



Family Handbook
2024-2025

St. Andrew Nature Preschool

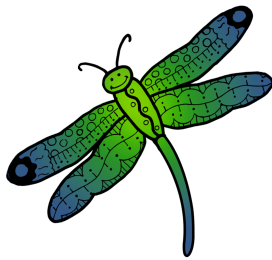
A ministry of St. Andrew Lutheran Church

www.preschoolstandrew.org

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We plant the seeds for life-long learning by building a safe and supportive community following the example of Jesus. We encourage exploration, enthusiasm and risk-taking to foster self-management and problem-solving skills. We offer predictable routines with a flexible curriculum to allow children opportunities for self-paced discovery and growth.



St. Andrew Nature Preschool:

*A journey of Grace,
Exploration,
and Growth!*

Curriculum

The St. Andrew Nature Preschool curriculum is child-centered, interest-based, hands-on, and informed by best practice in early childhood education. It honors childhood as a unique period of growth worth recognizing and validating. We work to build children's ongoing development by blending their spontaneous interests with existing knowledge across many areas of growth such as social emotional, literacy, art, math, and cognition. In addition, teachers use the framework of developmentally appropriate practice to create learning activities and experiences that promote young children's optimal learning and development. Teachers use resources from Creative Curriculum as a foundation for learning aligned to Washington State early learning standards. To learn more about the benefits of play-based learning, visit this link: www.greatschools.org/gk/articles/play-in-preschool

In addition, St. Andrew Nature Preschool's nationally certified Nature Explore Classroom offers nature-rich outdoor spaces that use the natural world as an integral part of learning. In our outdoor classrooms, children learn to work cooperatively, practice rich language skills, investigate early math skills such as patterns and sequencing, develop physical capabilities, and explore their imaginations and curiosities. To learn more about the benefits of outdoor classrooms, visit this link:

www.dimensionsfoundation.org/research/research-findings

Documentation of Learning

Student work is documented by photos and transcription of dialog. We respect children as imaginative, competent, and inquisitive learners. Evidence of student work is displayed in panels in the hallways, student portfolios, weekly newsletters, the school website, and social media. Student first names may be used in the hallway and classroom documentation. It is our policy to not identify students by either first or last name on materials available outside of the school. Please visit our website, Facebook, or Instagram pages to see examples of our posts.

Families

We recognize and appreciate the diversity of family structures. All teachers remain sensitive to the needs of children and adults across a variety of life and family circumstances and collaborate to ensure appropriate arrangements are made for everyone.

Teacher-to-Child Ratios

For all preschool classrooms, it is required that two staff be present. Our maximum staff:child ratio for 3-4 year olds is 1:7 and for 4-5 year olds is 1:8.

Two staff remain in the bathroom if a child needs assistance during an emergency situation.

Absences and Illness

The school cannot deduct tuition for any absences caused by vacations, colds, or other illnesses. For the health of all children, please do not send your child to school if they exhibit the following symptoms:

- Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea (keep home for full 24 hours after last episode)
- Earache, ear drainage, sore throat, or persistent cough
- Heavy nasal discharge (yellow or green)
- Fever over 100 degrees F
- Headache and/or stomachache in combination with other symptoms
- Communicable skin rash
- Infection in one or both eyes (pink eye/conjunctivitis)
- Other communicable diseases
- Head lice

Our Covid policy follows the current CDC guidelines: After a positive test, stay home and isolate until symptoms resolve and fever, if present, is gone for 24 hours. When returning to school, mask for 5 additional days. You can read the full CDC recommendations here: www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2024/p0301-respiratory-virus.html

Please report student absences in KangarooTime (from the check-in tab). Children must remain at home until they display a 24-hour fever and symptom free period of time.

In the event of head lice, please notify the school so we may take proper precautions in the classroom. This information will remain confidential.

Immunizations

Washington state requires that children participating in group activities be immunized; therefore, all children must be fully immunized before attending St. Andrew Nature Preschool. Immunizations are available through the Southwest Washington Health Department. We must have a Washington Certificate of Immunization Status signed and completed by a parent. We only accept medical exemptions (not personal or religious exemptions). If a child is not fully immunized for medical reasons, his/her parent will be notified within 24 hours if a vaccine-preventable disease is reported at St. Andrew Nature Preschool. A plan for the child's exclusion from the program will be developed with the family.

