

St. Paul Lutheran Early Learning Center

Family Handbook



300 W. Pecan Blvd
McAllen, TX 78501
Office: (956) 682-2201
Fax: (956) 682-7148

Table of Contents	
Mission Statement.....	3
Program.....	3
Philosophy.....	3
Holiday Schedule.....	3
<i>Enrollment Requirements.....</i>	4
<i>Process for the Arrival and Departure of Children.....</i>	4
<i>General Information.....</i>	5
Toys: (12 mos. - 4 yrs.).....	5
Clothing.....	5
Outside Play.....	6
Breastfeeding.....	6
Photographs.....	6
Food Service.....	6
Birthdays and other Celebrations.....	6
Discipline Policy.....	7
<i>Health Policies.....</i>	7
Illness and Exclusion Criteria:.....	7
1. Medication.....	8
2. Head Lice.....	9
3. Immunization Requirements.....	9
4. Tuberculosis Testing Requirements.....	9
5. Hearing and Vision Screening Requirements.....	9
<i>Fee Payment Policies.....</i>	9
Vacation Time Credit.....	10
<i>Parental Notifications.....</i>	10
State Handbook and Inspection Report.....	10
Persons Prohibited on or Near School Property:.....	10
Registered Sex Offenders.....	11
Preventing and responding to abuse and neglect of children:.....	11
<i>Emergency Safety Drills.....</i>	11
Relocation Site:.....	11
<i>RESOURCES.....</i>	12
Recalls and Product Safety News.....	12
Parent Acknowledgment.....	14

Introduction

Mission Statement

St. Paul Lutheran Early Learning Center's primary mission is to foster a loving Christian environment that helps each child feel secure and promotes children in all aspects of growth - spiritually, physically, emotionally, mentally and socially.

Program

Our center is open to children ages 6 weeks through 5 years old based on the age of the child on or before September 1st of the current academic year. Each classroom is arranged in such a way that a child can make choices and thereby become more self-sufficient, self-directed, and self-disciplined. Teachers use positive verbal statements to encourage children to use their words to express their feelings.

Elementary school children through the age of 13 may be admitted for after-school care when space is available. (summers and holidays)

Philosophy

We believe that young children are active learners and learn best by with hands on activities, play, sensory exploration and with the presence of positive role models to watch and imitate.

Little Lambs curriculum, published by Concordia Publishing House, was developed to give children of all ages the opportunity to grow in their relationship of faith and life with God.

The A Beka School curriculum is used for children 12-months old – 3 years old.

The Four-year-old program uses Christian Horizons Preschool curriculum.

Hours of Operation

The ELC is open year-round from 7:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M., Monday through Friday. Children attending public schools and plan to attend the after-school program at ELC must be aware of the holiday schedule found below.

No children will be admitted for care or supervision before 7:00 A.M.

300 W. Pecan Blvd
McAllen, TX 78501
Office: (956) 682-2201
Fax: (956) 682-7148
Stpaulmcallen.org/childcare

Holiday Schedule

New Year's Eve (Dec. 31) (Close at 12:00 P.M.)

New Year's Day (Jan.1)

Good Friday

Easter Monday

Memorial Day

Independence Day

Labor Day

Wednesday before Thanksgiving (Close at 12:00 P.M.)

Thanksgiving

Friday following Thanksgiving

Christmas Eve (Dec. 24)

Christmas Day (Dec.25)

The Early Learning Center has an open-door policy. You may come at any given time of operation to observe your child. You may drop off or pickup your child at any time within the time frame of your financial agreement. If your child attends part-time and you need additional time or day(s) there is an additional cost. Please contact the ELC director to confirm availability.

Enrollment Requirements

At the time of enrollment, parents must present the following completed information:

- Enrollment and Financial Agreement Form
- Emergency Treatment Authorization Form
- Immunization/Vaccine Records
- Discipline Policy Acknowledgment
- Discipline and Guidance Policy
- Photo Release Form
- Master Record Form
- Physical with physician signature (who has examined the child within the past year)
- Registration fee payment (yearly, due August 15th)

If there are any changes to policy, you will be notified by letter or email from the ELC Director

St. Paul Lutheran Church family members will receive first consideration for admission to the ELC. As space is available, enrollment in the ELC program will be on a first come, first served basis, without regard to race, color, ethnicity, origin, or religion.

