

“Children Learn What They Live”

If a child lives with criticism, he learns to condemn. If a child lives with hostility, he learns to fight.

If a child lives with ridicule, he learns to be shy. If a child lives with tolerance, he learns to be patient.

If a child lives with encouragement, he learns to confide. If a child lives with praise, he learns to appreciate.

If a child lives with fairness, he learns justice. If a child lives with security, he learns to have faith.

If a child lives with approval, he learns to like himself. If a child lives with acceptance and friendship,

He learns to find love in the world.

-Dorothy Law Nolte



~Where Love and Learning Meet~

Parent/Student Handbook 2024~2025

A Message from the Director:

Dear Parents,

Thank you for choosing Epiphany Lutheran Preschool for the education and care of your child/children. We understand that choosing a school and/or any type of childcare for your little one is a major decision and we will endeavor to keep your child safe and healthy. We will collaborate with you (as your child's first teacher) to help them grow and learn to love the Lord and appreciate the goodness

He has given us. We will strive to instruct your child about the world and the wonders that it holds, while we encourage them to enjoy a lifelong journey of learning. At Epiphany, we consider our families an extension of the school and Church, we want to partner together as we grow together both physically and spiritually. If there is ever anything we can for you, please do not hesitate to ask. In return, we may call upon you to help us from time as volunteers, chaperones and/or to share a skill or talent that you may be imminently suited for.

We look forward to a wonderful year. Welcome to Epiphany Lutheran Preschool, where love and learning meet.

*Many Blessings,
Lisa Ingram*

Epiphany Lutheran Preschool Mission Statement

The mission of Epiphany Lutheran Preschool is to provide a high quality, loving Christian environment for preschoolers, teaching them to know and follow Jesus as their Savior and Lord.

Epiphany Lutheran Preschool Philosophy

Children are encouraged to learn through play, developing mentally, spiritually, emotionally, socially, and physically into a child of God in a developmentally appropriate manner.

The preschool is an integral part of the ministry of Epiphany Lutheran Church. The preschool provides an environment that develops mutually supportive relationships between family, school, community, and church. It also provides specific developmental support to parents and draws children to a closer relationship with God, to a knowledge of the world, and to an appreciation of and respect for other people. The preschool teaches Biblical truths according to the Lutheran tradition and models forgiveness and love for one another. The preschool's core values are rooted in scripture and are as follows:

To nurture faith

Col. 1:10, 2 Peter 1:5-8, Eph. 4:14-16

To grow in grace and knowledge

Ps. 119: 66, Prov. 9:10, 2 Peter 3:18

To saturate with the Word

Deut. 6:6-7, Prov. 22: 6, John 8:31-32

To communicate and establish Christian values.

James 3:13, 1 Peter 1:13, 1 Peter 4:11, 1 Cor. 2:12-13

To equip for Christian service

Mark 10:45, 2 Tim. 3:16-17, Heb. 13:20, Eph. 6:13-18

To reach out

Matt. 28:18-20, Mark 16:15, Acts 1:8, Col. 3:16, Luke 4:18

Epiphany Lutheran Preschool Vision

It is our Vision...

- To nurture every aspect of a child's development, while reaching out to the family and community.
- To value each child as a unique and special child of God, created in His image, encouraging their individuality and promoting their self-esteem.
- To provide a balanced program to meet the total needs of the child to grow spiritually, socially, emotionally, intellectually, and physically.
- To value a child's play experience as an avenue of learning and provide a developmentally appropriate program for all children of any race, creed, nationality, or ethnic background.
- To provide a safe, stimulating environment for children to interact with others and increase in ability and knowledge within a small group experience.
- To nurture the spiritual and professional development of our staff; thereby enriching their lives.

Administration at Epiphany

The preschool is a ministry of Epiphany Lutheran Church. The governing body of the church is the Church Council. The Council coordinates the work of the various boards and commissions at Epiphany, including the School Board. The chairperson of the School Board is a member of

the Church Council, and both the Director and the Pastor serve as ex officio members of the council.

The School Board provides general oversight of the preschool program and is responsible for the creation of preschool policy. There are five voting members of the School Board. The Director and bookkeeper shall be advisory members. There may be one parent (currently attending child) representative and a teacher representative that are non-voting advisor attendees. The Pastor and one elder, selected by the Board of Elders, shall be non-voting advisors to the School Board.

The Pastor shall be the school's ecclesiastical advisor for the spiritual health and development of the staff, families, and students; and will assist with dispute resolution, problem solving, and other matters as appropriate. Each member recognizes his/her role in accordance with Matthew 20:17, "And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." Each member shall make every reasonable attempt to attend all monthly Board meetings and preschool functions. Board meetings are normally open meetings. Guests do not participate in the meeting unless specifically placed on the agenda. The Director serves as an extension of the Pastoral Office, supporting the Pastor as the Chief Executive of the preschool. As the chief executive of the preschool, the Director administers the school program and implements the policies of the School Board.

Hours of Operation and Holidays

Epiphany will operate from 7:00 am until 6:00 pm, Monday through Friday, year-round. We will be closed, and care will not be provided on the days that are listed on the school calendar. No credit or refund of tuition shall be given the days that the center is officially closed. Tuition is the same for each month regardless of the number of days.

