

**“And all thy children shall be taught in the Lord...”
Isaiah 54:13**

What Parents Can Do To Help Children Make A Happy Transition To School

Your child is a precious gift to you from God, our Heavenly Father, one for whom you as a parent hold responsibility to nurture spiritually, socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually. There are many things you can do, as a parent, that work hand-in-hand with the school environment to optimize your child’s potential for growth and development.

Your support of your child’s progress begins with the basic provisions

Ample rest A nutritious diet Time for exercise and play

You, as a parent, should encourage your child’s independence in *self-help* skills

Dressing Feeding Combing hair Toileting, etc.

Development of *Social skills* and *emotional stability* are of equal importance

Positive interactions with other people
Polite conversation
Ability to express one’s own needs and wants
Desire to follow guidelines and procedures
Growing self esteem

In addition, you will want to broaden your child’s *understanding of the world*

Read regularly with enthusiasm
Provide sensory experiences and explorations with art and music
Provide opportunity for patterning, counting, classifying and sequencing
Allow for imaginative play, rest and relaxation
Acknowledge your child’s curiosity and expressed interests

Of utmost importance...seek ways to *nurture your child’s faith and trust in the Lord*

Worship together as a family
Read Bible stories together
Teach simple prayers and pray together

And, finally.....

Pray daily for your child, asking God to be your and your child’s guardian and friend

SCHOOL READINESS

School readiness is the ability to cope with the school environment socially, emotionally, physically and academically without undue stress. The major factor for consideration of school readiness is the chronological age of the child. **St. Paul adheres to all state age requirements for school entrance.** Children entering the two year old class must turn two on or before September 1st of that year. Children entering the three year old class must turn three on or before September 1st of that year and likewise for four years olds and kindergarten. Emotional and social maturity, as well as language development, are other factors for consideration. Teachers at St. Paul encourage open, honest communication with parents on behalf of the child.

THE PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

The Mother's Morning Out Program for children who have turned one by September 1, is designed to give moms a much needed "breather" while providing the peace of mind that their child is in a safe, nurturing, loving, Christian environment. Children can attend Monday and Wednesday from 8:15 a.m. until 11:15 a.m. There is a maximum of ten students with two teachers.

Two year old children who have turned two by September 1, may attend St. Paul in a half day program, two days per week on Tuesday and Thursday from 8:15 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. Class size is twelve students with teacher and aide.

Three year old children who have turned three by September 1, may attend school on Monday through Friday from 8:15 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. St. Paul now offers a 5-day per week full day program for 3's through the Lunch Bunch/Extended Care program defined below.

Four year old children who have turned four by September 1, attend school five days per week. This session is from 8:15 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. Four year olds also have the option of a full day enrollment through the Lunch Bunch/Extended Care program defined in the following sections.

Lunch Bunch program is available for our pre-k 3's and 4's. This two hour extension of the regular school day runs from 11:15 a.m. until 1:15 p.m. (when school is in session). Lunch bunch includes lunch with friends, story time, quiet time, and outdoor play under the supervision of a teacher. Children may attend any number of days (Monday through Friday) on a "first come-first served" basis. Pre-registration is a requirement and an additional fee is assessed. Late pick up fees do apply (see the entry under "Late Fees" in this handbook). Families will be invoiced at the end of each month for all days that their child was REGISTERED to attend. **This means that "if you sign up to attend" you will be charged UNLESS your child is ABSENT from school due to illness.** In addition, in March you will be required to register for both April and May. All fees must be paid by May 15th for your child to receive their final report card.

Extended Care offers a four hour enrichment opportunity which extends the regular school day **for three and four year olds**. It meets from 11:15 a.m. until 3:15 p.m., Monday through Friday, when school is in session. Children registered for extended care are required to use a 2 inch rest mat which may be purchased through **THE SCHOOL BOX** in Newnan. Pre-registration with the Lunch Bunch teacher is a requirement and an separate fee is assessed. Families will be invoiced at the end of each month for all days that their child was REGISTERED to attend. **This means that “if you sign up to attend” you will be charged UNLESS your child is ABSENT from school due to illness.** In addition, in March you will be required to register for both April and May. All fees must be paid by May 15th for your child to receive their final report card.

