

Revised 5/29/20

# Parent Handbook

2020-2021



# Table of Contents

## Who We Are

Affiliation	4
Why a Christian Center?	4
Mission Statement	4
Philosophy of Education	4
Contact Information	4

## Our Program

Program Plan	5
Philosophy of Education: Areas of Development	6
Teacher Qualifications/Responsibilities	7

## General Policies and Procedures

Enrollment and Registration	8
Hold Fees / Deposits	8
Tuition and Fees	9
Discounts	10
Discipline	10
Termination/Withdrawal	11
Hours of Operation	12
Inclement Weather	12
Fire Drills	12
Tornado Drills	13
Drop-In Care	13
Absences	13
Arrival and Departures	13
Unauthorized Persons	14
What to Bring to Childcare	14
Supplies	14
Clothing	14
Items from Home	15
Pets	15

## **Our Schedule/Routine**

Meals and Snacks	16
Nap/Quiet Time	16
Toilet Training	16
Indoor / Outdoor Play	17
Field Trips	17
Daily Schedules	17
Summer Daily Schedules	18

<b>Health Regulations</b>	19
---------------------------	----

<b>Non- Discrimination Policy</b>	20
-----------------------------------	----

<b>Parent/Guardian Code of Conduct</b>	21
--	----

<b>Acknowledgment Receipt of Parent Handbook - Sign and Return</b>	22
--	----

## Affiliation

First Steps Early Learning Center is a mission of First Evangelical Lutheran Church. We are also a member of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod and follow their teachings.



## Why a Christian Center?

First Steps Early Learning Center will help your children take the necessary steps in their educational walk and help them grow in God's love. Your little ones are important to us, but more importantly, to Jesus who said, "Let the little children come to me...for the kingdom of God belongs to these." Mark 10:14

## Mission Statement

First Steps Early Learning Center exists to serve the La Crescent community and surrounding areas providing childcare for children ages 6 weeks to 12 years. First Steps Early Learning Center provides a safe, loving environment where children learn and grow in Christ's love.

## Philosophy of Education

We believe that each child entrusted to our care is truly *a gift from God*. Each child is a special individual who possesses an innate ability to be fruitful in a unique way. We believe that each child needs a well-balanced program designed to motivate growth spiritually, emotionally, physically, mentally, and socially.

## Contact Information

### **First Steps Early Learning Center**

414 Main Street La Crescent, MN 55947

Phone: (507) 895-5704

Email First Steps: [director@keepchristfirst.com](mailto:director@keepchristfirst.com)

Church: [churchoffice@keepchristfirst.com](mailto:churchoffice@keepchristfirst.com)

Pastor: [pastor@keepchristfirst.com](mailto:pastor@keepchristfirst.com)

## Program Plan

1. First Steps Early Learning Center welcomes into its program all children ages 6 weeks - 12 years regardless of race, color, creed, sex, or national origin. Our maximum enrollment is 65 children. We are licensed to care for :
  - 11 Infants (6 weeks-15 months)
  - 19 Toddlers (16 months-32 months)
  - 20 Preschoolers (33 months-1<sup>st</sup> day of Kindergarten)
  - 15 School Ageds (Kindergarten- 12 years of age)
2. We assure free and open access to the entire facility by all parents/guardians whose children are enrolled in our program. Our operating hours are Monday-Friday 6:30 AM- 6:00 PM
3. Evidence of child abuse will be reported, **immediately**, to the proper authorities.
4. Parents/guardians and authorized persons may pick up children at any time of day. A phone call to alert staff is appreciated, but not required.
5. First Steps Early Learning Center does not allow unauthorized parties to pick up children. Photo identification must be presented and written or verbal authorization is required to pick up any child. It is essential that parents notify us if and when they request an alternate person pick up their child.
6. We will never use corporal punishment as a disciplinary practice. We do use positive reinforcement and redirection. We incorporate the Conscious Discipline methods. More information can be requested on this at any time.
7. We do not transport children off the premises without parental consent.
8. First Steps Early Learning Center does not allow research, experimentation, or public relations activities involving children without parental consent.
9. Children are supervised by qualified staff at all times (within sight and sound) as required by law.
10. First Steps Early Learning Center complies with local fire, health, and building codes to insure a physically safe environment for children.
11. We do not allow unauthorized persons to loiter on or about the premises.
12. We are licensed by the state of Minnesota and fully insured in accordance with state law.
13. Illegal drug or alcohol use is prohibited on the premises.
14. We are not allowed to accept sick children, and children who become sick in school must be isolated while in our care. Parents/guardians or designated caretakers must pick up children who become ill within an hour of notification.
15. In the event of a serious injury, we will contact medical authorities and parents/guardians or emergency contact(s) immediately.
16. The toddler room is split into two sides. The students will be able to freely utilize both sides of the classroom and interact with all the lead teachers in the room.
17. Parents/guardians may review the program plan upon request.

