

# TRINITY LUTHERAN PRESCHOOL

## Parent Handbook

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### ***Welcome to Trinity Lutheran Preschool (TLP)***

We are pleased that you have entrusted us with your child's early education. This handbook will inform you about our high-quality programs, general policies and procedures to make your experience with TLP an enjoyable one. Our staff and board are committed to meeting the needs of each child and family. TLP is a Non-Profit Christ-centered child-care center licensed by the State of Colorado serving children 12 months thru 12 years. TLP admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin. Our center participates in a USDA-funded program (Colorado Adult and Child Food Program) and is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

### **Philosophy/Mission Statement:**

#### **Trinity Lutheran Preschool Philosophy**

We believe that:

- Each child was designed by God for a purpose.
- Providing a strong biblically based age appropriate curriculum enables each child to develop mentally, physically, spiritually, socially, and emotionally.
- Children feel safe and secure in an atmosphere of Christian Love.
- Through age appropriate experiences, children develop an appreciation of work, play, learning, truth, the love of God, others and himself.

#### **Mission Statement**

The mission of Trinity Lutheran Preschool is to minister to the children and families of our community by presenting a developmentally appropriate Christian education and to lay a foundation for a relationship with Jesus Christ in a loving, safe and nurturing environment.

**Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.**

#### **Proverbs 22:6**

#### **OUR SCHEDULE:**

7:30 am	Preschool opens
7:30-8:30	Free Choice centers
8:30-9:00	Breakfast Preschool
9:30-lunch	Class time: learning centers, outside play, movement, Creative Curriculum, Chapel, Field trips or special guests.
11:25	Toddler Lunch
11:30	Preschool Lunch Shift
12:00-12:45	Free Play
12:45-2:45	Rest time
3:00- 3:20	Snack time
3:20-3:40	School Age Snack Time
3:20-5:00	Indoor/outdoor activities (Weather permitting)
5:00	Pick-up deadline WE ARE CLOSED

**A more detailed schedule is posted inside each classroom. Please refer to it for individual classroom schedules. All schedules are subject to change according to state regulations concerning COVID and other illnesses. You can ask for a copy.**

**Teaching Staff:** We take great pride in our professional staff, their qualifications, their credentials and their ability to work together to maintain a safe, nurturing, and productive environment for your child. TLP proudly employs a college-educated teaching staff. All teachers have taken at least 6 college level ECE credits, and many have much more. In addition each staff member also attends at least 15 hours of continuing education classes every year. Teachers are assigned to specific age groups based on their interest and experience to ensure the highest quality instruction and care for your child. Staff members receive instruction in First Aid/Infant CPR and Standard Precautions.

**Home Language:** CACFP forms and Parent Surveys are already available in Spanish. If staff members need to communicate with a parent who does not speak English as their primary language, written notes will be used. The notes will be written with the help of Google Translate. If there is a dominant second language in the classroom, a bilingual aide will be provided to help in translation in the classroom.

**Referral for Services:** When parents, teachers or both feel that a referral is necessary, after a conference and agreement, a referral can be made to San Juan BOCES, Axis Health, Pinon Project, Safecare Colorado, or any local agency that can help address the concern.

**Hearing/Dental/Vision Screenings:** Parents will need to provide dates of hearing, dental and vision screenings on registration information. Trinity will be providing an opportunity for children to be screened at school for FREE. Hearing and vision screenings are conducted by Montezuma School District. Dental screenings are provided by Cortez Dental.

**Medical Insurance:** Parents will need to provide medical insurance for their child. Name of the insurance company will need to be on the child's registration form. If you need help finding insurance for your child there is information on our family resource wall (just inside the front door)

**Adult/child ratios and group sizes:**

Fish Class (Toddlers) 1:5 with a group no larger than 10

Bear Class (2½-3) 1:8

Elephant Class (3-4) 1:10

Kangaroo Class (PreK) 1:12

School Agers 1:14

When enrollment in a class increases, a second person, an aide, will be added to the class to decrease the adult to child ratio. Primary caregiving practices are part of the policies of our school. The development of a relationship between a child and a caregiver who is special to that child is at the heart of good childcare. Primary care is the assignment of a special caregiver to each child which encourages the formation of close and trusting relationships between caregivers, the children and their families.