After School Program is offered for Pre-K four children. This program operates from 3:15pm to 6:00pm for \$15.00 per day. Please contact Charlane Grimm for enrollment paperwork and additional program information. She may be reached at 770-865-6186 or cgrimm@stpaulptc.org.

THE KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM (For children who have turned 5 by September 1)

While kindergarten is associated with the elementary school division, by the length of the school day (8:15 a.m. until 3:15 p.m.) there are reasons, educationally, why it is considered to be part of the early childhood program. Among these are the children’s style of learning, the need for activity-based interactive instruction, the inclusion of thematic units of study, the development of large motor skills, the importance of play and the emphasis on social and emotional development

SAFEGUARDING OUR CHILDREN

The “Safeguarding Our Children” policy reflects the desire of St. Paul Lutheran Church and School to protect children from any harm or danger that might occur from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers from false accusations. **This policy applies to all volunteer and compensated workers of St. Paul Lutheran Church and School. Parents who desire to be classroom volunteers, field trip drivers and chaperones, must participate in the appropriate orientation, and if needed, training.** Parents need to check the school newsletter for orientation/training dates and times.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Parents are encouraged to provide a timely arrival and dismissal for their children. This will minimize the child's stress, maximize the benefits of the school day and assist the teacher in involving every child in the beginning activities of the school day. **At all times of the day, we ask that parents do not park in the crosswalk. We also request that all parents and children cross the driveway only in the crosswalk.**

For the safety of the children, the downstairs doors will be locked at all times. They will be unlocked and supervised 20 minutes prior to the start of the day from 7:55 a.m. until 8:15 a.m. **WHEN CHILDREN ARRIVE AFTER 8:15 A.M., PARENTS ARE REQUIRED TO ENTER THE BUILDING UPSTAIRS AT THE OFFICE TO REGISTER THEIR CHILD'S ATTENDANCE.** Please do not ask teachers or students to make exceptions to this rule by asking them to open the downstairs door.

FOR DISMISSAL SAFETY:

- **Do not park in the parking lot during dismissal.**
- **Remain at your car in the pick up line.**
- **Teachers will escort children to their waiting vehicles.**
- **Please do not leave your car running and/or unattended.**
- **Children should be properly restrained in car seats by the driver, not the teacher, before leaving the parking lot.**
- **Do not use your cell phone in the pick up line.**
- **Please be patient.**

A written note is required when a child is to go home with another driver. Please call the office in case of an unexpected change in drivers. Please place your family name card (given to you at the beginning of the year) on the dashboard of your vehicle. This enables teachers to expedite the dismissal process.

SNACKS, MEALTIME AND BIRTHDAYS

Each teacher will provide specific information regarding classroom procedures for snacks and meals. Please strive to feed your child foods "simple to serve, simple to eat and simply nutritious." Please send a quantity that corresponds with your child's general appetite. It's not always easy to send uneaten portions of food home. Carbonated beverages are never allowed. **BE SURE TO PROVIDE A NAPKIN AND UTENSILS.** Notify your child's teacher in writing of any food allergies.

Milk and juice are available for purchase (for 2 years old and up) for snack and/or lunch on a semester basis. Order forms are emailed twice each school year (June and December).

Your child's teacher will also let you know about classroom birthday celebrations. If you choose to have a *home* birthday party, please help us avoid hurt feelings by *mailing* party invitations. If the entire class is included in your celebration, invitations to the whole class may be distributed at school. If your child provides a birthday snack for the class at school, we require that all foods be **store purchased** and ask that you provide accordingly. Please do not send birthday snacks with peanuts, peanut butter or any nut products.

HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

The following classroom parties are celebrated during the school year. In order for you and your child to spend individual, quality time at these celebrations, we ask that you make other arrangements for siblings.

Fall Celebration
Valentine's Day

Thanksgiving Feast
Mother's Day Tea
End of the Year

Happy Birthday, Jesus
Doughnuts With Dad

FIELD TRIPS

From time to time, classes may be scheduled to take field trips that extend and enrich classroom learning. Advance notice will be given in writing. Written permission from parent or guardian is required. **Transportation may be provided by parent drivers who have completed "Safe Guarding Our Children" training.** All children are properly transported in booster seats as required by law. Parents are asked to give full attention to the responsibilities of the school children in their care when they chaperone a field trip. *Therefore, siblings should not attend school trips.* We additionally request that parents do not provide food or drink for children in the car on field trips.