Arrival and Dismissal

We recommended that children enrolled are brought into class no later than 9:00 am to get the full value of our program and class time is least interrupted. Children can be taken from school at any time during the day.* Because children thrive on routine and prefer to know what to expect, we ask that you try to arrive at about the same time each day. Establishing a routine for the morning "good-bye" is one of the best things you can do to help your child make a smooth transition. Try to do the same thing each day upon arrival (put belongings away, assure your child you will return, say good-bye then leave).

Each teacher will have a planned drop-off routine. For the younger students, the teacher may ask for parent's assistance with separating AM & PM meals/snacks. For older students the teacher may ask the students to begin helping themselves to place snacks and drinks in the supplied boxes.

*It is our wish that students are NOT be dropped off or picked up during naptime. Naptime is between the times of 12:15 PM – 2:30 PM. Such interruption can be difficult for your child as well as disruptive for the rest of the class; however, if this is required then the office staff will aid to keep the disturbance to the minimum.

Students should be picked up from their respective classrooms at the agreed upon time. If someone other than the parent/legal guardian needs to pick up your child, their name needs to be on the approved pick-up list, or a written note sent to the office, and they must provide an ID for identification purposes.

Making the Transition

Children with more than one attachment are more secure overall, which is beneficial for their future in and out of school. Children need to eventually learn to know and trust other people. Infants develop a bonded relationship with their mother and father, but they also can have important relationships with a variety of people, including extended family and routine caregivers.

Your child's well-being is our primary concern. We want you to feel comfortable and confident as you combine your life as parents with your career needs. We want the time your child is in our care to be as free from worry for you as possible. We do this by adhering to strict operational policies which govern our discipline, administration of medications, or release of children to others. We will call you if anything is amiss, but otherwise, we will share your child's day with you when you arrive in the afternoon. Consistency in a child-rearing philosophy between childcare center and the home is best for the child, we will honor parents' concerns and wishes for development to the best of our ability.

To ease the transition, the staff will greet each child warmly each morning as they arrive and bid each goodbye with anticipation of the next day. As children grow older, they clearly benefit from association with other children to learn how to get along in the community. Our commitment to staff-to-child ratios, your child's safety and well-being, our personalized interactions with every child, and strong connections with families are key aspects of our high-quality early childhood program. With these essentials in place, we follow curated and proven curriculum guide (Wee Learn) that offers the children an engaging and enriching

opportunity to gain experiences in which they can explore their environment and grow in mind, body and spirit.

This handbook provides detailed information about our facilities and programs. Our Administration and staff will be happy to assist you with any questions that you may have about Epiphany.

Your child's home away from home

Epiphany Lutheran Preschool is unique because the Church members built it specifically as a school, our classrooms are large and full of light. All rooms feature large windows so that the smallest children can look out onto the natural world that surrounds us. The infant room mimics a home like atmosphere, as much as possible.

The playgrounds are enclosed and offer a vast variety of activities to enhance the learning experience. Opportunities for hands-on learning experiences will be provided throughout the day.

In 2024, we are updating our outside doors to make the building more secure. The building is equipped with sprinklers, smoke detectors and other safety measures. The Emergency exits are clearly marked in each room and drills are practiced throughout the year. Each room has two exits; however, access to the building is controlled for the safety of the children. The safety, security, and cleanliness of the school is a high priority to the Administration and to the Church. We will diligently work to keep your children safe from harm.

Child Attendance

It is the responsibility of the parents to check your child/children in and out daily, please acknowledge the teacher in your room when your child is dropped off and picked up.

We value any time your child may be able to spend at home with you or relatives. However, if your child is ill or absent for any reason, please notify Epiphany. Full tuition is required whether your child is present at school or not. No credit is extended due to illness, vacation, holidays, or inclement weather.

VPK: We ask that you arrive on time VPK*. The hours are from 9-12 and to include all the skills and learning required we need to avoid interruptions in our morning as much as possible. VPK only students are welcome to arrive at 8:45 with no added drop-in fees. This allows your student to acclimate and get ready for the start of the day. *We understand

that occasionally appointments or delays will occur. We ask that you strive to keep medical/dental appointments outside of VPK hours as much as possible.

Inclement Weather

In the case of inclement weather, our closings will be announced on the major television and radio networks as “Epiphany Lutheran Preschool.” We will follow Leon County School Board closures.

Epiphany will only be closed for other reasons under extenuating. If we do not have power or water, Epiphany must close by the standards set by DCF and our accrediting entity.

When evacuation is necessary due to fire or any other reason, we will evacuate to a safe place and notify parents.

Application/Admissions

Epiphany does not discriminate regarding race, color, religion, physical disability, or gender. If we are unable to meet the child’s needs, we will assist in finding care for the child. Each child must be between the ages of six (6) weeks and 4 years, turning the appropriate age by September 1. All enrollment paperwork must be completed and returned to the office prior to the child’s first day at school.

Upon completion of the forms, students are admitted when space is available. Priority is given to full-time students and/or their siblings.

If there are any changes to the application forms such as names, addresses, phone numbers or places of employment, the parent(s) must notify the office in writing immediately.

Registration and Tuition

In effect August 2024, a \$40 non-refundable application fee will be required to get your child on the waitlist for the next opening. The registration fee, supply fee and first month’s tuition are due upon accepted enrollment. Tuition is based upon a monthly cost per child. This tuition is not based upon the number of days in a month. Discounts may be available for multiple children.

