



Family Handbook

2008-2009

MISSION STATEMENT

We are a Christian preschool that welcomes children of all faiths or of no faith. Our preschool offers your children a Christian setting in which to grow, to learn and to develop physically, spiritually, intellectually, and socially. We teach children to care for others and to love God and the world He gave us.

We provide a learning environment where children are encouraged to interact with one another through hands-on developmental learning activities. We believe in facilitating the parent/guardian in nurturing the seeds of your child's individual growth.

PHILOSOPHY

It is the philosophy and firm belief of Light of Christ Christian Preschool that each child is a unique person with special needs and abilities. It is our overall goal to encourage the growth of the "whole child" through physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and spiritual development.

Specifically to:

***Physically** help each child to grow in perceptual motor skills and development.

***Socially** provide an environment where each child is given the opportunity to develop peer relationships, learn to cooperate, respect, share and care for their new friends.

***Emotionally** encourage, accept and support each child as they grow in developing a positive self-image.

***Cognitively** provide hands-on, age appropriate experiences in language, math, science, art and social studies that enhance discovery, conceptualization, creativity and communication.

***Spiritually** emphasize a rich heritage of Christianity and show each child that he/she is secure in God's abiding love and care.

Daily schedules of both teacher-directed and child-directed activities serve to reinforce, enrich, motivate, and challenge in an environment where each child is respected as an individual.

EDUCATIONAL VIEWPOINT

Our program at LOC Christian Preschool offers "academic content", such as reading, writing, and math in **developmentally appropriate** and meaningful ways. Research has shown that children need to "experience" their world through meaningful visual, auditory, and tactile means for early brain development. Without these experiences, it is very difficult for the brain to progress, retain, and connect the information for later abstractions, i.e. the concept of numbers and letters. The "academic content" offered through LOC preschool requires children to *DO* and experience *hands-on* the meaning of such abstractions. When we see that a child is developmentally ready, we will then connect the hands-on learning to the abstract pencil and paper tasks.

Curriculum consists of learning-units that are appropriate to the developmental level of the various age groups as well as individual children. These units provide a well-rounded and progressive learning experience for each child. Learning centers, which correspond with these areas, are available to each child as an important part of the daily schedule. Each child will be encouraged to begin and complete a project.

Spiritual development is encouraged in ways that are meaningful to the child. Daily Christian Education activities (prayer, songs, stories, projects, etc.) are incorporated within the daily schedule. In addition, all classes will receive a visit from Pastor Moe Redding once a month for our "Chapel Time".

Ultimately, we feel very strongly that the parent is the child's first and best teacher. Our job at LOC Christian Preschool is to act as a springboard for your child's developmental growth and learning. We wish to be a resource to you and your child as he/she continues a lifelong journey of learning.

STAFF

Each staff member has been carefully selected for educational qualifications and experience in the field of early childhood education. Equally as important is a loving nature and genuine interest in young children. Continual staff growth is required through classes and workshops.

Kelli Greenlee, Director of Education/Teacher

Tanya DuPont, Director of Operation/Assistant Teacher

Lisa Scott, Teacher

Sherry Vaughn, Assistant Teacher

Libby Vincent, Office Manager

LOC Pastor: Moe Redding

Executive Preschool Board

The Executive Preschool Board includes the Light of Christ Christian Preschool Directors, Light of Christ Pastor, a Light of Christ Church Council Member, and several Light of Christ Church Members.

GENERAL POLICIES

Facility regulated by AZDHS

Light of Christ Christian Preschool carries an Arizona Department of Health Services (AZDHS) classification of "Part-Day Care" and is regulated by their Office of Child Care Licensure. We meet all requirements per state regulations and all fire and health inspection reports are available to the public through AZDHS.

Arizona Department of Health Services
Division of Licensing Services
Office of Child Care Licensure
150 N. 18th Ave., Suite 400
Phoenix, AZ 85007-3244
(602) 364-2539
www.azdhs.gov

Per AZDHS regulations, each staff member has undergone a background check as well as completed and received fingerprinting clearance through the Arizona Department of Public Safety.

Hours of Operation

Monday/Wednesday/Friday - 9:00am-12:00pm

Tuesday/Thursday - 9:00-11:30am

Equal Rights

Light of Christ Christian Preschool admits students of any race, color, age, handicap, gender, 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, age, handicap, gender, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

Notices/Fliers/Posters

All notices, fliers, and posters must be submitted to LOC Preschool for approval before being distributed at the school. Soliciting is not allowed during preschool hours of operation.

Siblings

Siblings **may not** attend class during the preschool's hours of operation. However, siblings are more than welcome to participate in Extra Enrichment Days with **parental supervision**.