PERSONAL TOYS

Children should not bring toys and items to which they are personally attached ("blankies, pacifiers, etc.) from home unless they have been requested to do so by the teacher for show and tell or another special event. The classroom is a place where children learn to share toys and turns. It is better for children to play with school toys in a shared setting. Playing with school toys minimizes personal disappointment when a toy breaks. Personal items that interfere with learning will remain in cubbies during the day (blankets, jewelry, dolls, pacifiers, etc.)

SCHOOL DRESS

Children in kindergarten through eighth grade will follow the school guidelines for standardized dress. **Children in pre-kindergarten** may wear clothing that is appropriate for school. Current style does not necessarily dictate good taste. Clothing should be neat, clean and generously cover the body. (Please...no tank tops, body suits, swim wear or clothing that is too tight.) Children should be able to manage their own clothing once they are potty trained. **Shoes and socks should be worn at all times. Sandals, jellies, thongs, slides and other open shoes can be dangerous during play. Jewelry is discouraged. ALL OUTERWEAR SHOULD BE CLEARLY MARKED WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME.**

TOILET TRAINING

Parents of children in the Mother's Morning Out and two year old class will be asked to provide necessary disposable paper products (diapers and wipes) for their own child's needs. **Children MUST be toilet trained in order to be enrolled in the three and four year old classes.** While it is certain that occasional accidents may occur, parents will be notified if their child is regularly not in control of bathroom needs. Please be sure your child is comfortable asking to use the bathroom, is capable of properly wiping and is able to reasonably adjust his/her clothing afterwards. Children in all the pre-kindergarten classes are asked to provide a seasonal change of clothing in a Ziploc bag...shirt, pants or shorts, underwear and socks. Please put your child's name on these items.

ILLNESS, MEDICATION

Please be sure your child is healthy for school attendance each day. **Children should be symptom free/fever free for 24 hours before returning to school following an illness.**

If your child is on medication, please complete and "authorization for medicine" form, deliver the medication to the school office in the morning and notify the school office manager and the classroom teacher. All medications must be provided in the prescription bottle and dispensed in the school office. Teachers are not allowed to apply lotions, sunscreen, creams or ointments of any type. DHR permits the application of only soap, water, ice and/or a band-aid.

If a child develops symptoms during the school day that affect his participation in class activities, teachers will do their best to assess the situation and notify parents if the child needs to be picked up.

INJURY

Should your child be injured at school, we will assess the situation and use the emergency information you have provided for the school office to notify you. If necessary, we will call 911 for professional help. (See school handbook)

PROGRESS REPORTING

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled in October for students in Kindergarten through eighth grade. Conferences for Pre-Kindergarten children (Two's, Three's, and Four's) are held twice a year in October and February. These conference times provide an opportunity for an exchange of ideas and concerns between teacher and parents that will nurture the child and maximize learning opportunity in the classroom. Parents and teachers may request additional conferences as needed. Written pupil progress reports are issued quarterly for Kindergarten through eighth grade and by the semester for Pre-Kindergarten.

YOUR CHILD AT ST. PAUL

The Early Childhood Education program at St. Paul includes students in Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten. The curriculum for the early years addresses the unique educational needs of these young children **physically, emotionally, socially, academically and spiritually.**

Activities are planned to be appropriate to the age span of the children within each group and are implemented with attention to the different needs, interest and abilities of the individuals within the group. Children are encouraged to be expressive and creative and are challenged to grow in understanding and skills.

The classroom setting is alive with child-centered opportunities for learning which are either teacher directed or student initiated. Learning centers that support thematic units of study allow students to explore independently or with adult assistance. Free-play activity allows children to engage in self-defined tasks which allow for skill development, socialization and implementation of ideas.

Learning materials include a wealth of hands-on manipulatives that support the total development of the child in both the indoor and outdoor environments.