Tuition is due on the first of each month. Tuition is late after the 10th. A \$30.00 late fee will be assessed to that account when tuition is not paid. If payments are returned or are late more than twice in a school year, your child’s enrollment may be in jeopardy.

If you are having difficulty paying your monthly tuition, please contact the office to apply for an Exception's Application. This application is based on approval from administration and the proof of need.

Tuition rates are based on the number of hours per week your child attends. Should you need to change your rate, you will need to come to the Preschool Office to submit a Tuition Rate Change Form. Tuition rates cannot be changed after a month has already begun and will be based on availability in the classroom.

Withdrawal

Should you find yourself in a position needing to withdraw from Epiphany you must give the school a two (2) week notice. Should you wish to apply for re-enrollment, the application and registration fee will be waived if re-enrolling within 90 days of withdrawing. After 90 days, registration is payable, and admission is contingent upon available space in your child's classroom at that time.

Waitlist

We often have a waitlist in our classrooms. Siblings of enrolled children and full-time students have priority status on the waitlist so that we may better serve their families. Family payment history will be considered before an offer of enrollment is made. The exception to sibling priority occurs when commitments have been made before a parent request has been made. It is in the family's best interest to request a spot on the wait list as soon as possible.

Late Pick Up Fee

Our goal is to care for your child in the best possible way. Children become anxious when it is time to go home, and no one has come for them. It is not only unfair to the child, but to the teacher as well, because they cannot perform the duties required at that time. For these reasons, a stringent late pick-up fee will be assessed. \$10.00 will be charged for every 15 minutes, or portion thereof, that the parent is late. We will make every attempt to contact you and/or the emergency contact listed, however; it is your responsibility to contact Epiphany if you are running late. If we do not receive a call from you and cannot reach your emergency contacts, we may be required to call the local authorities to assist with the situation. Members of our staff are not permitted to take your child home with them. The late fee will be assessed the following day and is to be paid with the next tuition.

Records

Your child's records will be maintained in an accessible manner in the school office of Epiphany. These are to include the following:

- Your child's identifying information (name, birth date)
- Parent(s) name, address, home and business phone numbers
- Name and address of person(s) to whom the child may be released
- A signed statement by the parent regarding any allergies and other known health problems (medical, mental, emotional) and any special procedures that should be used in caring for the child
- Description of accidents or serious illnesses occurring while your child is at Epiphany, including the date, time, and condition under which it occurred, and the action taken
- Current School Entry Exam and Health and Immunization information
- For Religious Exemption: Form DH681 is required upon enrollment

Religious Exemptions Vaccinations

Epiphany Lutheran Preschool requires all children to meet state standards and to be up to date with their vaccinations and immunizations prior to enrollment. If a family receives an exemption (Religious or Medical) from the County Health Department, Epiphany Lutheran Preschool will respect and honor the exemption from immunizations and vaccinations. The required form is DH 681.

Health Procedures

We will promote the health and safety of your child by providing a clean, smoke-free environment, safe toys, physical education, supervised physical activities, and maintain information for disease prevention resources for parents. For the protection of all the children, we must enforce rules on illness and administering medication. Smoking is prohibited on our property.

Medication

Epiphany will administer physician prescribed medication and non-prescription medication only on the written request of the child's parents or guardians on our "Authorization to Administer Medication" form. Only an administrator is permitted to administer medication. Prescription meds must be kept in the original container with the prescription name and dosing instructions per the Pharmacist on the container and all medications will be locked up in the Clinic. Over the counter medications must be brought in NEW, nothing previously opened. A refrigerator for the medication that requires refrigeration will be provided. For the safety of the children, do not leave medication in your child's cubby or backpack. Medication administration records are kept on the form provided to parents for consent. Epiphany staff will not give the first dose of medication. The first dose must be given by the parent/guardian and monitored for the risk of side/affects and/or allergic reactions to the medication. Epiphany has the right to refuse to administer medication that can be administered before or after childcare.

Illness

A current up to date record of the child's immunizations (or a physician's statement that immunization is contraindicated) is required upon enrollment and must be kept current. We will help you with this by reminding you at least 30 days prior to expiration, and we do expect your support in this important health requirement. We are required by the Florida Department of Children and Families to have the name, address, and telephone number of your child's physician in our files. Please be sure to bring this information with you when

you are ready to enroll your child, as the school must have this information prior to attendance. A child that is vomiting or has a fever of more than 100.4 degrees will not be admitted to class.

If a child has two or more loose bowel movements (diarrhea) or has symptoms of any communicable disease they shall be isolated from the other children and given appropriate care by a staff member until picked up by a parent, guardian, or designated representative. For infants, the criteria are different, if a babies' loose bowel movements are too frequent, smell sour or have blood/mucus in the stool then parents will be called. Parents must arrange to pick up their sick child within ninety mins of being notified. If your child will be absent or has been possibly exposed to a communicable disease, please notify the school office.

If your child is sent home with a fever of 100.4 F degrees or more, they must be fever free, without medication, for twenty-four (24) hours before returning to the center. They cannot return the next day. Parents will be informed of all communicable disease occurrences. Symptoms will be reported immediately to parents. Sick or injured children will be isolated from the other children and will be made as comfortable as possible until their parents arrive. If the sick or injured child is not picked up within ninety, the emergency contact listed in the child's file will be notified and asked to pick up your child.