Parent/Grandparent Visitors/Volunteers

At Light of Christ Christian Preschool, we encourage parental support and value our parent volunteers. Please let us know ahead of time if you would like to help out in the classroom so that we can plan accordingly. We will be taking volunteers beginning in September or October so that all of the children have the opportunity to feel comfortable with the preschool environment, teachers, and routine. In accordance with AZDHS regulations, parent volunteers may assist **ONLY** their own children unless a Criminal History Affidavit and proof of fingerprint clearance from the State of Arizona have been submitted and are on file with LOC Preschool.

We will also have projects to be completed at home for parents who cannot volunteer in the classroom. Your child will love seeing you participate and we'll love having you!

One or both parents are required to review the *Family Handbook* during our scheduled "*Parent Orientation*". Thank you for your cooperation. 😊

Snacks and Nutrition

Each day, we've allotted a special time to provide each child with a nutritious snack. Snack time will give each child the opportunity to practice hygiene responsibilities as well as meal etiquette. A monthly snack menu will be posted daily for parent's review. It is up to each parent to update the staff of your child's food allergies.

Snacks will be served "family style". Families will provide daily snacks on a rotating basis beginning alphabetically by last name. If your child cannot attend school on your scheduled snack day, please arrange to trade snack with another family. AZDHS regulates that snacks provided are 2 out of the 4 food groups. Also, snacks are to be store bought and in their original packaging. AZDHS regulates that we keep track of all receipts. A "snack basket" will be sent home to serve as a reminder prior to your snack day.

We appreciate the special effort you and your child make to bring a nutritious snack to school to share. Therefore, we take time out to recognize and thank the child responsible for the day's snack. This gives your child a special sense of pride and teaches one of the many aspects of sharing.

Birthdays

Birthdays are recognized at LOC Preschool, as they are very special to children. You may have your child bring in an extra little "treat" if you so choose. Please note that treats must be **store bought** and brought to school in their **original unopened** container.

As children are very sensitive, birthday party invites, thank-you notes, or gifts may not be distributed at the preschool unless all students in class are included. Thank you! 😊

Holiday Celebrations

We focus primarily on the Christian holidays. LOC Preschool will celebrate Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine's Day, and Easter. We also celebrate cultural diversity and will introduce other cultural celebrations and traditions.

Monthly Chapel

One day per month, Pastor Moe Redding will attend LOC Preschool to present a "Children's Chapel". He will interact with the children through singing and storytelling. Bible stories, which teach children simple moral/character qualities, will be shared. Pastor Moe will give special attention to Christian holidays and their significance to our Christianity in a very appropriate way to the children.

Pick-up/Drop-off

AZDHS requires that all parents sign-in and sign-out their child daily. **Only those individuals as listed on your Emergency Blue Card may pick-up your child from school.** We will request identification if necessary.

Please call if you're running late, or make arrangements ahead of time. A \$10 fee will be assessed if you are more than 15 minutes late to pick up your child without prior notification. Please note that we begin and end classes at the time indicated. **Teachers will open the door when they have finished preparing or wrapping up for the day.** If you need to pick up your child early, please inform us at the *beginning* of class time.

Clothing

"Dress for mess to ensure success" is our motto. We do a lot of hands-on activities and this usually means that we'll be playing with lots of messy things. So that your child is comfortable, please dress them accordingly with closed-toed shoes. Also, please provide us with a change of clothes in a labeled large ziplock baggie in case your child has any sort of accident.

Supplies

A labeled backpack without wheels is required to help your child have ownership in bringing items to and from school. We also encourage the healthy habit of drinking water regularly, so please provide your child with a labeled water bottle each day. 😊

Toys

Aside from show-and-tell, toys, toy weapons and video games should be left at home.

Discipline

The preschool provides a social opportunity for children to learn and use various social skills. We encourage them to talk about their feelings and use words to work through a situation. Redirection is used as a guidance method to help the children make a better choice for their behavior.

Should a problem persist, we will exercise a "cooling down" time similar to "time-out". We do not view this as negative. We teach the children that they have an opportunity to step away from the situation so that they may regain self-control.

We believe in setting reasonable limits and will help the children maintain them through a loving but firm manner. We will always work to keep parents informed on a daily basis and we will notify parents if a conference is needed.

Disenrollment

In certain circumstances, it may be necessary for the preschool to discontinue a child's enrollment. Such a decision is based on what is in the best interest of that child as well as other children/staff at the facility. Every effort will be made to correct a problematic situation before a final decision is made.