## **Philosophy of Education: Areas of Development**

### **Spiritual Development**

We will provide a Christian learning environment through group concern and caring, Bible stories, simple prayers, and through experiencing God's love in our work and play area.

### **Social Development**

We will provide an environment in which children develop healthy attitudes toward themselves. It is important that they learn to understand, respect, and cooperate with others. Our program provides important opportunities for children to make new friends, work with one another, and learn to appreciate and respect the work and play area of others.

### **Emotional Development**

We will provide positive guidance to enhance your children's understanding of self-worth. Through problem solving, the children will learn to be responsible and work both in groups and independent of others.

### **Physical Development**

We will provide opportunities for each child to develop large motor coordination through activities in the large motor area and outside play equipment. The children will also be encouraged to develop their fine motor skills through various activities like sorting, doing puzzles, rubbings, printing letters, and art.

### **Cognitive Development**

We will provide an environment in which each child will experience a hands-on approach and play-based curriculum that provides the most conducive environment for learning. Through play we are able to enhance and teach pre-reading skills and concepts, foundations for math and science, writing skills, creative art, dramatic play, and social and emotional activities. All these factors will be essential in your children's future educational success.

## Teacher Qualifications/Responsibilities

The lead teacher must meet Minnesota state licensing rules and qualifications. The teacher will also be required to take courses or attend workshops/conferences each year to further their knowledge of early childhood education.

The teacher-to-child ratio is as follows:

Infant (6 weeks - 15 months) Room: 4:1

Toddler (16 - 32 months) Room: 7:1

Preschool (33 months – 5 years) Room: 10:1

School Age (Kindergarten - 12 years): 15:1

The teacher is responsible for planning and implementing safe and developmentally appropriate activities for the children. Staff are to be supervising the children during the school hours. If you wish to have a conversation beyond the usual greetings with the teacher, make arrangements for a time when the teacher is not in charge of the children. The teacher appreciates talking with you, as long as it does not interfere with the role as a teacher.

\*More detailed qualifications and responsibilities are available upon request.

A staff may have a variance due to previous experience and work history which qualifies them according to state guidelines to offer quality care at a higher level than their education studies originally dictates. These variances may be for experience hours in childcare or for educational backgrounds. Those employees that have a variance for experience are earning their hours of experience through their employment. This means that they have had no prior experience in a childcare setting specifically. Employees that have a variance for education are working towards furthering their early childhood education or have not attended a university for a degree and are working towards the CDA.

*For the 2020-2021 school year we do have a staff member that was disqualified due to a background check. The reason they were disqualified had nothing to do with children, it was retail theft. This took place many years before working at our childcare center and the infraction has been dealt with in the proper way. Since this employee has provided tremendous care for our children at the center, we see no reason to suspend or terminate her employment with us. Licensing has verified this staff member as well.*

The Department of Human Services reviews all these disqualifications thoroughly. They will set it aside when the employee shows no risk of harm for the children or program.

## Enrollment and Registration

There are several forms that make up the First Steps Early Learning Center enrollment packet:

- Enrollment Form
- Enrollment Contract
- Acknowledgment Receipt of Parent Handbook
- Individual Care Plan Family Information Form (children 6 weeks to age 2)
- Health Care Summary* (completed and signed by a physician)
- Immunization record
- Walk Permission Form
- Photo and Video Release Form
- Medication Form
- Household Income Form (CACFP)
- Child Enrollment Form (CACFP)

This enrollment packet must be completed and on file *BEFORE* we can assume the responsibility of caring for your children. This is required by the state licensing guideline but also ensures that your children receive the very best care possible. All forms must be reviewed and updated annually. If there are changes to any information included on the forms in the enrollment packet, please notify the Director to update your records. *Note:* There is a 30-day grace period rule for the Health Care Summary form.

*Registration Fee:* A \$50 per child non-refundable registration fee is required at the time of enrollment. If you suspend childcare for a period of more than 90 days, upon return to First Steps Early Learning Center (space permitting), a \$25 reapplication fee applies.

*Annual Supply Fee:* A \$65 per child annual supply fee is charged each September, or upon registration. Families using our School Age after-school care program have an adjusted supply fee of \$35.

*Key Fob Fee:* A \$25 per key fob charge will be made on every Procure account. This is refundable. Parents/guardians will receive the \$25 back when they turn in their key fob at termination of enrollment or upon graduation from the preschool program. We ask that parents/guardians return their key fobs at the start of the child's final week at First Steps.

## Hold Fees / Deposits

*Hold Fee / Wait List:* Families needing childcare in the future can be added to our Wait List. To secure their placement in line a \$50 non-refundable hold fee is required. With the completion of an Enrollment Form this hold means that families will be notified according to the order in which they requested their seat. First Steps will communicate with the families once childcare is available. Being placed on the Wait List without a hold fee does not guarantee a spot in a classroom.