**Primary Care:** Each child in care will be assigned a primary teacher. That staff member is primarily in charge of the child's observations, assessments, and communication with parents.

**Continuity of Care:** In the toddler room, children begin at 12 months and attend that class until they turn at least 2 ½ or 3. Children that are potty trained and ready can transition into the Bear class at 2 ½. According to State Regulations, children that are 3 must transition into the Bear class.

**Toilet Training:** Children enrolled in the preschool classes must be potty trained when they start school. We ask that students wear underwear, not pull-ups. We understand that sometimes little ones have bathroom accidents. This is not a requirement for children enrolled in the Toddler Nursery. However, children must be potty trained by their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday to be moved from the toddler program to the preschool program. Children that are potty trained may move to the preschool program when they turn 2 ½ years old at the beginning of a new session (fall, spring or summer).

**Transitions:**

**New children:** Parents are encouraged to bring their child to visit the school prior to the first day of attendance to help children (and parents) feel more comfortable on the first day. During this visit, you will be given a tour of the facility and be introduced to the staff members that will care for your child.

**New School Year:** An open house will be held at the beginning of each school year so ALL children and families can visit the classroom they will attend and meet the teachers and other families.

**Toddler to preschool:** Toddlers that will transition to the Bear class (first year of preschool), will visit the classroom accompanied by their teacher or classroom aide. They will have the opportunity to visit for up to a month before they will move to the classroom, as teacher/child ratios permit. Each of the visits will be scheduled for different times of the day so they will be able to experience the entire day. Children will be moved up to the preschool room at the end of a session (summer, fall, or spring), in pairs/groups. Parents will be notified at the beginning of the transition process and are invited for a conference with the toddler and preschool teachers.

**Class to class:** Children that are moving from one classroom to the next will be given opportunities to visit the new classroom.

Children will be moved to the next classroom at the end of a session, (summer, fall, or spring).

During the regular school day, children have the opportunity to interact with all teachers. Preschool nap-time takes place in other classrooms than their own, so in this way, children get to know the other teachers and the classrooms. It is discussed with children throughout the year which class they will attend next year, so they look forward to moving up as they grow older. We strive to maintain this family type atmosphere, so that children feel comfortable with all staff and classrooms in the school, making adjusting to changes easier.

A kindergarten transition dinner will be held in April each year. Children going into kindergarten and their families will be invited to dine with us at the preschool before attending their future elementary school's open house that evening. We will notify families of which elementary school their child should attend based on their address and school district

boundaries. Additional information regarding transitioning to public school (kindergarten) will be made available to families as it is published.

**Enrollment:** Parents need to have all pages of the enrollment packed filled out before the child can start school. The state of Colorado requires we have a completed and signed health examination report and immunization record on file for each child attending TLP. This health report must be repeated annually.

Pre enrollment for summer sessions and the school year will be held each April. Enrollment for current families will be held for three weeks before beginning open enrollment.

**Withdrawal:** Please give notice of withdrawal from the program or a change in your child's schedule at least one week in advance of the change.

**Payment:** Payment of tuition must be made on the first of the month for that month. If your situation requires an exemption from this policy, you must request it in writing to the director. If tuition is not paid by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month, your account will be subject to late charges of 1.5% monthly. Our school accepts child-care assistance from the Montezuma County Dept. of Social Services. Notice of acceptance into this program is required before the child can attend. Parental share payment will be treated like tuition and is due on the first of each month. Please consider paying automatically by credit card. There will be a \$30.00 bounced check fee for checks returned to us. Receipts are available upon request, and credit card slips will be issued when the credit card has been successfully charged. Statements will be available by January 15 for child-care payments made the previous year to be used for income tax purposes.

**Payment and billing records** will be available to all parties responsible for payment. If the account is delinquent, the child can lose their spot, regardless of which party is delinquent. Account information will be available to the assigned collection agency in the event of delinquent accounts being turned over for collection. The collection agency has a \$350.00 legal fee in addition to the amount being collected.

**Parents cell phones:** Please refrain from using your cell phone at the preschool. Teachers may need to convey important information about your child and cannot do so if you are on the phone. Your cooperation is very much appreciated!