An essential dimension to the St. Paul curriculum recognizes that children are a gift from God and provides them with a foundation for their relationship with Him. Children are nurtured in classrooms that reflect the love of Jesus. They are helped to gain knowledge and understanding of the Holy Bible which reveals to them the love of their heavenly Father as shown through Jesus Christ, His Son. Children are encouraged in their faith life which guides daily living, prepares them for successful, productive lives as Christian adults in this world and sustains them in their earthly walk with God.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Physical development and independent growth patterns are respected in the early childhood classrooms. Appropriate activities related to the child's physical development are included daily with several goals in mind. It is key that each child be guided to develop an awareness of his body and its capability for movement. It is desirous that he seek knowledge and control over body movement, not necessarily mastery of it. It is our intent to enhance each child's joy of movement as he is encouraged to explore and solve problems relating to body motion.

Opportunities are available that provide for large motor skill development, fine motor skill development, imaginative movement exploration, manipulation of games and toys to improve small muscle and eye-hand coordination, as well as provision for experiences with various dimensions of size and space, individually and in a group setting. There is also an intention to help children recognize safe play routines indoors and out and to learn about health and safety habits through adult modeling and patient guidance.

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Emotional development in the young child has to do with self-identification of thoughts and feelings and the development of the ability to express those feelings appropriately. Feelings common to the young child relate to separation, self-esteem, frustration, stress, self-control, respect, pleasure, anger, anxiety, disappointment, sadness, joy, excitement, exuberance, pride, empathy, acceptance of comfort and help...to name a few. Educators realize that these expressions vary with the age of the child and that developmentally appropriate guidance demonstrates respect for children. Adult responses to the child's emotional needs help the child develop self-control and the ability to make better decisions in the future.

It is a goal at St. Paul that each child will:

- ❖ Develop an interest and joy in learning
- ❖ Experience success in learning
- ❖ Establish himself/herself "away from home"
- ❖ Broaden awareness of his/her environment
- ❖ Adjust to new situations
- ❖ Become more self-reliant
- ❖ Exercise self-control
- ❖ Develop a sense of self-worth
- ❖ Grow in creativity and self-expression
- ❖ Complete a task
- ❖ Enjoy helping

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Social development is an important aspect of growth. At the early childhood level, socialization incorporates the process of helping children think beyond their own needs toward a cooperative effort in the school setting to prepare them to interact appropriately with other people.

It is a goal at St. Paul that each child will develop the ability to:

- ❖ Listen to others
- ❖ Cooperate with adults and peers
- ❖ Respect the rights of others
- ❖ Recognize the needs of others
- ❖ Work and play with others
- ❖ Participate in conversations and discussion
- ❖ Follow rules

ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT

Literacy – The ability to read and write begins developing in the home at the very earliest stages of listening and speaking. In the classroom setting, children are exposed to a language-rich environment which develops vocabulary and mastery of speech. As children are exposed to literature and led to experience the rich and beautiful sounds of poetry, rhyme and other literary devices, they develop an interest in the printed word. They approach the complicated task of understanding sounds and symbols through an intricate process which is responsive to individual needs. Quality literature, self-expression, invented spelling, a variety of writing tools, phonetic analysis and repeated exposure to printed symbols and words enable the child to begin to read and write.

Natural Science – The young child’s natural curiosity about the world around him is an obvious opening to provide opportunities to explore and investigate the wonders of God’s world. Children ask questions, they explore, they invent, they evaluate cause and effect and they predict what will happen when they learn in a setting that is designed to sustain their interest and respond to their curiosities through a variety of media and materials.

Music – Music is an important part of every child’s growth and development. Not only does the study of music help a child develop listening skills, motor skills and the ability to respond, it also increases aesthetic awareness and creative expression. As educators, we are concerned for the development of the whole child and, therefore, regard the rewards of musical expression as a vital part of the school day. In addition to the wealth of secular music to be studied and enjoyed, we also celebrate a rich heritage of sacred music which is a medium for expressing the faith life of a child of God.

Mathematical Concepts – Provisions are made to include mathematical activities that fit the child’s level of development. Mathematics is the organization of time, space and quantity into a systematic form. The child will be helped to organize and symbolize relationships in the environment through activities that involve the use of concrete materials with gradual movement toward abstract concepts, using a problem-solving approach.