*Deposit:* Once a start date has been confirmed a deposit for half of the first week's tuition will be requested. This deposit will be applied to their tuition payment upon start. No deposit will be accepted until a confirmed date can be determined.

*Long Absences/Vacation Time:* Families are responsible for weekly tuition to hold your child(ren)'s space during vacation and in the situation of maternity/paternity leave. A family enrolled for full time childcare



for the *ENTIRE* calendar year receives one week of discounted vacation hold fees annually of 50% of the normal weekly tuition rate. Please inform the Director at least two weeks in advance of the scheduled vacation time of your intent to utilize your discounted vacation hold fee.

\*\*\* Please note, some families may have two 50% off weeks to utilize in 2020 due to COVID 19 \*\*\*

## Tuition and Fees

Your tuition rate(s) is outlined on your Enrollment Contract(s).

Tuition Schedule			
	Weekly	Drop-In	Hourly
Infant	\$210	N/A	N/A
Toddler	\$190	\$50	N/A
Preschool	\$165	\$50	N/A
School Age	N/A	*\$50	\$5
Summer School Age	\$155	\$50	N/A

\*In the event there is no school and your children attend First Steps Early Learning Center for the day (space permitting), the daily drop-in tuition rate applies. Please see the *Drop-In Care* section later in this Parent Handbook.

Tuition is due by close of business Friday evening for that week. Tuition payments can be made by check, cash, online by ACH, or credit card\*. Checks must be placed in the locked tuition box near the office. There will be a late fee of \$10 for failure to pay by Center closing time on Friday. \*Credit card payments are subject to an additional 2.7% administration fee.

Please make checks payable to:

**First Steps Early Learning Center**

Repeated late payments will be reviewed by the First Steps Early Learning Center Committee and the First Evangelical Lutheran Church Board of Lay Ministry and is grounds for suspension and/or termination of the childcare contract.

All tuition and fees are to be paid in FULL for childcare services provided even if the childcare contract is terminated by the Center or the child(ren)'s parent(s)/guardian(s).

Tuition that is 2 or more weeks delinquent (including late fees) and without satisfactory payment arrangement with the Director, or is not being paid in accordance with the payment arrangement will result in immediate termination of the childcare contract. Tuition and fees not paid in full within 60 days will result in collection activity and/or legal action.

If a check is returned for non-sufficient funds (NSF) there will be a \$25 fee assessed as a result. Cash payment is required for the NSF fee(s) and the original amount of the check presented for tuition payment. Childcare will be suspended until full payment of tuition and NSF charges has been received online. Upon a second returned check within a 6 month period, only online payments will be accepted for tuition payment for a period of 3 months. All returned checks will be reviewed by the First Evangelical Lutheran Church Board of Lay Ministry.

First Steps prohibits a child to remain in our care for more than 10 hours each day. Please be sure to make arrangements for their pick up. A \$5 fee will be charged for each 15 minute segment over the 10 hour limit. Multiple infractions regarding this rule may lead to a termination in contract.

## Discounts

There is a 15% discount for members of First Evangelical Lutheran Church, La Crescent.

A 20% discount applies for each additional enrolled child. Your youngest child enrolled in care determines the full price rate.

Discounts cannot be combined. Each child can receive one discount in total.

## Discipline

First Steps Early Learning Center utilizes a conscious discipline policy, which focuses on prevention, redirection, love, consistency, and firmness.

If a parent/guardian and/or child is exhibiting behaviors and/or actions that deviate from the policies and practices of the Center, your child's teacher will request a conference; together we will try to find a resolution. If unable to reach resolution, the Director will issue and document an occurrence. Written notification of the occurrence will be placed in your child's mailbox as well as their student file. If necessary, a meeting with the Director will be held to discuss options to prevent future occurrences or to dispute an occurrence. Parents/guardians have the option to dispute an occurrence with the First Steps Early Learning Center Committee. Three occurrences within any 12 month period will result in termination of the childcare contract. The Director will request an exit conference with the parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss the three occurrences that were issued.

### **Grounds for Immediate Dismissal:**

- First Steps Early Learning Center reserves the right to refuse service to anyone at any time. If it is determined, by staff that a child is being disruptive, destructive, disrespectful, has repeated discipline problems or is endangering themselves or others, the child's parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted to pick-up the child from the Center and could result in suspension and/or termination of the childcare contract. If a child exhibits this behavior, a meeting will be held with the Director, parents and classroom lead teacher to discuss ways to help prevent and improve behavior. If a child is sent home three times, the childcare contract will automatically be terminated immediately concurrent with the third occurrence. In severe cases where a child intentionally causes great harm or destruction, the child's parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted to immediately pick up the child and

immediate termination of the childcare contract without further notice. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be responsible to find alternative childcare.