Medications

Generally, St. Andrew Nature Preschool discourages the administration of medicine. However, there will be times when it is necessary to administer medicine to ensure the child's health and safety while in preschool. In these cases, teachers are to administer prescription medication **only** with written permission from a parent or physician. All prescription medication which a teacher has been asked to administer is to be reported and registered with the Preschool Director. The Preschool Director is to ensure teachers are properly trained and provide centralized control.

For medicine administered, the child's first and last name, amount to administer, time of administration, purpose of the medication side effects of the medication, and how the medication is stored must be specified. Medication must be in its original container labeled with the child's first and last name, date the prescription was filled or the expiration date, and legible instructions for administration. Teachers are permitted to administer non-prescription medication **only** with a parent or guardian and physician's written instructions and in accordance with manufacturer's directions. All medications are to be reported and registered with the Preschool Director and kept in locked containers or drawers out of child reach.

Injuries

In case of serious injury, teachers call 911, notify the Preschool Director, and provide first-aid. Family members are notified promptly. Minor bumps and bruises are attended to by St.

Andrew Nature Preschool staff, and families are informed of any such accident verbally at pick up or via the KangarooTime app.

Any injuries that occur during a child's day are recorded in KangarooTime and communicated to the child's family. If an injury requires treatment beyond what can be provided at St. Andrew, parents are contacted immediately. If a parent cannot be reached, calls are made in the following order:

- Emergency contact person
- Child's physician
- Steps necessary to obtain emergency medical care or surgery as warranted
- 911 for a pediatric trauma emergency. Trained paramedics and dispatchers will assign transportation as needed for the situation

The Preschool Director must contact the program's insurance company and report the incident.

Emergency Medical Care

A medical emergency is defined as a situation in which immediate treatment is administered for life-threatening conditions. In the event such an emergency occurs, primary consideration is given to the well-being of the child. All staff respond quickly, calmly, and follow these procedures:

1. One staff member stays with the injured or ill child and administers first-aid as appropriate. If the child is not breathing, a CPR certified staff member establishes an airway and initiates CPR. If a spinal cord injury or other internal injuries are possible, staff do not move the child.
2. Another staff member immediately goes to the phone, dials 911, and requests an ambulance. This person is prepared to provide the program address and give clear directions. This person then pulls the child's emergency card and calls a parent to inform him/her of the situation. Finally, this person goes to the front of the building and waits for the ambulance to provide direction to the injured child.
3. Other staff members move the other children away from the injured or ill child and into alternative activities. They discuss the situation with the children while being calm and reassuring.
4. If a parent has not yet arrived, a staff member accompanies the child to the hospital, making sure to take the child's emergency information.
5. A teacher records all information regarding the incident and completes an Injury Form.
6. One copy of the Injury Form is given to the child's parent and one copy is given to the Preschool Director.

The Preschool Director must contact the program's insurance company and report the incident.

Child Abuse Reporting

As mandated reporters, we report immediately:

- A death, serious injury requiring medical treatment, or illness requiring hospitalization of a child by phone and writing to the parent and any other required party (e.g., social worker)
- Any instance when teachers have reason to suspect the occurrence of physical, sexual, or emotional child abuse, child neglect, or child exploitation by phone to child protective services or local law enforcement.

Under Washington state law, mandated reporters who knowingly fail to make a report shall be guilty of a gross misdemeanor (RCW 26.44.080).

Clothing

Play clothes that encourage self-help are the best. We do many **messy** activities. Remember coats and rain gear for outdoor activity on cold or rainy days. We find that rain boots, bib-style rain pants, and a raincoat combined work well to keep children dry and comfortable. The curriculum extends outdoors for 45 minutes or more every day except in thunderstorms and extreme cold or wind. Athletic shoes with rubber soles or rain boots offer the best protection. (Sandals, shoes with hard soles, or plastic shoes are not recommended) Please mark clothing and belongings with student's name to avoid loss.

Toileting

With the exception of Little Acorn classes, students should be completely toilet trained and independent of the teachers for assistance in personal hygiene.