Guidelines

To help us successfully meet all our goals, the following guidelines have been set:

- All personal items must be labeled (bottles, baby food, diapers, blankets, clothing, toys, etc.)
- Sick children should remain at home. Please do not bring your child to school if he/she is showing signs or symptoms of illness including rashes that weep or seep. Any child or personnel in the childcare facility suspected of having a communicable disease shall be removed from the facility or placed in an isolation area until removed. Such a person may not return without medical authorization, or until signs and symptoms of the disease are no longer present. With a child, the condition shall be reported to the custodial parent or legal guardian. Signs and symptoms of a suspected communicable disease include the following:
 - Severe coughing, causing the child to become red or blue in the face or to make a whooping sound.
 - Difficult or rapid breathing.
 - Stiff neck.
 - Diarrhea (more than one abnormally loose stool within a 24-hour period);
 - Temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher when in conjunction with any other signs of illness.

- Pink Eye.
- Exposed, open skin lesions.
- Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool.
- Loss of smell or taste.
- Yellowish skin or eyes; or
- Any other unusual sign or symptom of illness.
- A child identified as having head lice shall not be permitted to return for 48 hours and must show proof that treatment was given. The child will be re-examined prior to being admitted to class.
- For infants and toddlers, an ample supply of diapers, formula and/or baby food must be provided
- A fresh change of clothing, including socks, is required for each child each day for activities involving sand and water play, as well as in case of accidental soiling. Infant and toddler teachers may require two changes of clothing. Dirty clothing will be sent home each day.
- Medication will be given at times parents indicate on the *Authorization for Dispensing Medication* form provided by the Center.
- Medication can be given only with the express written direction of the parent. Each medication must be labeled with the child's name and dosage. Medicine will be kept locked up by the teacher, supervisor and/or director.
- Epiphany staff will not give the first dose of medication. The first dose must be given by the parent/guardian and checked at home for the risk of side effects and/or allergic reactions to the medication.

Accidents/Injury

If an accident occurs, appropriate procedures will be followed, and parents will be notified at pick up. Reports are kept on all accidents and copies are asked to be signed by the parent upon picking up the child at the end of the day. In the case of severe injury or head injuries we will call parents immediately and please give us the name of an emergency contact other than the parent or physician. We also need a signed emergency medical treatment form (provided by the school) in the event a child needs emergency care. If we cannot reach you the child will be taken to the nearest Emergency Room or the Hospital.

Fire/Tornado Drills

Fire drills are conducted as required by the Florida Department of Children and Families. Records as to the date and amount of time to evacuate are recorded and kept on file at the school.

Tornado drills are conducted September-May. Date and amount of time to evacuate is recorded and kept on file at the center. Emergency evacuation plans will be posted in conspicuous places through the center and in each classroom.

Custody of a Child

At the time of enrollment, you will be expected to provide in print the names, addresses, and phone numbers of three (3) people to whom we may release your child. Any change in the above must be given to the director in writing. A child will not be released to any person other than those authorized above without prior written authorization. At any time, we reserve the right to ask for identification. It is the policy of Epiphany to not interfere, however we must have the custody court documentation in your child's file to clarify the rights and responsibilities of the parents and/or guardians.

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect

According to Florida law, all Epiphany employees are mandated to report any suspected child abuse and/or neglect to the Department of Children and Families (DCF). The Director is not required by law to notify the parents before contacting DCF.

Your child's safety is of the utmost importance to us; this includes your child being in a car seat or booster seat that is needed for their age and weight. It is our responsibility to report any child not in the proper child restraint.

Birthdays

If you would like to provide a special snack (keep room allergies in mind) for your child's birthday, you can arrange the date with the teacher. Birthday snacks will be served during snack time or lunchtime. We do not allow birthday parties to be conducted at school. Please do not send favors or balloons. Private party invitations will only be distributed if the whole class receives one. Children can easily get their feelings hurt if they feel excluded.

Daily Programs and Routines

Daily activities and schedules are posted in each classroom, along with the weekly lesson plan. We take walking trips to explore our property and the world around us that God created.

Parent Information, Involvement and Visits/Conferences

Parent information will be found on the Parent Information Board found near your child's classroom. Every child is provided a cubby for storage of personal items. Correspondence from the Director or the Teacher to the parent(s) may be placed in these cubbies.

It is part of our philosophy to bring together the child's school and home environments. It is to the child's advantage that we work together cooperatively. A child receives a great deal of satisfaction when parents are interested and involved in the life of the school. For these reasons, we ask that each parent keep abreast of school events through calendars and newsletters. We do offer Parent Involvement Activities to give you a chance to take part in events with your child at the school. Examples of these are: Pastries with Parents, Easter Egg Hunt, Oktoberfest, and Christmas Program. These are just a few of the ways that you can actively participate in your child's early learning development.

This will be our inaugural year for more school & church connections: We will have three added special events that we ask the students and families to participate in. Students will be encouraged to sing at our Sunday Contemporary Service at Rally Day in September (VPK), Christmas Celebration Day (2's-VPK), and The Spring Sing (2's-VPK). Those dates TBA.

Communication between staff and parents is encouraged. Although daily or weekly reports are given, we urge parents to speak with caregivers. Keep us informed of significant home events. This will allow us to deal sensitively with all situations.