- Delinquent tuition and/or fees beyond 2 weeks, without satisfactory arrangements with the Director.
- Lack of parental cooperation: There will be no cursing, swearing, smoking, threatening behavior, confrontation, or violation of First Steps Early Learning Center's confidentiality policy allowed inside or outside of the premises including social media. Appropriate actions will be taken if these rules are not followed.

## **Termination/Withdrawal**

1. Parent(s)/guardian(s) must notify the Director two weeks prior to the withdrawal of the child(ren).
2. Registration fees will not be refunded regardless of whether the childcare contract is terminated by the Center or the child(ren)'s parent(s)/guardian(s). All tuition and fees must be paid in FULL for childcare services provided.
3. Termination of enrollment will occur due to the following actions:
  - Failure to pay registration or childcare fees.
  - Failure to submit the required enrollment and health information forms.
  - Failure to observe the rules of the Center relating to the arrival and departure of the child.
  - If the child is unable to function within the framework of the childcare program or consistently displays inappropriate behavior.
  - Lack of parental cooperation.
  - Unforeseen circumstances where it is determined by the staff and First Evangelical Lutheran Church Board of Lay Ministry that an adjustment in enrollment is made in the best interest of the Center as a whole.

## Hours of Operation

First Steps Early Learning Center is open Monday through Friday, 6:30 AM - 6:00 PM. Children are to be picked up no later than 6:00 pm (Center closing time). As a reminder a late fee will be assessed for those children picked up after Center closing time. There will be a minimum of \$1 per minute charge for any time spent at the center after 6pm.

Preschool is held from the Tuesday after Labor Day (September) through the Friday before Memorial Day (May). There are various days of no preschool in correlation to holidays and school schedules.

Childcare is in operation year round. There are a limited number of days that childcare is closed to Staff Inservice training days according to licensing statutes, deep cleaning of our facility, additionally to allow staff members time with their families during the Holidays.

First Steps Early Learning Center will be closed on the following days (this is subject to change based on the need for deep cleaning the Center) :

New Year's Day  
Good Friday and Easter Monday  
Memorial Day  
The Week of Fourth of July\*  
Labor Day  
Thanksgiving Day and Black Friday  
The Week of Christmas Eve and Christmas Day\*

\*Subject to Change.

We maintain an open door policy for parents/guardians during Center hours. This means that parent(s)/guardian(s) are always welcome to call, visit or pick-up children in the Center at any time of day. A phone call to alert staff is appreciated, but not required.

## Inclement Weather

First Steps Early Learning Center **will remain open** unless a statewide emergency is declared for our area. In the event that the Center will be closed for the day, you will be contacted via email by 5:30 AM. You may also check our Facebook page for updates. If the Center has opened for the day and it becomes necessary to close, parents/guardians will be contacted to come and pick up your child(ren) or make arrangements to have your child(ren) picked up **within one hour** of contact.

## Fire Drills

We are required by state law to conduct 1 fire drill monthly. We will not conduct fire drills when the temperature is below 20 degrees or above 90 degrees. Evacuation cribs with wheels are used to transport infants and non-walking toddlers to the emergency meeting area.

## Tornado Drills

We are required by state law to conduct 1 tornado drill monthly during the months of April through September. Evacuation cribs with wheels are used to transport infants and non-walking toddlers shelter area.

## Drop-In Care

A Drop-In situation may be considered for children age 16 months and older, provided staffing remains within the ratio set by the state licensing guidelines. In order to provide care a week's notice is required by Parents/guardians. Dates are not guaranteed unless confirmed by the Director. State Licensing requires all paperwork to be completed *BEFORE* the child(ren) is permitted to attend the Center. The rate for drop-in care is \$50 per day.

We must receive your child's drop-in schedule at a minimum of one week in advance. Requesting dates with less than a week's notice has a higher potential to have the request denied due to lack of staff.

Drop in care is subject to change based on enrollment in each classroom. It is possible that drop in care will be suspended for a certain amount of time. For more information, contact the Director.

## Absences

We understand that illness and vacations will arise. First Steps Early Learning Center is open year-round and tuition is based on enrollment, not on attendance. Illness and vacation time have been considered in our competitive tuition rates. To maintain your child(ren)'s space, tuition must be paid during the absence of a child due to illness, vacation, holidays or for any other reason.

As previously stated, a family enrolled for full time childcare for the **entire** calendar year receives one week of discounted vacation hold fees annually\*. The discounted vacation hold fee is 50% of the normal weekly tuition rate.