Communication

We are committed to communicating with families using:

- Weekly school newsletters via email
- Daily classroom updates and photos on KangarooTime
- Bulletin boards and Documentation Panels in hallways and in classrooms
- Calendar on our website

Please contact your teachers or director with any joys or concerns about your child.

Arrival

Arrival begins 10 minutes prior to the start of class. Please sign in your child on the KangarooTime app each morning before entering the building, and check with the staff member at the door that the sign-in is complete. See "Sign In and Out" below for more details.

As our teachers will be busy preparing for the daily activities, children will not be allowed in the classrooms prior to class. Teachers will open the classroom door when they are ready for students to enter and start class.

While waiting for the classroom to open, families should help children wash their hands and store their coats and personal items in their designated cubby. Families and students may then wait in the lobby closest to their class and enjoy the books available.

Departure

Sprouts and Seedlings classes will be dismissed to families from outdoors. Families may wait for their child(ren) inside the cones in the parking lot. Oaks and Saplings are dismissed from indoors; families may wait in the lobby. Please be prompt in picking up your children after class. It can be distressing for children whose parents arrive late. Teachers have limited time between classes for lunch and preparation for the next class. **Except in emergency situations, a charge of \$10 for every five minutes you are late may be imposed.**

Sign In and Out

Children must be signed-in, via the KangarooTime app, by the adult who delivers them inside the classroom. If the adult does not have their phone or access to the app, please see a staff member for a “forced check-in.” This adult must also escort the child into the classroom, assist in the handwashing procedure, and make sure the teacher has acknowledged the child’s presence before exiting the room.

When picking up a child, an authorized adult **must** sign him/her out via the KangarooTime app before a child will be dismissed. Only adults listed on the KangarooTime app are authorized to pick up a child. Parents must keep pick-up authorization updated by removing adults no longer authorized to pick-up and adding new adults allowed to pick-up. **Children are never released to an adult who has not been entered in the app.** Under no circumstances will a staff member release a child to a non-custodial parent or caregiver, unless the custodial parent or legal guardian has given written permission. If this person is not familiar, staff must ask to see current photo ID before releasing the child.

If a person authorized to pick-up a child appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, staff cannot refuse to release the child to that person. However, staff are required to notify police concerning the driver’s condition, automobile make, color, and license plate number.

Lunch Bunch

Lunch Bunch is available between the morning and afternoon classes. You pack a lunch (with no peanut products) and teachers will escort morning students to the Lunch Bunch after class. When afternoon students are dropped off, teachers escort them to their classroom following Lunch Bunch. See the registration form for Lunch Bunch prices.

Behavior Policy

Behavior guidance is an essential teaching part of the classroom and is not viewed as punishment. Guidance is used to help children learn self-control, to help develop their self-esteem, and a regard for and acceptance of others in the classroom.

The following techniques, as outlined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, will be used:

1. Guide children by setting clear, consistent, fair limits for classroom behavior.
2. Value mistakes as learning opportunities.
3. Redirect children to more acceptable behavior or activity.
4. Listen when children talk about their feelings and frustrations.
5. Guide children to resolve conflicts and model skills that help children to solve their own problems.
6. Patiently remind children of the rules and their rationale.

Continued Enrollment

Our school will work to provide a safe environment for all children present. It is our policy to work with each child, within the structure of our behavior policy, to manage conflict by developing appropriate skills. If a child's behavior is disrupting the safety and/or educational environment, parents will be contacted to assist in developing a plan to acquire the appropriate skills. In some cases, we may refer a child to outside organizations for screening and support. With the parents' consent, these agencies will help give techniques/strategies to support the child, or to find a placement for the child which will support development of the appropriate classroom skills.

In very rare cases, a child's enrollment may be terminated by the joint decision of the Preschool Director and the Lead Pastor in consultation with the child's teacher and family.

Reasons for termination include:

- The preschool does not meet the needs of the child and/or family due to schedule, tuition, or philosophical differences. Documentation has been gathered demonstrating evidence of needed disenrollment from the preschool.
- A child's behavior is consistently disruptive in such a manner that is harmful to the well-being of other children and/or staff
- Tuition payments have not been submitted, and no arrangements for payment have been made by the family

- The family fails to cooperate with staff in the operation and management of the preschool (e.g., consistently fails to pick up child on time, brings visitors without prior arrangement, sends ill child to school, interferes with teaching staff in their work with children, etc.).

