

GOOD SHEPHERD EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER

**PARENT HANDBOOK
2025-2026**



Growing in love every day

**Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
E9035 State Highway M-28 East
Munising, MI 49862
906-387-3579**

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WELCOME

Your child is a unique creation of God and a special gift to your family. Early Education is the foundation of formal education and our Board of Education and staff take their responsibilities very seriously.

Good Shepherd Early Childhood Center offers educational, social, and physical opportunities with Christ at the center. Our program provides quality education in a loving Christian atmosphere. We are looking forward to teaching your child about the love that God has for them.

Staff:

Marcia LindstromDirector/Lead Teacher
Kimi Schierschmidt.....Enrichment Teacher
Jodie Jackson.....Teacher Aide
Samantha Nolta-Eubanks... ..Teacher Aide



CONTACT INFORMATION

Please notify us of any phone number or address changes in a timely manner. It is important to have accurate information if you or any of your child's caregivers need to be contacted.



STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The education that children receive during their early years is extremely important. In the Bible, we read in Proverbs 22:6, *“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”* During these early years, children need a stimulating environment and supportive experiences that aid in developing their full potential and a positive self-concept.

In light of this, Good Shepherd Early Childhood Center offers programs which will provide your child with a wide variety of learning experiences. In a guided Christian environment, your child will be free to explore his/her surroundings and to participate in activities designed to promote success.



GOALS OF GOOD SHEPHERD ECC

1. To acquaint your child with Jesus and His love for them
2. To help your child develop a positive, healthy self-concept
3. To help your child establish himself or herself “away from home”
4. To learn transition, routine & structure.
5. To help your child get along with others & develop healthy friendships
6. To broaden your child’s growth experiences, spiritually, mentally, physically, emotionally and socially
7. To form a close home-school relationship.

OUR STAFF

Good Shepherd Early Childhood Center requires a comprehensive background check on all employees and unsupervised volunteers. All supervised volunteers shall receive a public sex offender registry (PSOR) clearance before having any contact with a child in care. A copy of this clearance shall be kept on file at the center. In addition, our teacher’s aides and any volunteer parents will fill out and sign a statement concerning any criminal background they may have, with specific notation of a conviction in criminal court or of adult or child abuse. This is required by the Bureau of Family Services. If we find any of our staff or volunteers have prior criminal convictions, it shall come before the Board of Education and be dealt with in a satisfactory manner. The Early Childhood Staff must sign a document stating that they are aware that child abuse/neglect is against the law. All staff must sign a Confidentiality Statement.

LICENSING

Our Early Childhood Center is licensed by the State of Michigan. A representative serves as a consultant to our child care center – making suggestions regarding our program, equipment, staff and health standards. The main responsibility of the department is to see that all licensing requirements are met. Our center follows all the regulations which they ask of us. A licensing notebook is available to parents during regular business hours. It contains all the licensing inspection and special investigation reports. It is also available online at www.michigan.gov/michildcare. A requirement by the state is continuing education. The teacher-student ratio will be 1 adult for every 8 children in the Preschool room. Our staff is required to take classes and attend conferences. Also, all teachers and aides at the Good Shepherd Early Childhood Center are CPR and First Aid certified.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Our staff shall use positive methods of discipline which encourage self-control, self-esteem, cooperation and conflict resolution. The main purpose of the disciplinary procedure during school is to ensure the comfort and safety of each child, respect for all property, and to discourage the disruption of class. When verbal correction and redirection does not work, the child will be removed from the group. The child may return after a change in behavior. In an extreme case, where disruptive behavior cannot be controlled, the parent will be requested to take their child home for the remainder of the day. No physical punishment will be used, GSEC is a Zero Tolerance Policy center. If consultation about a child is requested, it will be done in a private setting. Children are treated with respect and dignity during any form of disciplinary action. Our objective is always to provide a positive Christian care-giving environment.

ADMISSION AND WITHDRAWAL OF CHILDREN

Good Shepherd Early Childhood Center is a non-profit organization open to all children regardless of race, religion, nationality, or ethnic background. Good Shepherd believes that educational opportunities should be open to boys and girls on an equal basis.