If classes are full, a waiting list will be established. As vacancies become available, they will be filled by the next family in line on the waiting list.

Process for the Arrival and Departure of Children

Arrival to the ELC:

1. Sign your child in at the beginning of the day on the roster located by your child's classroom door.
2. Clearly write the time of arrival
3. Please acknowledge with the caregiver that your child is now in their care

Bring your child only on the assigned days as requested on your enrollment form.

Monday – Friday	All day or Half-day
Tuesday and Thursday	All day or Half-day
Monday, Wednesday, Friday	All day or Half-day

If a holiday happens to fall on one of your assigned days, there will not be any make-up days.

Departure from the ELC:

1. Inform the caregiver of your presence.
2. Sign your child out on the roster located by his/her classroom door at the end of the day and secure your child (once the child leaves the classroom, you are fully responsible for their safety).
3. Pick up all items that belong to your child from their cubby.
4. Every Friday, be sure to pick up your child's bedding items (blankets and pillows) to be laundered.
5. If your child has a sippy cup or bottle, they must be taken home every day to be washed and dried and brought back the next day.

Authorized Pick Up List:

At the time of enrollment, parents must give a list of authorized persons allowed to pick up their child(ren). It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to inform the ELC of any changes on the list.

We will release the child(ren) to authorized persons only. Photo identification will be requested before the child(ren) is released.

The ELC must be notified if anyone other than the parent or authorized person is to pick up the child. Under no circumstances will a child be released to an individual not known to our staff. A photo identification must be present before a child is released.

Other Pertinent Information:

In the event of a divorce, separation, or joint custody ruling, both parents will be granted access to their child/children unless legal documentation is provided to the ELC Director. All court orders, written permission/release notes from parents, and information on child's release are placed in the child's file.

General Information

Infant Room (6wks-12mos.)

- Please label all items with child's first and last name.
- All creams to be applied require a completed medical authorization form and must be kept in their original packaging labeled with your child's full name.
- Baby formula, baby water, and baby food/cereal when appropriate must be provided by the parents.

Toys: (12 mos. - 4 yrs.)

We allow children to bring in a special blanket or stuffed animal to sleep with during naptime. Please make sure these items are properly labeled and durable.

Clothing

Children should arrive to the ELC comfortably dressed in washable play clothes, and tennis shoes. Your child will play outside as well as use water, paints, glue, etc., an extra change of clothes is required. **Boots and sandals** are not allowed for safety issues. Coats, jackets, sweaters, caps, blankets, and other clothing **MUST BE CLEARLY MARKED** with the child's name in it.

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN EARLY LEARNING CENTER IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR LOST PROPERTY (jewelry, toys, electronic devices, etc.).

Outside Play

Children will be allowed to play outside if the temperature feels like 60° F- 90° F.

Breastfeeding

Mothers have the right to breastfeed their children at ELC or provide breast milk for their child while in our care. Mothers who wish to breastfeed their child may go to the therapy/nursery room to breastfeed.

Photographs

From time to time or on special occasions we may take pictures of your child. By signing the form in the registration packet, you are allowing or not allowing us to photograph your child and display them on bulletin boards, in yearbooks, etc.

Food Service

A variety of nutritious foods are prepared and served giving your child a balanced meal each day. Children are always encouraged, but never forced, to eat their food. A morning snack, noon meal, and an afternoon snack are served each day.

A menu will be sent home at the beginning of every month with your child and posted at the entrance to the ELC Director's office and outside your child's classroom.

If your child has a food allergy, please make the teacher aware and the ELC office personnel also.

Morning snack (not a full breakfast) is served between 8:00 A.M. and 8:30 A.M. If your child arrives before 8:00 A.M., please provide him/her with a nutritional breakfast.

