the tuition will be prorated and is due at registration. Payments made after the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month will be assessed a late fee equal to a percentage of the monthly tuition rate. The fee for returned checks is \$25 per incident. If tuition becomes delinquent, the child may be denied the right to return to school until the outstanding balance is paid.

The Center will shut down the first week in July. During this time tuition is not due.

Because we maintain a space for every enrolled child, no adjustment in fees will be made for illness or absence. Expenses for staff, operations, and supplies are still incurred by the Center regardless of your child's periodic absence.

### **HOURS OF OPERATION AND YEARLY SCHEDULE**

Ascension's Children's Learning Center is open Monday through Friday, 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., year-round. The Children's Learning Center will be closed in observance of the following holidays:

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|---|---|
| New Year's Eve and Day                  | Labor Day   |
| Memorial Day                            | Day Before Thanksgiving, Thanksgiving Day<br>and the Day After Thanksgiving |
| First week in July<br>(Annual Shutdown) | Christmas Eve and Christmas Day   |

## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

To assure the staff maintains accountability for all children we use head counts and line of sight. We count the children against attendance tracker in the classroom, and Procare attendance every half hour, matching the names with faces. We also keep the children in our line of sight at all times.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

**Tornado** – In case of a tornado, all children and staff will gather in the bathrooms located in the lower level of the building until conditions are known to be safe.

**Heavy snow or blizzard** – We follow the District 11 School Closure schedule. If District 11 cancels classes due to inclement weather, the Center will be closed as well. If we must close due weather, and District 11 is open, we will run announcements on television and radio. If a storm occurs while children are at the Center, listen to the radio or television for closure notices and instructions. If we need to close early parents will be notified. If District 11 closes early, we are closed. Your child must be picked up at the school and not the Center.

**Fire** – In the event of a fire or fire drill, all children and staff will exit the building or playground and walk to the southeast end of the parking lot. Teachers take a head count and call 911.

**Lost child** – If a child is missing, we conduct a complete search of the facilities and grounds. If the child is not found, then both the Police Department and the child's parents will be contacted immediately.

## **HEALTH AND ATTENDANCE POLICIES**

To preserve the health of our staff and children, those who are ill will not be admitted to the Center. If a child becomes ill while at the Center, we will call the parent/guardian to pick up the child immediately. Until the parent arrives, the child will be kept isolated from the other children. A child with any of the following symptoms will not be allowed to attend until the below symptoms are no longer present:

- Thick yellow or green discharge from the nose
- A fever of 100° or higher within the previous 24 hours
- Atypical behavior for that child, such as unusual lethargy, fussiness, or lack of appetite
- Vomiting or diarrhea within the previous 24 hours
- Skin rash or lesions indicating an infectious illness (chicken pox, roseola, impetigo, ringworm, etc.), pinworm, scabies, or head lice (and/or nits)
- Conjunctivitis (pinkeye)
- Any other indications of infectious disease

## **EXPOSURE NOTICES**

In the event of exposure to an infectious disease, the Director will circulate a notice to the parent/guardian of each child. We also request that you report, to the Center, if your child has been exposed to a communicable disease outside of the Center.

## **MEDICATION**

All medications, both prescription and non-prescription, must be administered by staff who have taken the medical distribution class. We can only give prescription drugs that are clearly marked, in the original container showing the doctor's name, prescription number, date filled, child's name, and directions for use. Before we can administer this medicine, the parent must complete and sign an authorization form. Medications can be distributed only with written authorization from both a physician and the parent. Medications will be stored in a lock box in a labeled container, unless it is a medication for emergent use (epi pen, etc.)

## **ACCIDENTS AND INJURIES**

The Center maintains a file for each child that contains emergency medical information. If your child becomes ill or has an accident at school, we will make every effort to contact the parent. If we cannot contact a parent or individual on the Emergency Authorization form, we will follow the procedures as outlined on the written Authorization form. The Center will inform parents of minor injuries (more than a scrape on the knee) at school by a written accident report.

## **REPORTING CHILD ABUSE**

In accordance with Colorado law, any staff member who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect shall immediately make a report to the El Paso County Department of Social Services at 444-5700 (weekdays) or 475-9593 (nights) or the local law enforcement agency. Parents may also report suspected child abuse or neglect to the above listed authorities.

## **DISCIPLINE**

Discipline is a positive force in a child's life. It is not something children are fearful of. When the child begins attending, the staff creates an atmosphere of positive discipline and independence in the classroom. The discipline technique used is Love and Logic, which encourages the children to solve their problems independently with little or no help from the teachers. Throughout the year, they model appropriate behavior, remind children of what is expected when necessary, and set limits. Gradually, children learn to regulate their own

behavior, learn how to problem solve and learn to create a compromise. Eventually the children achieve the goal of self-discipline.

If a problem should occur, the teacher or staff member first consider that certain behaviors are to be expected at certain ages and are part of each child's development. . In handling a specific discipline problem, the situation is independently evaluated.

In other instances, it may be necessary to stop the child's activity and focus on the child and her/his actions. The teacher or staff member will try to help the child reach a solution, pointing out why his/her actions are a inappropriate.

At times, a child may lose control of a situation erupting in anger or frustration. If this occurs, the teacher or staff member may take the child aside and allow her/him to work out the anger or frustration before problem solving with the child.

Positive discipline is a part of the training of every staff member and all will strive to provide consistent limits. Self-discipline is promoted by ensuring that classrooms and routines are comfortable, relaxed and predictable. Each child learns respect for others, the environment, and the joy of cooperation.

## **PROBLEMS WITH THE CENTER**

Any parent having concerns with a policy or person in the Center may speak directly with a staff member or Director. Parents may also go to the Children's Learning Center Cabinet, by contacting the church office (634-1694). If you have a complaint concerning a suspected license violation, contact the Colorado Department of Human Services, 1575 Sherman Street, Denver, CO 80203 or 303-866-5958.

## **TERMINATION POLICY**

The Children's Learning Center reserves the right to terminate its relationship with a family. A child may be excluded for the following reason(s):

1. failure of a parent/guardian to cooperate with the staff or policies of the Center;
2. behavior by the parent/guardian or child that jeopardizes or appears to jeopardize the safety of other children, the staff, or him-/herself;
3. the Director determines that the Center is unable to meet a specific child's needs. In such cases, the parents and the Director will meet to discuss the problem and possible schools or centers open to the child.
4. Failure to pay or make arrangements with the Director to have a payment plan.

**Steps for removal:**

- 1. If a child has received behavior reports on a regular basis, the Director will require and schedule a conference with the family, teacher, and/or the Director.**
- 2. If the matter is not resolved and a second conference needed, the Director may contact the Child Care Response Team. The family must be willing to allow the CCRT to observe the child in the classroom as a requirement to continue attending the Center.**
- 3. If all attempts to reconcile have been exhausted, the family will be asked to leave.**

***Acknowledgment of the Policies and Procedures comprising the Handbook of Ascension Children's Learning Center.***

***Please return a signed copy to the Children's Learning Center Director.***

**I understand that every parent and student are required to comply with the policies and procedures described herein.**

**If I have questions or concerns about these policies and procedures, I should contact the Children's Learning Center Director.**

**The Certificate of Acknowledgment will be retained in the student's file.**

**Certificate of Acknowledgment**

**"I have received and read the Ascension Lutheran Church Children's Learning Center Handbook and understand that myself and my student have an obligation to comply with it."**

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**Print Name**

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**Signature**

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**Date**

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**Witness**