Tuition and Payment Procedure

Tuition is calculated on a yearly figure and divided into ten equal payments. This means that holidays, in-service days, and vacations do not change the monthly tuition rate. Tuition payments cover teacher and staff salaries, equipment, supplies, insurance, maintenance, improvements, and food expenses. Fees are charged and automatically withdrawn on a monthly basis on the 20th of each month from August through May of each year. Families also have the option of paying for the entire school year in one payment at the start of the school year.

Tuition is received using electronic funds transfer (ACH) with Vanco Services. There is no cost to you to participate in this program. A charge of \$10.00 per month applies to late payments or insufficient funds. A payment of \$120 is required at the time of registration each year an enrollment slot is offered for a child. If after paying the fee, families choose not to attend St. Andrew Nature Preschool, the \$120 registration fee is forfeit.

If any circumstances prevent continued enrollment, notice must be given to the director by the 15th of the month prior to withdrawal or the next month's tuition will be invoiced. Current tuition rates are listed on the registration form. There is a \$25.00 discount for the monthly tuition on the enrollment of two children.

Cleaning and Sanitation

We follow all cleaning and sanitation guidelines as recommended by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Toys that have been mouthed are set aside and sanitized daily, classrooms are cleaned throughout the day, and tables are cleaned before and after food service. All teachers follow blood-borne pathogen procedures for handling bodily fluids including minor first aid and wiping noses.

Field trips

Parents are responsible for transporting and supervising their children on field trips. Teachers must be available to all students in their class. Teachers will notify you of the place, date, and time to meet. There will be no classroom time on the day of a field trip for the participating class. Siblings are welcome to join us for field trips.

Food

We prefer that your children do not bring food, candy or gum to school. Please have your children eat meals before or after school away from the classroom. A good meal before school is essential for learning.

Birthdays

We enjoy celebrating birthdays with your child. The birthday child is the center of attention for a Q & A session with classmates and will get to pick out a birthday book as a gift. Please do not send goodie bags or food. Your birthday party at home is the perfect time for these. We request that cubbies only be used to distribute invitations to the entire class to avoid hurt feelings.

Toys

We request that children do not bring toys from home except on specific sharing days.

Projects

Your child will bring home treasured creations. Please remember these projects are important for the skills your child is using in imagining, experimenting, wondering, evaluating, and modifying them. The process and resiliency are much more important than the end result.

Family Participation

Family volunteers are welcome in our classrooms. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact your child's teachers or the Director. All volunteers must be screened with a Washington State background check and review the Volunteer Handbook for guidelines for helping in the classroom. St. Andrew Nature Preschool facilitates activities and events for the family throughout the school. These are announced both online and in-person.

Visitors/Siblings

Parents and children interested in our program may visit our classrooms together to see first-hand the variety of opportunities we offer. Because our classrooms are set up for a particular age child, they may not be appropriate for younger siblings. When the classes or Lunch Bunch are not outside, younger children are welcome to use the playground area under direct adult supervision.

Snow Days/Inclement Weather

We follow Evergreen Public Schools for weather delays and closures. Consult local media for Evergreen closures. All morning classes will be canceled if the Evergreen Public Schools announces a closure or late start due to inclement weather. Preschool closures will be announced via text through the KangarooTime app.

Confidentiality

Open written and verbal communication among staff, children, and families is vital to a healthy and transparent preschool. Staff may discuss questions or concerns about a child with the Preschool Director or a fellow teacher. However, staff refrain from discussing child or family information with other children, families, or church members.

All personal information (e.g., family names, addresses, phone numbers, etc.) is to be kept confidential and sharing is prohibited without written consent from a parent or legal guardian and approval of the Preschool Director. All records containing personally identifiable information are to be kept confidential during the collection, storage, disclosure, and destruction stages.

Harassment and Misconduct

It is the policy of St. Andrew Lutheran Church that harassment and misconduct will not be tolerated. Any preschool family member who believes that s/he has experienced or witnessed harassment or misconduct should report it immediately to the preschool director or pastor. A copy of the policy is available in the church office.

Notice of Nondiscriminatory Policy as to Students

The St. Andrew Nature Preschool welcomes students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and other school- administered programs.