Visits to Epiphany by parents are always welcome. We do ask that if you wish to visit your child's classroom, you make prior arrangements with the Director or Supervisor in charge. We do this to minimize disruption in your child's day, since children have little concept of time and think that when they see you, it is time to go home. A parent's departure after a short visit can be very unsettling to a small child. View windows are installed near the door of each room. We also recognize that because of your interest in the welfare of your child, you will, on occasion, wish to confer with the teacher or Director. Conferences may be arranged upon request.

In response to our Lord's request to fulfill the ministry of Epiphany Lutheran Church and the congregation's priority to spread the Gospel of Christ, the families of Epiphany's children are welcomed into our fellowship. Should any situations arise in your family life that may receive help from counseling and/or spiritual support, our Pastor will be willing to assist you in any way.

Family Expectations

Parents/Guardians and their guests must use proper language while on Epiphany property. Foul language of any type is not allowed on school grounds, which includes our parking lots and playgrounds.

We do not encourage parents to use any type of corporal punishment on their own child, whether enrolled in our program or not, while on school property. This includes our parking lots, playgrounds, and bathrooms. Further, while verbal reprimands may be proper, it is not appropriate for a parent to verbally abuse their child while on Epiphany premises. Doing so can cause undue embarrassment and emotional distress to a child. Violations of this policy will result in immediate withdrawal from our program. Parents and their guests are also prohibited from addressing or disciplining a child that is not their own. If you have a concern about the behavior of another child at our school, please bring your concern to the director who will address your concern and resolve the issue.

We have a responsibility to provide a safe environment for our employees, the children we serve, and other adults. Therefore, we have zero tolerance policy on threats or threatening behavior in our school, whether the threat comes from a child or an adult, and regardless of who is the target of the threat. This includes, but is not limited to, threats to do personal harm to someone or threats to retaliate in any way. This type of behavior will result in immediate withdrawal from our program.

At no time is any person permitted to possess firearms, ammunition, or other weapons on Epiphany property, or at events sponsored by Epiphany Lutheran Church and Preschool. For persons authorized to carry concealed weapons, we respectfully ask that any/all weapons be left in your vehicle during the period when you are at Epiphany. Any violation of the policy may result in immediate withdrawal from our program.

Grievance/Due Process Resolution

It is our desire, at Epiphany Lutheran Preschool, to address all questions and concerns that might arise. If your questions or concerns involve your child's teacher, that would be where you would begin. If a resolution has not been reached by meeting with the teacher, your next step would be to schedule a meeting with the Floor Supervisor. After meeting with the Floor Supervisor and not finding a solution, a meeting should then be scheduled with the Preschool Director. We believe it is important to follow this process by which to find a resolution. God gives us a Biblical model of dealing with issues in Matthew 18. Epiphany Lutheran Preschool uses this model to arrive at a suitable resolution for all parties.

Important Things to Remember

- Accompany your child to their classroom and say good-bye positively and quickly.
- Try to bring your child at approximately the same time each day.
- Voice appreciation of your child's creative work and if possible, display his/her work at home.
- Feel free to discuss with us things troubling you concerning your child's behavior, language, health, problems, or family changes that could affect attitude or behavior at school, and to respond positively when things are good.
- Come for your child on time.
- Schedule conferences aside from drop off or pick up.

We do reserve the right to terminate a child's enrollment for violations of policies and rules of the school or of the Florida Department of Children and Families. It is imperative that parents respect the religious nature of Epiphany.

Our Staff

Epiphany is committed to providing children with a caring and nurturing Christian staff that values the opportunity to share the love of Jesus with the children in their care. The staff selection process includes interviews, work experience checks, and criminal history background checks. Our staff participates in continual professional staff development opportunities, which include monthly staff meetings, in-service workshops, first aid, and CPR training.

Epiphany strives to provide a family environment. We believe that staff, parents, and children's feelings and emotional well-being should always be valued.

Program

Epiphany's program of childcare and early childhood education includes teaching, storytelling, sharing, music, playing, and chapel in an informal, home-like environment. We believe that hearing Bible stories is an important part of the development of a child because of what it teaches about God's love for the world, especially shown in Jesus Christ. We also believe that a child's knowledge of the love and acceptance of God in Christ is the best way of developing each child's unique personality, promoting individuality and a positive self-image both in individual and group situations.

The Epiphany program provides experiences and activities that will meet your child's spiritual, emotional, social, intellectual and physical needs. Your child will be guided to start

taking part in small and large group activities. This combination of experiences will broaden your child's aptitude for future schoolwork, while allowing free reign for imagination and creativity. Children are attended, at all times, by trained/experienced caregivers.

Your child will be guided:

- To become aware of and have an interest in the world about him/her
- To develop a sense of pride in him/herself, his/her school, church, and nation
- To make a happy transition from home life to school life
- To talk and listen to God through a regular practice of prayer
- To work and play comfortably with other children
- To manifest some degree of self-discipline and self-control
- To hear basic Bible stories and relate them to living now
- To grow in verbal, sensory motor and conceptual skills
- To observe and use simple health and safety rules
- To help think and act for self while growing in common courtesies

The program includes outdoor play – with games, exploring, exercise, indoor child-selected play – with developmentally appropriate toys, sand and water play, prayers, songs, Bible stories, music, chapel, story time, nature study and field trips.