*\*\*\* In regards to a pandemic, some families may have two weeks of 50% discount\*\*\**

## Arrival and Departures

Children are to arrive clean and fed (unless arriving before a meal time). Parents/guardians are required to escort their children to and from their children's classrooms. Parents/guardians are required to sign their children in and out of the Center each day. Children who ride the bus to/from the Center will be signed in/out by Center Staff. For your convenience, a computer is located near the door, this records the children's attendance, hours, and who escorted the children to/from the Center each day. This ensures safety as well as accuracy in applying tuition. Failure to utilize the computerized sign in/out system will result in a warning for the first occurrence and a fee of \$50 per occurrence. If you encounter difficulty using the computerized system, please contact a Staff member to assist as soon as possible.

It is normal for some children to have difficulty separating from parents/guardians or cry when dropping off. Please make your drop off brief to minimize anxiety at separation. Center staff will encourage your children in interactive play upon arrival.

Please be brief at pick-up times as well. This may present as a time of testing when two authority figures are present (the parent(s)/guardian(s) and provider). During arrival and departure, we expect parents/guardians to support our rules.

Our procedure is to release children only to parents/guardians, individuals designated by the parent(s)/guardian(s) on the Authorized Pick-up and/or the Emergency Contact Form. If someone other than the parent(s)/guardian(s) is to pick up the child(ren), we must have written or verbal authorization in advance. Written authorization is preferred. Photo identification *WILL* be required for Center staff to release your children. For a smooth transition please advise the pickup person of our photo ID policy.

*\*\*\*In the case of a pandemic, we may still have a policy regarding our ELC. We ask that parents wash their hands and their child's hands in the bathroom. After washing, please ring the doorbell and an employee will walk your child to their classroom. Be sure to update staff or message your teacher regarding any information they should know.\*\*\**

## Unauthorized Persons

If an unauthorized person, a person who is incapacitated or suspected of abuse attempts to pick up your children, Center staff will take appropriate action. If the parent(s)/guardian(s) cannot be successfully contacted, staff will contact the Authorized Pick-up and/or Emergency Contact(s) to pick up your children. In the event we are unable to contact you, an Authorized Pick-up or Emergency Contact, Center staff will supervise your children at the Center. At the discretion of Center staff, police may be called.

## What to Bring to Childcare

### **Infant Room (6wks-15m)\***

Diapers, wipes, powder, ointment, Nuk/pacifier, 3-4 bottles, breast milk/formula, 2 extra sets of clothes.

**Summer:** Swim diapers, swimsuit, sunscreen

### **Toddler Room (16m-32m)\***

Diapers/pull-ups, wipes, diaper cream, Nuk/pacifier (if needed), blanket, inside shoes or slippers (non-marking and skid resistant), 2 extra sets of clothes

**Summer:** Swim diapers, swimsuit, sunscreen

### **Preschool Room (33m-5y)\***

Crib-sized fitted sheet, blanket and pillow, inside shoes or slippers (non-marking and skid resistant), 1 extra sets of clothes, a box of Kleenex, a box of wet wipes

**Summer:** Swimsuit, sunscreen, towel

**\*\*Please label all items listed above\*\***

## **Supplies**

Parents/guardians must supply the following items to be kept in child(ren)'s cubby; diapers, pull-ups, wipes, powder and/or ointment, pacifier, bottles, inside shoes or slippers (non-marking and skid resistant) and two complete change of clothes (replace when soiled). All personal belongings should be clearly marked with your children's name.

## **Clothing**

Children should arrive in clothing appropriate for the weather and for movement. Layers allow your children to adjust to changing climates. A change of clothing is required to be kept in the children's backpack or cubby at all times. Please be sure to include hats, mittens, boots and coats for cold weather.

Label all clothing items.

## **Items from Home**

Children are not permitted to bring toys or personal items from home as they may be a distraction, lost or broken. The exception to this is that your children may bring a comfort item for nap/quiet time. All personal items must be clearly marked with your children's names.

Electronic devices are not allowed and will be kept with the Director until the parent(s)/guardian(s) retrieves the item in order to prevent loss, theft, or breakage. First Steps Early Learning Center is not responsible for the loss or breakage of personal items.

## **Pets**

Due to present and possible allergies, pets are not allowed to be in our facility; however First Steps Early Learning Center may have fish in our classrooms. Parents/guardians will be notified in advance if a pet will be in our building for special occasions.

## Meals and Snacks

First Steps Early Learning Center follows standards as provided by the USDA Food Program. Meals provided consist of breakfast, lunch, morning and afternoon snacks. Please ensure your child(ren) arrives fed prior if they are scheduled to arrive after meal times. All food is provided by the Center; children are not allowed to bring cold lunch. There may be an exception to the cold lunch rule due to dietary restrictions in which proper documentation will be required to be kept on file.