A medical examination is required to assure that the child has no communicable disease. ***The physical must be completed before school starts in September.***

All children enrolled in the preschool must be potty trained and out of diapers and pull-ups.

GSECC reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of a child for any one or more of the following reasons:

1. A child has special needs beyond which the staff members are able to adequately meet
2. A child is having frequent, ongoing bathroom accidents and is not able to use the restroom independently.
3. Persistent, unresolved inappropriate behavior (including hitting or biting) on the part of the child.
4. Lack of parental cooperation in regards to an ongoing issue.
5. Physical or verbal abuse of center staff by a parent.
6. Failure of parents to complete and return all necessary forms.
7. Failure of the parent to observe the rules of GSECC relating to the arrival and departure of the child.

Upon the discretion of the Director and after reasonable effort on the part of the staff to integrate a child into the program, a child's participation may be terminated if that child requires a

disproportionate amount of one to one attention because of disruptive behavior.

In any of the above situations a conference will be scheduled with the teacher, the Board of Education and parents to determine the best course of action for all those involved.

In extreme cases, no prior notice will be given on the part of the center to have a child withdrawn from the program.

A two-week notice is required to withdraw a child from the program.

Preschool Toilet Training Policy

Children enrolled in Preschool must be toilet trained before attending. Children must be wearing underwear. A child having accidents daily would not be considered toilet trained. Please note that wearing pull ups is not considered toilet trained.

Why do children have to be toilet trained before they begin Preschool?

*There are strict standards for changing and disposing of wet or soiled diapers/pull ups. Our classrooms are not equipped for that.

*When an adult is changing soiled clothing, it removes one adult from the direct supervision of and interaction with the rest of the class. We do understand that even toilet trained children will occasionally have accidents. "Accidents" can be defined as unusual incidents that should happen infrequently. In these instances, the teachers will help the children change their wet clothing, while encouraging as much independence as possible.

A toilet trained child is a child who can do the following:

*Communicate to the teachers that they have to use the restroom before they go

*Alert him/herself to stop what he/she is doing to go to the bathroom

*Pull down his/her clothing and get them back up with minimal assistance

*Wipe him/herself with minimal assistance

*Get on and off of the toilet

*Wash and dry hands as instructed

*Postpone going temporarily and briefly if they must wait for someone who is in the bathroom ahead of them or we are away from the classroom

Your child will be reminded to use the bathroom several times a day. A teacher will assist your child as needed, but children should be able to complete most toileting activities independently.

It is not uncommon for a child who is fully toilet trained to have a setback when he or she is in a new environment. We are aware of this and will assist the children. Please send a complete change of clothing appropriate for the season in a labeled Ziplock bag. These will be left in their cubbies. Parents will be made aware if a child has an accident and the wet clothing will be placed in a sealed plastic bag.

We understand that each child arrives at this milestone differently, therefore we will allow time for your child to demonstrate this goal. However, if the situation continues and is not manageable within the classroom environment, we will discuss the issue with parents and reserve the right to unenroll until such a time that the child has arrived at this milestone.

CENTER FEE POLICY

A child is not guaranteed a spot until the registration form and the \$50.00 non-refundable registration fee have been received.

3 Year Old Preschool

\$280.00 paid monthly (Sept.-May) 5 days per week - Total \$2,520.00 or one-time payment of \$2,470.00

***+\$150.00 snack fee for school year**

4 Year Old Preschool

\$280.00 paid monthly (Sept.-May) 5 days per week - Total \$2,520.00 or one-time payment of \$2,470.00

***+\$150.00 snack fee for school year**

GOOD SHEPHERD MEMBER DISCOUNT

Members may receive a discount of 15%

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

A scholarship application is available in the church office. Depending on need and availability of funds we may be able to provide partial or full scholarship assistance.