Curriculum

Our curriculum is based on the knowledge that children learn best through their first-hand sensory experiences of touching, tasting, smelling, hearing, and observing. Children need to manipulate, experiment, and explore with various materials and in a variety of ways before they are ready to pick up a pencil and begin writing. They need to be able to sort, categorize and manipulate items before they begin to count. Most importantly they also need guidance, limits, and routines to feel safe and secure. It is our task to provide a variety of materials and learning opportunities as well as the boundaries that children need for optimal learning. We plan activities around age-appropriate objectives and units that coincide with the Florida Early Learning Developmental Standards. In addition to the daily classroom routine, planned by teachers and children, our curriculum also includes music & creative movement plus Bible lessons. We use the Wee Learn Curriculum, a Christian Bible curriculum that emphasizes that children learn best through play while they learn about the world that surrounds them.

Share Days

We ask that toys from home do not come to school unless a teacher has a specified SHARE Day. This is determined by individual teachers. This does not apply to security items such as blankets or a stuffed animal that a child may need at nap/rest time. Please do not send in

any toy that reflects violence, no toy weapons of any kind. Epiphany cannot be responsible for lost or damaged items.

Nap time

Children will nap or rest between 12:30pm and 2:30pm each day, depending on the child's age. Parents will provide a travel sized pillow, blanket and a sleeping friend (stuffed animal) if so desired. These items will be sent home every Friday, laundered by the parents, and brought back on Monday. Please do not bring anything that will not fit in your child's cubby.

Behavior Management/Discipline Policy

We believe that all our children can behave appropriately at Epiphany; thus, limits and boundaries are set for the children. If a child engages in improper activity, we will explain to him/her why his/her actions are unacceptable to those around him/her. We want children to learn to make appropriate God-pleasing choices independently and not to rely on adults to control behavior for them. In accordance with our goals of discipline, we utilize supportive and fair discipline techniques that help children acknowledge the behavior, make choices about the solution and be responsible for consequences. We recognize that this is a process.

Teachers are responsible for the behavior management of the children in their care. Teachers facilitate the development of self-control in children by using the following positive guidance techniques:

- Setting clear, consistent expectations for age-appropriate classroom behavior
- Valuing mistakes as learning opportunities
- Redirecting children to a more acceptable behavior or activity
- Listening when children talk about their feelings and frustrations
- Guiding children to resolve conflicts
- Modeling skills that help children solve their own problems

The teacher may ask the child to sit apart from others if there are repeated disciplinary issues. This is time for the child to calm down and decide when he/she is ready to rejoin the group. If all customary techniques are exhausted, an administrator may be called in to assist in resolving an issue. It is possible a parent-teacher conference may prove to be effective to resolve a behavior issue. This is an opportunity for teachers and parents to work together to find potential causes and/or solutions for repeated behavior issues. Long-term misbehavior will result in a conference between the Director and the parent(s) and may result in the withdrawal of the student.

Withdrawal may be a result of the following:

- Abuse of other children, staff, or property by child or parent/guardian
- Continued violation of policies by child or parent/guardian
- Disruptive or dangerous behavior by child or parent/guardian
- The school's inability to meet the child's needs or the parent's/guardian's expectations
- Excessive biting habits that cannot be easily redirected or deterred

Epiphany reserves the right to withdraw any student at the discretion of the Administration and School Board.

Epiphany prohibits punishment that is severe, humiliating, frightening, or physically harmful to a child. Discipline shall not be associated with food, rest, or toileting. Spanking or any other form of physical punishment is not tolerated. Young children's behavior is challenging at times, but some behaviors are typical at different age levels. We will use positive guidance techniques to work with these behaviors, but will not tolerate a child hurting another child, staff or self. We will also not tolerate disrespect or bullying of others. We will also help all children learn responses to inappropriate behaviors and bullying. If these behaviors cannot be corrected, we will have no choice but to terminate the child's enrollment immediately.

Progress Reports

Your child's teacher and/or the Director are available to discuss your child's progress at any time and will regularly bring matters to your attention when necessary. In addition, we offer Parent/Teacher conferences as needed throughout the year. The parent(s) may request Parent/teacher conferences at any time. It is intended to include you in your child's progress and to provide information on activities you may wish to reinforce at home with additional discussion.

Epiphany Rules

- Walking when inside
- Respectful indoor voices
- Keep hands and feet to yourself
- Show respect for others
- Follow directions and Be kind
- Any other classroom rules decided by the children and the teacher

Child's Personal Items

Please have your child wear play clothes that are comfortable and easy to manage. Independence is a part of the learning process and helps to build self-esteem, so make sure they can pull on/off their own clothing, assistance will be offered to button and snap. It is important that your child be allowed to get dirty and to get wet (we do have sand & water tables) and encourage the children to play both indoors and out. Therefore, we require that your child have at least one complete change of clothing, including socks & shoes, at school. Soiled clothing will be placed in the child's cubby, in a plastic bag. Each item of clothing should be labeled with your child's name so that the clothes are not misplaced. Please place clothing in a clearly labeled Ziploc bag. Jackets or sweaters sent to school should also be clearly labeled with your child's name. We recommend rubber soled and closed toed shoes to avoid falls that could result in injury. Flip-flop sandals or open toes shoes are not permitted.