Termination of enrollment may be the result of any of the following:

- Abuse of other children, staff or property
- Disruptive or dangerous behavior
- The center's inability to meet the child's needs
- Parents' non-compliance with preschool policies and/or regulations

Extra-Enrichment Days

These are non-school days that are scheduled throughout the school year to provide off-site learning and social interaction for both child and parent as well as **enhance your child's understanding** of the subject matter. Each parent is responsible for transporting and chaperoning his/her own child. To help ensure safety, each child is required to wear a blue **LOCP t-shirt**.

REGISTRATION

AZDHS requirements state that we have on file a completed Emergency Contact Card and Immunization Record or signed waiver for each enrolled child. These forms must be submitted at the time of registration, and updated before the school year begins.

A \$110 **non-refundable Materials Fee** is due at the time of registration. This fee covers the purchase of consumable supplies for the preschool including, but not limited to, paper, crayons, paint, play-doh, markers, glue, etc.

Student placement is performed according to age, gender etc. for the first year. Because our teachers get to know students very well, behavior, ability, etc. are also considered when they return the following year to complete our program. Every child is placed to create well-rounded and balanced classrooms where we feel he/she will thrive the most. **NO REQUESTS** for teachers, friends, etc. will be accepted. Exceptions include twins and/or siblings who are enrolled in the same program.

Our **expenses** have been budgeted monthly for the school year. It is important that tuition is paid promptly so we can pay our staff and purchase consumable supplies. Supplies that have not been included in the budget will be donated and/or purchased personally by staff members.

TUITION

- Monthly payments are based on our yearly budget divided into ten equal payments. Full tuition is due on the **first** of each month regardless of attendance or the number of school days in a particular month. Two exceptions, August and January, are noted on the school calendar. We do not offer multiple child discounts.
- Payments received after the **6th of the month** will be assessed a \$15.00 late fee.
- Returned checks are subject to late fees in addition to bank fees.
- If a tuition payment becomes more than 15 days late, the child will not be allowed to attend class until the balance is brought current.
- Should you decide at any time to disenroll your child, paid tuition is non-refundable and a 2-week written notice is required to avoid paying the following month's tuition.

LATE ENROLLMENT

Students who join us after the school year has started are still responsible for the full Materials Fee regardless of what month it is. However if your child's first class is after the 15th of the month, tuition for that month is halved.

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

If you are in need of financial assistance, you may contact our Scholarship Committee chairperson, Dakri Sutton at 480-213-3687 for more information.

HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES

Emergency Procedures

Staff members are certified in CPR and First Aid. As required by AZDHS, a first aid kit, easily assessable to adults, is located in each classroom at all times. Fire Drills are performed monthly and a copy of our Fire/Emergency Evacuation Plan is posted inside each classroom door. Our emergency procedures are outlined per AZDHS. Please note that we will first assess an emergency situation, then notify parents as necessary. All injuries are documented for both the preschool and the parents.

Pest Control

Information regarding pest services and/or pesticides used on premises is available upon request. A notice will be posted on the classroom doors 48 hours before a scheduled service.

Smoking

LOC Preschool is a smoke and drug-free zone. Smoking on premises is prohibited.

Illness

Health checks are done daily during hours of operation per AZDHS regulations. We ask that if your child complains of not feeling well, you refrain from sending him/her to school. **Children who show outward signs of the following may NOT attend school for at least 24 hours:**

- Fever of 99.9 or higher (child must be fever free for 24 hours **unmedicated**)
- Vomiting/Diarrhea (within last 24 hours)
- Rash (suspicious rashes that do not look to be the result of an insect bite or allergic reaction)
- Pain involved with an earache or toothache
- Bacterial Infections (a child must be on antibiotics for **at least 24 hours** before returning to school)

Medications

Medication will not be administered to children while in our care. We will use topical products to treat minor injuries. Should your child need an inhaler or prescribed medication during hours of operation, we will contact you or ask that you stop by the preschool to administer the medication.

Reporting Absence

When we don't see your smiling faces, we wonder about you. Please take a moment to alert us of your child's absence by voice mail (480-726-0436) or email preschool@loc-az.org.

Insurance Coverage

LOC Preschool carries liability insurance per AZDHS requirements. Our Certificate of Insurance is available for viewing on premises.

PARENT/STAFF COMMUNICATION

We send home two progress reports during the year and offer parents the opportunity to have one conference mid-year. This is also an opportunity for parent's questions and concerns to be voiced. Please feel free to set up separate additional conferences as you feel necessary.

A **Communication Center** is placed outside each classroom door. It houses a mail slot for each child where you'll find newsletters, monthly curriculum and snack calendars, flyers for upcoming events etc. The Sign In/Out book is kept on top and a mailbox is attached to the side for tuition checks, book orders, permission slips etc. To keep our paper costs down, we will be communicating via e-mail as well. Please check your e-mail frequently. Thank you! ☺