**Signing Your Child In & Out:** Please pick your children up on time. **If children are not picked up by 5:30 every effort will be made to contact parents and/or designated pick-up people. If no contact can be made, the Cortez Police Department and/or Montezuma County Social Services Department will be notified and the child will be handed over to them.**

*\*A \$1.00 LATE FEE IS CHARGED FOR EACH MINUTE AFTER 5:00, PER CHILD .*

You must sign your child in and out each day. We need accurate sign-in sheets for safety, billing and record keeping as required by the State of Colorado. In case of an emergency, the sign-in clipboards will accompany the class and are used to account for children, so accuracy in signing in and out is vital to your child's safety. If you must have someone different pick your child up, please call the center and/or send a written note and have the person bring identification with him or her. Please instruct the person about the sign in/out procedures.

We WILL NOT allow children to go with an unauthorized person. Any person arriving to pick up a child that is suspected to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol will be denied access to the child. If your child's class has left on a field trip, please report to the office so the child can be placed in another class until their class returns.

**Absences:** You will be charged for the days your child is signed up to attend. Please notify us if your child will be absent. (There are no credits for absences)

**Items from home:** Each child will need to bring a change of clothes, and all day children may bring a small nap blanket. Our center has lots of toys, manipulatives and engaging activities; therefore, toys from home are not allowed.

**Rest Periods:** Children attending more than 4 hours will be required to rest in accordance with state regulations.

**Visiting:** Families are always welcome at the center at any time. If someone is to visit your child during the day, let us know. Visitors need to check in and sign our guestbook. If you would like to volunteer in the classroom please contact us. Please ask due to Covid-19 if the preschool is allowing visitors at the time.

**Food Program:** Our center is a member of the Colorado Adult and Child Food Program that reimburses the school for food according to family income. Each family must fill out an Income Eligibility Form upon enrollment, (it is necessary for claiming procedures). A copy of the weekly menu is posted near the kitchen door. Sack lunches are permitted on designated days. Children will be encouraged to try foods in a relaxed atmosphere and no child will be forced to eat. Food will not be used as a reward or punishment. Please make staff members aware of allergies or special diets. If the child requires special food, the parent is required to provide that food. You are invited to provide snacks for a special occasion if you desire, however, no homemade goodies are allowed by order of the health dept. (Only store bought treats)

**Children with Disabilities:** Children with various disabilities are welcome in our center. We will work with you to serve disabled children to the best of our ability. However, our buildings are not currently wheelchair accessible.

**Child Abuse:** Colorado Law requires any staff member who has reasonable cause to know or suspect that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect to report it. The staff member will report it to the director and together they will report it to the Montezuma County Dept. of Social Services and/or the Cortez Police Department. If you feel you need to report abuse or neglect the number to call is 565-3769. If you suspect this preschool of having licensing violations, the number of the Child Care Licensing authority is 564-4275 in Cortez or 1-800-799-5876 in Denver. You can inquire on the status of this school's license by calling 1-303-866-5958, or at 1575 Sherman Street, Denver, CO 80203-1714.

**Clothing:** Your child should wear simple clothing, easy for a child to remove, sturdy and washable. For safety reasons we request that cowboy boots or flip-flops not be worn to school. Label outer garments with permanent marker.

**Emergency:** If an emergency arises during the day requiring medical attention, parents or other persons listed will be called. If no adult responsible for the child can be reached, professional emergency medical care will be obtained. In the event of natural emergencies involving weather, children will be taken to Trinity Lutheran Church. Fire drills are conducted monthly. In the case of a missing child, parents & the Cortez Police Department will be notified immediately.

**Weather:** If the Cortez schools are closed due to snow, we will be closed. If the Cortez schools have a delay we will as well. Listen to the local radio for school updates, our Facebook page (Trinity Lutheran Preschool), website [tipcortez.org](http://tipcortez.org), and or a Procure message will be sent out. Emergency texts will be sent to those who sign up for them, contact the office to get on the list. In excessively hot weather, children will have a more limited time outdoors and water breaks will be encouraged. Children will go outside most days, so please, dress children appropriately for any type of weather. Flip-flops and most sandals are not appropriate for wear at school. Sunscreen may be applied by staff with written permission of the parent.