Parents provide a blanket or covering for use at school. Other personal items such as pillows and stuffed animals from home are allowed at school for rest time if they can fit neatly on their cot. Safety considerations dictate that cosmetics and money, particularly coins, should never accompany your child to school.

Each child is assigned a cubby; this is a place to keep personal belongings during the day to be sure they are taken home in the evening. Parents, please check the cubby regularly for communication announcements.

Infants and Toddlers

An infant's capacity to learn is present from birth. Infants learn about their world primarily through social contact – the experiences they have with those who take care of them beginning at birth. Every infant is an individual with a unique temperament. All infants possess a set of skills and abilities that change with development. Although the rate, pattern and quality of development vary from child to child, all infants progress through similar stages of development. Our infant/toddler program is closely attuned to the predictable sequences of normal infant development in the areas of motor skills, language and communication, cognition, and socialization. This development is encouraged as the caregivers play with the children, talk to them, provide non-verbal stimuli, and respond to them. We believe that consistency in response makes the child's environment more predictable and comfortable. Varied experiences such as textures, different food, shapes, and sounds, going for strolls outside, watching birds and animals help to stimulate your child.

For infants 6 weeks to 12 months of age, care is in the ratio of four children per staff member. Children are not left unattended, even when asleep. For 12-23 months our ratio is one adult to six children. For 24-35 months our ratio is one adult to eleven children. Our staff is qualified, loving and patient. We encourage our staff toward continuing education to further their understanding of child development to meet the needs of the students. The teachers will spend a great deal of time holding, cuddling, and interacting with the children. We do not allow a child to “cry it out,” but rather make every attempt to comfort and console them. We encourage nursing mothers to continue as their individual work schedule permits and have refrigeration in the infant room for storage.

Each infant has his/her own crib, and the parent provides the crib sheet. The linens are changed weekly or when soiled and sent home to be laundered. When the child is not asleep or eating, he/she is free to move about the room, explore and interact with other children and teachers. The children are held, rocked, talked to, sung to and as appropriate, taught basic concepts of language.

We ask that you furnish a daily schedule for your infant regarding eating, sleeping and other routines, and we will adhere to it as much as possible. In addition, you may provide special requests to our staff daily by making whatever written entries you wish on your child’s daily record. We will also make written entries from time to time throughout the day. Detailed information on foods he/she has eaten, how long he/she slept, diapers, his/her disposition and activity level, noted signs or symptoms of illness or discomfort, special experiences during the day, and any extraordinary achievements such as a new word or a first step. The form will be available to you at the end of the day as a record of your child’s activities during the hours they were in our care. Your child’s teacher can explain the record as needed.

Infants, toddlers and Two’s are checked frequently throughout the day and changed at the first sign of wetness or soiling. No child is knowingly left in wet or soiled clothing. Parents will provide disposable diapers and necessary ointments. The changing table is disinfected after each use. Teachers wash their hands with antibacterial soap after each change. Federal and State Licensing requirements indicate that all infants be put on their backs for sleeping and there are no blankets or loose items allowed in the crib, therefore we suggest a sleep sac. Infants are not propped on pillows for sleeping.

We will maintain your practices regarding potty training if we can. When you think your child is ready to begin toilet training, we will assist you in accomplishing this skill for your child if there is ready access to a toilet. If your child is in a classroom without easy access to a toilet, children cannot begin potty-training at school. If access is available, we will work with you to the best of our ability until they have entered the two-year-old classroom wherein they will get regularly scheduled times to go to the bathroom and complete the

training process. Children cannot be advanced to the three-year-old room until they are potty-trained with limited accidents. This means they can independently use the bathroom with minimal help from the teacher. Class placement will be discussed with parents if a three-year-old is meant to progress to the next classroom if potty-training has not begun or needs more time to develop.

Biting is a common act among small children. For some children, they have not yet learned to express themselves with words and/or they use their mouth for sensory input. When children bite, we do the best we can to redirect them into a positive behavior and teach them to use their words. However, if biting becomes a consistent issue or an act of aggression and it cannot be resolved by redirection, we may ask for input from parents to assist but at some point, withdrawal may become necessary.

Preschool Program

As the children continue their experience at Epiphany, new considerations and changes are given to their increased attention span, activity level and need to satisfy their curiosity. A more structured environment is created, and the opportunities of exploration are increased. Some other things will change in the way the classrooms operate after the children leave the Infants and One Year Old Classrooms, the following changes will occur: no more bottles & bibs; no more refrigeration of lunches (cold packs only); nor more daily reports; children must keep shoes on throughout the day, even at nap; no more pacifiers; "lovies" are for nap time only. * No Toys from home allowed, please.

The preschool program serves children between the ages of three and four years of age with a 1:15 or 1:20 teacher/student ratio. Emphasis is placed on social and cognitive skills. Our curriculum concentrates on pre-reading, mathematical and science concepts, creative arts and music, and Bible truths. Planned activities are to reinforce the natural learning that is part of every activity in a child's day. We encourage the child to learn by doing and experiencing activities in a safe and well-supervised environment. We use on campus field trips and other special experiences to extend the children's knowledge of the world around them. All the children's activities are well-planned and presented in a positive, caring atmosphere by trained professionals.