Lunch is served at 11:00 A.M. for ages 12 mos. - 3 ½ yrs.

Lunch is served at 11:25 A.M. for ages 4 yrs. and 5 yrs.

Lunch will not be served after 11:30 A.M.

Child(ren) brought in after 11:30 A.M. Parents either provide a lunch or have had their child eat lunch prior to entering the ELC.

Parents are welcome to have lunch with their child and the price of lunch will be added to your monthly bill.

Birthdays and other Celebrations

The ELC will have celebrations for various holidays throughout the year. Parents will be asked to help provide special treats for these days.

Birthdays are very special days, and we allow children to celebrate at the ELC with their classmates; however, gifts may not be exchanged. Please notify us several days in advance so we may assist in making your child's day special.

Birthday party invitations may not be distributed UNLESS ALL CHILDREN IN THE CLASS ARE INVITED.

Children who attend the ELC will not be released for after-school activities such as birthday parties unless the teacher receives written consent from the parent.

It is imperative that the parent notifies the teacher and ELC Director by means of written consent that someone else will be picking up your child from this event.

Discipline Policy

Discipline and guidance shall be consistent and based on an understanding of the individual needs and development of each child and shall be directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior. Understanding this, we provide the following rules and their consequences to aid us in our walk together and toward greater maturity in discipline.

A caregiver may only use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, which include at least the following:

- Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior.
- Reminding a child of behavior expectations by using clear, positive statements.
- Using brief supervised separation or time out from the group, when appropriate for the child's age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age.
- If children are willfully disobedient and persistently uncooperative, the following measures may be taken:
 1. Notification of parents: behavior problems will be reported to parents. Parents will be expected to support the staff with their disciplinary actions.
 2. Temporary Removal: If a child commits a serious offense, the parent may be asked to remove the child from the ELC for the remainder of the day.

In the event of a "biting incident" in the classroom, the following guidelines will be followed:

Child bitten

1. First aid is given to the bitten area. Cleaned with soap and water, if necessary, a bandage will be applied.
2. Parents are notified, and an accident report is completed.
3. The name of child bitten is kept confidential.

Child that bites

1. A child who bites (depending on the situation) will be redirected to a positive behavior.
2. Parents are notified.

Health Policies

Illness and Exclusion Criteria:

At St. Paul Lutheran ELC, we are concerned with the health and safety of all our children. We ask that you keep your children at home when they are ill and/or consult your doctor. Please use the information below to guide your decisions. These guidelines will be enforced. If a child becomes ill during their time at the ELC, the guidelines below will apply. The child will be separated from the other children and parents will be notified to pick up their child.

When Your Child Must Remain at Home		
No exceptions for these symptoms without a doctor's note.	Fever – 99° F or up	Ringworm
	Earache	Lice
	Impetigo	Diarrhea
	Pinkeye	Hand, Foot &
	Vomiting	Mouth Disease
Only with doctor note or ELC Director's or Assistant Director's permission	Rash	
	Sore Throat	
	Severe Cold or Flu Symptoms	
When Your Child May Return to ELC		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. After 24 hours fever free without medication 2. If you see the doctor, please bring note with diagnosis 3. Child may return as prescribed by doctor (must have doctor's note) 4. Must have doctor's note if absent for 3 days or more 		
<u>Attending or Returning with Activity Restrictions</u>		
Activity Restrictions will be handled on a case by case basis and ultimate authority will be with the Director or Assistant Director. If the restrictions will be permanent or long term, the ELC Director will decide if it can be accommodated while still providing the child a quality experience at St. Paul.		
<u>Ultimate Authority</u>		
The above information is not all inclusive, the ELC Director and/or Assistant Director have the ultimate authority as to whether the child can remain in attendance to ensure the safety of all children cared for at St. Paul Lutheran ELC.		