Infants 11 months and younger will be served formula or breast milk. Formulas can be provided by the Center; parents/guardians are required to provide their own formula if a formula other than the Center provided formula is preferred. Infant 12 to 24 months will be served unflavored whole milk. All breast milk brought into the Center needs to be labeled with the child's first and last name as well as the date the milk was expressed. A refrigerator is located in the infant room for cold storage of breast milk. First Steps Early Learning Center will never use a microwave to warm formula or breast milk.

If your child has allergies and requires a modified diet the Center must be notified of this in writing. An appropriate substitution will be made if possible.

In the event of a birthday or special occasion, parents/guardians may send a special treat for the entire class. Treats must be store bought and pre-packaged as required by state law. Please make arrangements in advance.

## Nap/Quiet Time

There will be a designated nap/rest time each day. All children must nap, rest, or read quietly during this time. Infants sleep in separate cribs with clean sheets used only by that child. Toddlers and preschoolers nap/rest on cots. Each child has a separate cot; with their crib size fitted sheet and comfort item (from home). Please ensure sheets and comfort items are taken home and laundered each Friday (unless soiled, then they will be sent home for laundering as necessary). Cots are cleaned with disinfectant weekly.

## Toilet Training

When you feel your child is ready for toilet training, we ask that you begin teaching this at home. We will follow through and encourage your child while in our care. The child must exhibit signs of readiness. The child must be kept in pull-ups or training pants at all times until successful training is complete. The activity level here at the Center can distract your child from responding to an urge to use the potty. Therefore, we will continue to use diapers or pull-ups until your child can and will announce that he/she must use the bathroom.

Children must be potty trained prior to entering the preschool classroom. Please keep this in mind as your child reaches the proper age to transition to preschool (31-33 months)



## Indoor / Outdoor Play

We provide a variety of age-appropriate toys for indoor play. Toys may be rotated or placed temporarily out of use to maintain variety.

We will play outdoors every day the weather permits. Please make sure that your child is appropriately dressed (see Clothing section) for outdoor play at all times. Our activities will include walks, playground, water play (sprinkler in summer), and others. We do not go outside when the temperature is below 20 degrees (including wind chill), or above 90 degrees (including heat index).

## Field Trips

Parents/guardians will be informed in advance of each planned field trip. A permission form is required to be signed by the parent(s)/guardian(s) if we leave the building. A signed walking permission form is required to remain on file for trips to local parks, the library, pool, or neighborhood walks.

## Daily Schedules

### Infant Room (6wks-15M)

6:30 - 8:30 AM	Arrival / Play Time / Breakfast
8:30 - 9:00 AM	Diaper Changes
9:00 - 10:00 AM	Nap / Rest Time
10:00 - 10:30 AM	Snack
10:30 - 11:00 AM	Story / Bible Time / Diaper Changes
11:00 - 11:45 AM	Large Motor / Outside Time
11:45 - 12:30 PM	Lunch Time / Diaper Changes
12:30 - 2:00 PM	Nap / Rest Time
2:00 - 3:00 PM	Play / Diaper Changes
3:00 - 3:30 PM	Snack
3:30 - 4:30 PM	Music / Story Time / Diaper Changes
4:30 - 6:00 PM	Pick - Up / Play Time
6:00PM	Center Closes

*\*Diapers are changed as needed and/or every two hours.*

*\*Bottles will be fed to children as needed throughout the day.*

### Toddler Room (16M-33M)

6:30 - 8:30 AM	Arrival/Breakfast/Free Choice
8:30 - 8:45	Diaper Changes
9:00 - 9:45	Circle Time/Music and Movement
9:45 - 10:15	Wash Hands/Snack Time
10:15 - 10:45	Craft
10:45 - 11:00	Fine Motor Activity/Sensory
11:00 - 11:15	Story Time
11:15 - 11:30	Large Motor Activity
11:30 - 12:00	Lunch/Diaper Changes
12:00 - 2:00 PM	Nap Time
2:00 - 2:30	Wake up/Diaper Changes
2:30 - 2:45	Wash Hands/Snack
3:20 - 3:30	Table Activities

3:30 - Close      Free Play/Departure  
6:00 PM            Center Closes

*\*Diapers are changed as needed and/or every two hours.*

*\*Free play time may involve going to the multi-purpose room and/or outside (weather permitting)*

### **Preschool Room (33M-PK Graduation)**

6:30 - 8:30 AM    Arrival/Breakfast/Free Play  
8:30                Circle Time/Free Play  
9:30-10:00        Bible Story  
10:00-10:15        Snack/Bathroom Break  
10:15 - 10:30      Fine Motor/Puzzles/Craft  
10:45                Large Motor/Music  
11:30 - 12:30 PM   Lunch/Clean-up/ Bathroom Break  
12:30 - 2:30        Nap Time  
2:30 - 3:30        Snack/Bathroom Break  
3:30 - Close        Free Play/Departure  
6:00 PM            Center Closes