Consistency is given through routine; variety is promoted through activities to stimulate all areas of development. Social interaction is encouraged, communication and cognitive skills are enhanced, and spiritual development is carefully nurtured.

Creativity is promoted in a non-inhibited environment. Our close staff/child relationships will contribute to the development of a child's positive self-image. All developmental areas

are given equal attention. Spiritual values are strongly promoted through exemplary interaction, as well as Bible story time, prayers before meals and snacks and regular chapel worship. Our main objective is love and individual attention through proper stimulation by the environment.

VPK Program

The pre-kindergarten program is designed for children between the ages of 4 and 5, with a teacher/child ratio of 1:20 except for VPK hours which is 1:11. We begin to develop pre-reading skills and lay the groundwork for kindergarten programs in elementary school. We round out our program with art, music, dramatic play, and motor skill activities. We offer your child a stimulating and fulfilling pre-kindergarten year. Schedules for the pre-kindergarten program are posted on the Parent Information Board. All children must be here at least 80% of the time or may be terminated from the program and they must be in their classroom by 9:00am. Tardiness affects your overall VPK attendance. Attendance recording will be taken at the end of each month, please ensure that we get your signature on the last days of each month. The clipboard will be posted outside the classroom door. All absences require notes, doctor/dental visits as well as Parent Notes regarding home bound illnesses.

Meals

Breakfast is an important meal of the day. Please provide your child with a healthy breakfast prior to coming to school each day. Our lunch time is between 12:10 pm and 12:45 pm. We do not provide lunch; parents are to provide a healthy lunch in a lunchbox with an icepack if needed as the school does not provide refrigeration. An AM snack and 2 PM snacks are advised, as we offer a snack time after nap, around 2:30 and later in the day 4-4:30, for those that remain a full day. We ask that parents help their younger children separate the snacks into classroom snack bins, earmarked for the purpose. VPK children can make appropriate snack & portion control choices once they understand the Good Food/Grow Food/Brain Food distinctions.

Children are given as much time as they need to eat, however in VPK we are prepping for kindergarten and will progress to timed lunches midway through the year. Children are encouraged to become interested in the food before them and aided when needed. No child is forced to eat any food. Special eating problems or marked changes in lunchtime behavior will be reported to parents.

We will review each child's medical report to be aware of allergies or other food problems. We also do some cooking and baking in school to provide the children with both a fun and nutritional experience. The school encourages either juice or milk with all meals.

Parents will provide all food for all ages. All baby bottles must have child's first and last name on them. Provided breast milk must have child's first and last name on the bag.

Department of Children and Families/Accreditation

Epiphany Lutheran Preschool follows and adheres to the standards set by DCF. We are accredited by the National Lutheran Schools and belong to the Florida-Georgia District. As a part of the VPK program we adhere to all rules set by the Early Learning Coalition of the Big Bend.

Class Placement

Children are placed in a classroom according to their birthdate and the Florida State Age Requirement of September 1. Teachers are assigned a classroom, and students are placed in classes in August. Class assignments are published the night of Orientation, which is the Friday before the first day of school. Epiphany Lutheran Preschool does not accept parent requests, however, any unusual circumstances in relation to your child should be noted on the application.

After School

Epiphany Lutheran After School Program Handbook

Purpose:

Our After School Program provides a safe, nurturing, and enriching environment for your child after the school day ends. We strive to foster spiritual growth, academic support, and social development in a Christ-centered atmosphere.

Schedule:

- * The program operates from school dismissal until 6:00 PM on school days.
- * We are closed on school holidays and during school breaks.
- * Epiphany Lutheran After School does not pick children up on days when the school is closed due to inclement weather.
- * Please ensure prompt pick-up by 6:00 PM. Late pick-ups will incur additional fees.

After School Offers a variety of activities such as:

- * Homework Help: Dedicated time and space for students to complete assignments with support from staff.
- * Bible Study/Devotions: Age-appropriate Bible lessons and devotional time to encourage spiritual growth.
- * Free Play: Opportunities for creative play, both indoors and outdoors (weather permitting).
- * Arts and Crafts: Engaging projects to foster creativity and self-expression.
- * Games and Activities: Fun, structured activities promoting physical activity and teamwork.
- * Snack Time: Please provide your child with two snacks for After School. We understand that school days are long, and we strive to give children two opportunities to enjoy a snack from home: Once when they arrive at After School, and then again at 5:30 PM for those who are staying until 6:00 PM.

* In addition, our church provides a weekly Wiggle Worship service that is open to the public. Children in After School and their parents are invited to participate in this kid friendly service where we learn about Jesus while we get our wiggles out with dinner after the service. We ask that parents sit and eat with their children during this time. No child can be served food without their parent or guardian in attendance at Wiggle Worship.

Behavior Expectations:

- * We expect all students to treat others with respect and kindness.
- * Bullying, inappropriate language, and disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated.
- * Disciplinary measures will be implemented as needed and may include parent conferences.

Communication:

- * We encourage open communication between parents and staff. Please feel free to reach out with any questions or concerns to your child's teacher or the director.

Enrollment & Fees:

- * Enrollment is on a first-come, first-served basis with priority for siblings.
- * Please complete the enrollment form and submit all required documentation.
- * Monthly tuition is due on the first of each month, if not paid by the 10th of each month an automatic \$30 late payment fee will be applied to any account balance on the 11th of that month.