The parent will be notified immediately if the child:

- Is injured and the injury requires medical attention by a health-care professional
- In case of sudden acute illness or the serious injury of a child, emergency medical care procedures will be to call 911, notify parents or emergency contacts immediately, and contact the physician or dentist listed on the Emergency Medical Care Form.
- In case of minor injury, the staff will administer basic first aid.

1. **Medication**

Medication prescribed for a specified child should be kept in the original container bearing the pharmacy label which must include child's name, prescription number, date filled, physician name, and directions for use. For a child to have medication administered by ELC staff, the following must be in place:

- Parents must sign an authorization form and include the time(s) for our ELC employees to administer each medication according to label directions
- The medication must be in the original container labeled with the child's name
- The medication will only be administered in amounts according to the label directions or as recommended by a physician
- No medication will be administered after its expiration date
- Medication will only be administered to the child for whom it is intended and prescribed to

2. Head Lice

Head lice spread very easily from one person to another, and schools are easy targets for outbreaks. Please be aware that having head lice is not a reflection on you, your child, or the cleanliness of your household. If you find that your child has head lice, please report it to the ELC office. This will give the ELC the opportunity to have other children inspected and control any outbreak as quickly as possible. If a child is found with head lice, he/she will be asked to take a leave of absence for three days or until treated.

3. Immunization Requirements

An official immunization record or copy must be on file and updated when new vaccines are given.

This record must be validated by a physician or other healthcare professional with a signature or rubber stamp and include:

- The child's name and birthdate.
- The number of doses and vaccine type.
- The month, day, and year the child received each vaccination.

4. Tuberculosis Testing Requirements

Texas Department of Health requires Tuberculosis testing for any child ONE (1) year old and older.

Documentation must be on file with the Center.

New children enrolled into Center are required to receive a TB test before start date. Infants enrolled turning one year old will be required to receive a TB test.

5. Hearing and Vision Screening Requirements

The ELC is required to screen children age 4 whose birthday is before September 1st for vision and hearing.

The screening is visual acuity for vision screen and sweep check for hearing screen results or A signed copy from the child's doctor that the child's screening records are current and on file.

The statement must be dated and include the name, address, and telephone number of the doctor's office.

Fee Payment Policies

The **registration** fee is **NON-REFUNDABLE**. **Registration** cannot be completed unless the fee is paid. **If you withdraw your child from St. Paul and decided to return, a pro-rated registration fee will be assessed unless you continue to pay the monthly fees. Only by continuing to pay monthly can the space be reserved. The registration fee is per school year (August – July) for every child.**

- All fees must be paid in advance of service. Fees are to be submitted on a monthly, semester, or yearly (August - July) school basis.
- Once your plan is set for the days your child comes, you must give a 2-weeks' notice by the 15th of the month to change your plan.

- Any increase in fees will be announced at least two weeks in advance
- There will not be a refund for missed days or partial days.
- If your child is a part-time student, he/she must be picked up by 12:00 P.M.
If your child is not picked up by 12:00 P.M. you will be charged a fee of \$1.00 per minute for the first 15 min. and then \$5.00 per minute after 15 minutes. Full time students must be picked up by 6:00 P.M with a late fee of \$1.00 per minute for first 15 minutes and \$5.00 per minute after the 15 minutes.

A \$30.00 late charge will be assessed on current monthly charges if payment is not received by the 15th of each month. There is also a penalty fee of \$30.00 for insufficient funds.

Vacation Time Credit

The ELC is open year-round and provides a service to families of full-time child that is enrolled six (6) months or longer in which these families may take a one-week vacation credit. This service is available every six (6) months per calendar year. The ELC should receive two (2) weeks' notice when using this credit service.

Parental Notifications

Parents will be notified by letter, note on the classroom or front office door, and FACTS Parent Alert System via text.

Parents wanting to Participate in the Early Learning Center's Operation and Activities

must meet the ELC employee and volunteer qualifications:

- Federal Background Check & Fingerprinting
- Have a current TB Test

Parents may visit the ELC at any time during the day to observe their child, the ELC's operation, and program activities, without having to secure prior approval.