*\*Free play time may involve going to the multi-purpose room and/or outside (weather permitting)*

## **Summer Daily Schedules**

### **School-Age (K+)**

6:00 AM            Arrival/ Free Play  
8:00                Breakfast  
8:30                AM Devotion  
8:45                Movement  
10:00                AM Snack  
10:15                Activity/Craft  
11:30                Lunch  
12:00 PM            PM Devotion  
12:15                Read Aloud  
12:30                Down Time (books, puzzles, quiet games, movies, etc.)  
1:00                Get ready for water play/Movement  
1:15                Water play/Activity/Project  
2:45                Clean up  
3:00                PM Snack  
3:15                Movement  
3:45                Pack up belongings  
3:50                Outside Free Time  
6:00 PM            Center Closes

## Health Regulations

Listed below are symptoms of illness that are causes for a child to be kept at home, or if observed, sufficient reason to send a child home.

1. **COLDS AND SKIN RASHES:** Children will be asked to remain home if they have serious cold symptoms. Such symptoms include lethargy, heavy eyes, and a yellow-green mucus. If it is observed that your child has a possible respiratory infection or skin diseases, they will not be permitted to attend the Center until he/she is free from fever, on a prescribed medication for 24 (twenty-four) hours, and/or a note from a physician indicates that the child is able to return to school.
  2. **DIARRHEA:** Students with diarrhea (two or more loose stools *or* over and above what is normal for that student) will not be permitted to return to the Center until the diarrhea is cleared or the child is treated by a physician. A child must be diarrhea free for 24 hours before returning to care.
  3. **VOMITING:** Children will not be permitted to attend the Center until vomiting ceases and no fever has existed in the past 24 (twenty-four) hours.
  4. **EAR INFECTIONS:** As long as fever has not been present within the past 24 hours, students may attend the Center if the ear infection is being treated by a physician.
  5. **CHICKEN POX:** Children will not be permitted to attend the Center until ***all*** blisters have crusted over. The sores do not have to be gone as long as ***all*** are crusted and no fever has existed in the past 24 hours.
  6. **IMPETIGO:** It appears as blisters on skin that open and become covered with a yellowish crust. No fever exists, but children will not be permitted to attend the Center until treated for 24(twenty-four) hours. Example: Mosquito bites can become infected and develop into impetigo.
  7. **CONJUNCTIVITIS (PINK EYE):** Symptoms include red eyes, usually with some discharge or crust on eyelids. Children will not be permitted to attend the Center until 24 hours after treatment has begun. This is contagious and will spread easily among children and adults.
  8. **OTHER COMMUNICABLE DISEASES (Strep Throat, Mumps, Measles etc.):** Children will not be permitted to attend and may return to the Center with a physician's authorization. Children will not be permitted to return until symptoms decrease, or physician's note is provided to and reviewed by the Director. A child may only return to the Center if no fever has existed within the past 24 hours.
  9. **LICE:** Students found to have lice will not be permitted to attend the Center until treatment has been effective and ***ALL*** nits have been removed.
- Sick children (or any children showing signs of the 9 illnesses) must be excluded from contact with other children.
  - Children who have had 100 degree or higher fever within 24 hours will not be permitted to return to the Center.
  - Children must be on prescribed medication for 24 hours before returning to care at the Center. No medication, prescription or over the counter, will be dispensed to children without a completed medication distribution form signed by a parent/guardian. All medication must be in its original container with the pharmacist's or manufacturer's label, child's name, and dosing instructions on the bottle. All medication containers must be sealed in within a Ziploc bag with the child's name and current date clearly printed on the exterior of the bag and signed in with the medication distribution form.

- Sunscreen and mosquito repellent must also be signed in. Sunscreen, mosquito repellent, and diaper ointment may be administered if a medication distribution form for these items is signed and renewed each year.
- Any child who requires more care than the program staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children in our care will be asked to be excluded from activities.
- Parents/guardians and/or Authorized pick-up persons must pick up sick children within one hour of the call requesting that the child be sent home.

**We ask that parents/guardians contact First Steps Early Learning Center within 24 hours if their child has or has been exposed to any communicable disease. We will then post a sign when communicable illnesses have been reported to inform other parents/guardians.**

We must, at all times, have an updated immunization record for your children.

We do consultations annually with a health care provider to ensure our policies meet medical guidelines.

If an emergency injury or illness occurs while a child is in our care, if necessary, 911 will be called and the child will be transported to the hospital of your choice designated on the Enrollment Form.

Parents/guardians will be notified immediately by Center staff. Parents/guardians are responsible for all costs of emergency medical treatment, including emergency transportation, if required. First Steps Early Learning Center and First Evangelical Lutheran Church will not be held liable for any injury or illness of any child nor parents/guardians while on these premises.