**Discipline Policy:** Our basic goal in discipline is to help children understand that individual choices impact parents, classmates, teachers and school community in either a positive or negative fashion. Parents, students and teachers must work together to help children learn to comply with home, school and community rules in order to become productive citizens. Children need to be taught to respect rules and learn to accept personal responsibility for choices they make. Discipline policies help staff consistently address inappropriate behavior. The teacher will use the following steps to help teach self-control to the child.

1. Warning
2. Removal from the activity while staying with the teacher (time-out)
3. Discussion of feelings, rules and choices made, alternate choices & behaviors
4. Deciding to return to the activity
5. Teachers will document behaviors that interfere with learning and/or safety

If problem behavior continues the following steps will be followed:

1<sup>st</sup> offense: Note home and/or phone call to parents with a referral to the office.

2<sup>nd</sup> offense: Note and conferences scheduled between teacher and parents.

3<sup>rd</sup> offense: Conference with teacher, parents and director. At this time a written behavior plan will be established.

4<sup>th</sup> offense: If unacceptable behavior persists the child may be suspended/expelled at the discretion of the school board, director and teacher.

Extreme offences will be treated on a case-by-case basis and can result in immediate termination of child care contracts.

\*The Creative Curriculum discusses strategies for children to use when they are angry/out of control.

**Illness at school:** Please do not send your child to school if he/she has a communicable disease (staph or strep infection, chicken pox, a fresh cold, pink eye, impetigo, etc.) if he/she has a fever or had one during the previous night, is vomiting or diarrhea or has done so the previous night. If one is prescribed, children must have been on an antibiotic for at least 24 hours before they can return to school. Children must be fully able to participate in all

activities including outdoor play. If your child becomes ill at school, you will be called to pick them up. We take temperatures two times to assure accuracy. We will make every effort to reach the parents when a child is ill, but after 30 minutes we will attempt to reach the emergency contacts indicated by the parents.

**Administering Medicine:** If your child requires medication while at child care:

- \*All prescription and nonprescription medication require a written authorization from your health care provider AND a parent's written consent. Medications are kept in locked cabinets or the refrigerator. The medication authorization forms are available at the school.
- \*All medications must be brought in the original container.
- \*Program staff involved in medication administration receive special training and are supervised by a nurse consultant.
- \*Program staff is not authorized to determine when an "as needed" medication is to be given. Specific instructions are necessary.
- \*When antibiotics are necessary, they should be given at home when possible
- \*If your child requires an inhaler for asthma symptoms or an EpiPen for severe allergic reactions, the same procedure is followed. If a child is old enough to administer the medication himself, written permission from the doctor is needed & will be supervised by a staff member. No medications are stored in cubbies/backpacks.
- \*This is a child care licensing requirement.

**Safety:** We ask that parents closely supervise their children in the parking lot. It is recommended that as children exit from cars, they be offered a hand to hold. Do not leave cars running unless there is an adult present in the car. Be sure staff is aware of your child's presence, do not open doors and leave the child inside without making eye contact with a staff member.

**Parent Teacher-Conferences:** Formal parent-teacher conferences will be held each October and April. There will also be a back to school Open House held in August of each year. These are optional events but are a great opportunity to get to know your child's teacher and learn about their development.

**Fall program** runs during the Cortez School District's school year, beginning mid-August and running until late in May. Dates are included with your registration packet and available in the office.

**Parent Information:** There is information available at our center for parents. There is a display of pamphlets available about issues important to our parents (to the left of the door in the main building before going down the stairs). If you need help or information on a specific issue, please let us know and we will work with you to find the answers you need. Parents are informed of activities by receiving monthly calendars and newsletters including special days, weekly bible stories, and school closings and parenting tips (posted right behind sign in/out sheets in the main building). Family nights are provided every month by the Pinion Project.

**Summer program** begins 1 week after fall program ends, and ends 1 week before fall program begins. We provide care for school aged children on a first-come first served basis.

Information will be available yearly in April. Each child will be given a calendar at registration that will show dates when the school will be closed.

*After you review this handbook, we encourage you to ask questions and refer to this book often. We look forward to serving your family and promise to provide a warm and loving environment for your child.*

*\*Billing is done in advance monthly for days your child is scheduled to attend.  
Monthly rates are based on a yearly average of four weeks in a month  
(Oct. has more Nov/Dec have less).  
The Tuition Rates are Subject to change with a 30 day advance written notice*