State Handbook and Inspection Report

The Minimum Standards Handbook is available for review at any time and is located at the ELC office. The State Licensing Inspection Report is posted on the bulletin board near the ELC office.

Persons Prohibited on or Near School Property:

Early Learning Center prohibits all persons who have pled guilty or nolo contendere to or have been convicted of or found guilty of violating provisions of the Texas Penal Code dealing with offenses against persons or the family from being on or within 500 feet of property or ELC activity. Offenses include, but are not limited to the following:

- Sexual Offenses
- Incest
- Endangering the welfare of a child in the first degree
- Use of a child in a sexual performance
- Promoting a sexual performance by a child
- Sexual exploitation of a minor

Promoting child pornography

Furnishing pornographic material to minors

Despite the prohibition in this section, the ELC Director may grant written permission for a parent, guardian or custodian of a child to be on the property for the limited purpose of attending meetings with the staff or other events. Permission will be granted sparingly, if ever, and only in situations where the parent, guardian or custodian will be supervised at all times. If written permission is not granted, the parent, guardian or custodian may seek permission from the ELC Board. The ELC Director will inform relevant ELC staff of the scope of the permission granted. A copy of this written permission will be kept on file in the ELC office.

Registered Sex Offenders

Sex offenders required to be listed on the Texas sex offender registry, or who have pled guilty, pled nolo contendere or have been convicted of crimes for which the law currently requires offenders to be listed, regardless of when those crimes were committed, are not allowed on the property or at ELC activities without written permission from the ELC Director except to attend meetings of a public governmental body. A copy of this written permission will be kept on file in the ELC office.

Preventing and responding to abuse and neglect of children:

ELC staff are required to have annual training for increasing their awareness of issues regarding child abuse and neglect, including warning signs that a child may be a victim of abuse or neglect and prevention techniques and actions that the parent of a child who is a victim of abuse or neglect should take to obtain assistance and intervention and how to conduct health checks.

Emergency Safety Drills

Children, faculty, and staff practice fire, tornado/severe weather, evacuation/disaster, and lockdown drills monthly throughout the year.

Relocation Site:

In the event of an emergency, if we must evacuate the building, the children will proceed in a quick and orderly fashion from the building to Peter Piper Pizza on 10th Street. Children will walk down Quince to Redwood, left on 8th and then Quince to Peter Piper Pizza. Alternate location will be Jackson Elementary at 501 Harvey Avenue. The children will walk down the alley to 3rd Street and then to 4th Street to Highland and left to the school. If danger prevents going either west or north, then the children will walk to St. Mark Unite Methodist Church across Pecan Boulevard. South from the school is another site McAllen Memorial High School going south on 2nd Street to Hackberry, to the left (east) of the school when other sites are not good locations. Students will be gathered at designated site until they can be released to parents/guardians.