In non-emergency situations, parents/guardians will be notified at pick-up time or by phone. If your child is injured at the Center, a note will be sent home, or we will speak to you at the time of pick up. If you seek a physician's attention, you are asked to inform First Steps Early Learning Center as we are mandated to inform the Department of Human Services.

Our staff has the required First Aid and CPR training. When administering first aid we follow the procedures as recommended in the Health Care Summary Report.

## **Non-Discrimination Policy**

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#), (AD-3027) [found online](#) at: [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), and at any

USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410
- (2) Fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) Email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

## Parent/Guardian Code of Conduct

Parents/guardians are the primary role models for their children's behavior and conduct toward other individuals in their environment. The teachers/staff of First Steps Early Learning Center role model correct behavior and respect for others; they require parents/guardians to act with courtesy and respect, as well. Parents/guardians who violate the Code of Conduct create an unsafe/insecure environment and will not be permitted on the Center's property thereafter and their childcare contract will be terminated. Behaviors that violate the Code of Conduct include:

- Swearing/Cursing -No parent/guardian nor adult is permitted to curse or use other inappropriate language on the Center's property at any time, whether in the presence of a child, children, staff, other parents/guardians, or not. Such language is considered offensive by many people and will not be tolerated. At NO time will inappropriate language directed toward members of the staff be tolerated.
- Threatening behavior toward occupants of the Center –Threats/perceived threats of any kind will not be tolerated. Threatening behavior will be reported to the appropriate authorities. Apologies for inappropriate behavior are appreciated, but due to the perceived threat to safety, teachers/staff cannot risk a second chance.
- Physical/Verbal punishment of your child or other children – The teachers/staff do not use corporal punishment for unacceptable behavior. Verbal reprimands may be necessary at times, but it is not appropriate for parents/guardians to verbally abuse their child or other children as doing so may cause undue embarrassment or emotional distress.

Parents/guardians are always welcome to discuss their children's behavior issues with the teacher and to seek advice and guidance regarding effective disciplinary procedures.

Parents/guardians are not allowed to correct any children except their own.

If a parent/guardian should witness another parent/guardian's children behaving in an inappropriate manner or is concerned about a behavior reported to them by their own children, the concern should be discussed with the classroom teacher/staff and/or the Director; parents/guardians are not allowed to seek out another parent/guardian to discuss their children's inappropriate behavior. All behavior

concerns need to be brought to the classroom teacher or Director's attention. The teachers/staff and/or the Director are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another parent/guardian's child with you. All children/families enrolled in our Center have privacy rights protected by our Confidentiality Policy. You may be assured that we will not discuss anything about your children with another parent/guardian or adult visiting the Center.

- Smoking – To promote the health and safety of children and adults smoking of any kind is prohibited anywhere in or on Center property. Parents/guardians who are smoking in their cars must dispose of the cigarette/electronic cigarette, or cigar prior to arriving on Center property.
- Violations of the Safety Policy –Parents/guardians are required to follow all safety procedures at all times. These procedures are designed not as mere inconveniences, but to protect the welfare and best interest of the children, teachers/staff, and all individuals in/on Center property. Safety/security procedures include such things as following entrance and departure policies and not allowing unauthorized individuals into the Center (such as holding the door open for an unknown person following you). Security procedures are only as strong as the weakest person interacting with the Center in any way.
- Confrontational interactions with teachers/staff, other parents/guardians, or other individuals on Center property - While it is understood that parents/guardians will not always agree with the teachers/staff of the Center, it is expected that all disagreements be handled in a calm and respectful manner. Confrontational interactions are not an appropriate means by which to communicate a point and are strictly prohibited.
- Violations of the Confidentiality Policy –First Steps Early Learning Center teachers/staff are very serious about maintaining the confidentiality of all individuals associated with the Center in any way; especially the children, their families, and staff. Parents/guardians are fully informed of this policy and are required to maintain it at all times. Any parent/guardian who shares any information considered to be confidential, pressures employees or other parents/guardians for information which is not necessary for them to know, will be considered to be in violation of the Confidentiality Policy and will be asked to sever their connections to the Center.

## Acknowledgment Receipt of Parent Handbook

We/I, \_\_\_\_\_ (Parent/Guardian Name(s)) have received and read the First Steps Early Learning Center Parent Handbook.

We/I understand the policies and procedures given to me and agree to adhere to all school policies.

Please note: First Steps Early Learning Center's policies and procedures are subject to change to reflect the needs of the program, children, and families we serve.

We may also make changes or modifications in our policies if required by our licensing agencies. First Step Early Learning Center will inform parents of changes taking place whenever possible in a timely fashion.

---

Parent/Guardian

Date

---

Parent/Guardian

Date

---

Director

Date