Math experiences provide opportunities for:

- ❖ Exploring and manipulating concrete objects
- ❖ Counting activities in solving problems of interest to the child
- ❖ Beginning recognition of numerals through various materials including puzzles, games, recipes, books, pictures and manipulatives
- ❖ Developing concepts of number through manipulation of the environment...sorting, classifying, patterning, counting, comparing, weighing, measuring and constructing
- ❖ Developing awareness of time intervals and spatial relationships beginning with the child’s own day, the calendar along with holidays and special days, exploring space (indoors and outdoors), mapping and using position words.
- ❖ Applying number concepts to problem solving in real life
- ❖ Establishing numerical relationships through addition and subtraction

Social Studies (Community Concepts) – Studies about society are designed to help children understand the world around them and how that world affects their own lives. Discussions and activities prepare children for both the present and future by equipping them with knowledge, understanding and the values necessary for responsible, Christian citizenship. Children begin to understand how they are linked to other people in the home, school, church, neighborhood, the larger community and around the world. Their learning is designed to develop understanding, respect and responsibility toward God’s people.

Technology – Play and exploration form the first phase of computer education for the young child. Computer activities are best suited to the early learner when they are child centered, child initiated and age appropriate. The time spend in computer activities is limited so that the child’s primary source of activity at school is interactive with both peers and adults, providing the opportunities for social growth and emotional development.

Spiritual Development – The early childhood teachers at St. Paul take seriously the mission of the school to share God’s story and the forgiveness of sins with children. Daily religion lessons are integrated with the classroom activities of the day to help children recognize the love of Jesus Christ as their Savior and Friend, to lead them to appreciate what it means to be God’s child and to help them feel empowered by the Holy Spirit to serve others.

DISCIPLINE

Everything we do at St. Paul Lutheran School to develop effective discipline is rooted in our desire to build relationships based on the love and forgiveness shown to us by God the Father through His Son, Jesus Christ. In Jesus’ loving sacrifice on the cross, we have been restored to a new relationship with the Father through the forgiveness of sins. In this act of love, lies not only our salvation, but also our model for relationship building with people. As the Father has reached out to us in love, so we as teachers try to reach out to our students. Just as the Father provides for, guides and accepts us, so we provide for our students’ needs, offering guidance and lovingly accepting them. As He forgives, so we too strive to forgive and teach forgiveness.

Our goal of discipline is to stop a behavior, determine responsibility for the behavior and lead the individual to discover and implement a more desirable behavior for that setting. At St. Paul, teachers confront, listen, talk, feel, forgive, accept, understand, guide and encourage children in order to maintain a classroom atmosphere conducive to learning and growth. By interacting with children, teachers and students develop a mutual respect and appreciation for each other which forms the basis for easing conflict at school.

You can expect that teachers and aides will:

- ❖ Model appropriate social interactions among themselves and with children
- ❖ Set clear limits for acceptable behavior, communicate those limits effectively and apply those limits consistently
- ❖ Be able to help the child realize and accept reasonable and appropriate consequences for behaviors which cause offense, adhere to a logical sequence of steps to help the child analyze the behavior and the problem and determine an appropriate solution by:
 - Stopping the behavior
 - Talking with/listening to the child(ren) involved
 - Acknowledging the child's concerns
 - Determining logical consequences (time out, sharing, taking turns, redirecting play, clean-up, etc.)
 - Contacting parents and principal when a problem persists
 - Helping children realize the importance of repentance and forgiveness
 - Praying for successful new beginnings
 - Forgiving and going forward with a new spirit!!
- ❖ Give rewards with joy and penalties with sympathy
- ❖ Forgive and forget!

In cases where severe disruptive behavior continues, despite teacher and parent intervention, the principal will become involved in the discipline process at the classroom teacher's request. If the inappropriate behavior continues following that intervention, further conferencing between the parent, teacher and administration will occur to determine a course of action that will bring a resolve to the situation that benefits the child and supports the stable classroom environment. Options for consideration may include the establishment of a timeline for accomplishing desired behavioral outcomes as well as the course of action that will be incorporated into the discipline plan, a recommendation for professional counseling or referral to the St. Paul School Board for a final decision regarding school attendance.

Such steps may seem severe in dealing with young children. Please be reminded that it is our foremost desire to lead children to assume responsibility for their own actions while preserving a stable educational environment. Such responsible, God-pleasing behavior is not as effective when motivated by teacher and parents as it is when it comes from within the child, from a heart touched by the GOOD NEWS OF JESUS CHRIST. It is our primary intent to touch young lives with the empowering love of the Lord Jesus!

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