RESOURCES

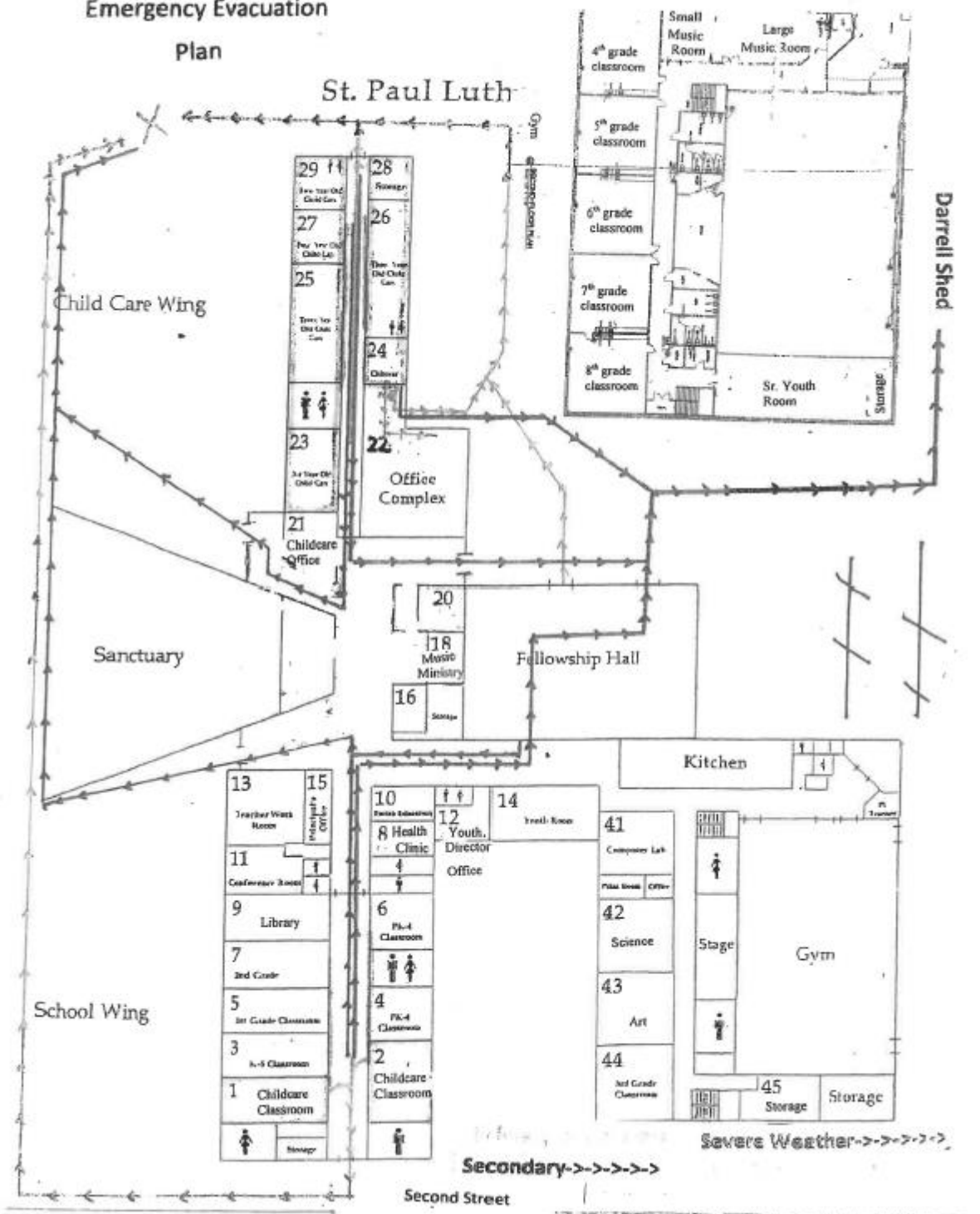
- Texas Department of Family and Protective Services
2520 S. Veterans Blvd.
Edinburg, TX. 78539
Phone: 956-316-8328
www.txchildcaresearch.org/
- Child Protective Services
300 E. Canton Rd.
Edinburg, TX 78539
956-381-5791
- Texas Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-252-5400

Recalls and Product Safety News

Website: www.cpsc.gov/recalls

**Emergency Evacuation
Plan**

West Alley



Parent Acknowledgment

By signing this form, you are acknowledging receipt of this handbook and will be held responsible for complying with its rules and regulations. Please read it carefully and keep the handbook on hand so that you may refer to it later.

-----Please return this form-----

I, _____, the parent of
_____, hereby acknowledge receipt of the St. Paul Lutheran Early Learning Center's Family Handbook. I also acknowledge that it is my responsibility to be aware of the contents and to comply with the rules and guidelines of the center.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Parent Acknowledgment

By signing this form, you are acknowledging receipt of this handbook and will be held responsible for complying with its rules and regulations. Please read it carefully and keep the handbook on hand so that you may refer to it later.

-----Please return this form-----

I, _____, the parent of
_____, hereby acknowledge receipt of the St. Paul Lutheran Early Learning Center's Family Handbook. I also acknowledge that it is my responsibility to be aware of the contents and to comply with the rules and guidelines of the center.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date