REFER A FAMILY

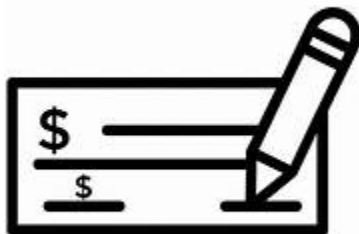
Refer a family: that registers a child and receive a thank you from us.....\$50.00 off one month's tuition for your child! Tell them to say you sent them! :)



TUITION PAYMENTS

The yearly tuition is calculated as an equal monthly fee for your convenience. Therefore months including holidays and breaks have been accounted for.

1. One-time payments are due by orientation
2. September tuition is due by orientation
3. Monthly tuition payments are due by the 1st of each month. If payment is not received by the due date, you will be contacted by the ECC preschool office. Please do not send your child until your account is current.
4. Please make payments out to **GSECC** (or Good Shepherd Early Childhood Center). Post-dated checks are not accepted. Checks returned for insufficient funds will incur a \$25 additional fee. Receipts will be given out for cash payments only.
5. Cash payments must be exact change. Any excess will be applied to next month's tuition.
6. **Any payments made after the 7th of the month will be subject to a \$10.00 late fee. A reminder statement is provided 2 weeks in advance of the due date.**



HEALTH AND SAFETY

We are concerned that each child in our program arrives in good health for his/her own comfort and the welfare of the other students. Listed below are some guidelines on when to keep your child home.

Child must not attend school if he/she:

- Is vomiting or has diarrhea. Child may not return until 24 hours after the last episode.
- Has a fever or if medicine is required to reduce a fever. Your child may return after 24 hours from being fever free.
- Has any cough or cold when child is feverish or lethargic
- Has heavy nasal discharge
- Has an open cold sore
- Has an unknown rash
- Has a constant cough, sore throat or problem swallowing
- Is over- tired to the point that they cannot function properly. Rest at such times may prevent serious illness
- Has breathing trouble
- Has pain in abdomen or stomach
- Has pink eye/suspected pink eye
- Has possible or diagnosed head lice
- Has symptoms of possible communicable disease

If your child comes to school ill or becomes ill during school hours, they will be isolated from the other children and you will be notified and asked to promptly pick them up. **Please be considerate of other families and staff when deciding whether to send your child based on their symptoms.**

Please notify the school if your child will be absent for the day and also please report to the school at once if your child has communicable diseases such as chicken pox, etc.

A child taking antibiotics should not return to school until 24 hours after the first dose.



MEDICATIONS/PRESCRIPTIONS

If any medications are to be taken during school hours, ECC staff will provide a medication request form. The medication request form shall be completed and signed by a physician and parent/guardian. Medication includes both prescription and non-prescription medications and includes those taken by mouth, inhalers, injectables or applied to the eyes, nose or skin. Medications must be in the original containers and labeled with the child's name. Prescription medication shall have the pharmacy label indicating the physician's name, child's name, instructions and name and strength of the medication.

HAND WASHING

Children and staff are required to wash hands before handling food, eating and after using the bathroom by using soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds. Children are reminded to wash their hands when they sneeze/cough into hands, blow their noses, put fingers into their mouths or when deemed necessary by staff. Children are encouraged to sneeze/cough into the crook of their arm instead of into their hands to help prevent the spread of germs.



MANDATED REPORTING:

Preschool providers are mandated reporters. Under the Child Protection Law, Preschool providers must contact Children's Protective Services (CPS) **immediately** if and when they suspect child abuse and/or neglect.

SCHEDULE OF OPERATION

We expect the children to be ready to start class promptly at 8:30 a.m. Children should arrive **no earlier than ten minutes before class begins**. This is prep time for teachers and it is important for them to have the chance to get everything set up for the day. Children should be picked up **no later than ten minutes** after school is dismissed at 12:00 p.m. A child will not be dismissed with anyone except a parent or someone designated by the parents. ***In the event that someone other than a parent is to pick up the child, a written note or phone call is necessary.***

It is the parents' responsibility to schedule /cancel Altran bus services. All communication is between you and their dispatch. They **will** charge for no-show rides if not arranged in advance.



CENTER CLOSURES

The center follows the schedule of the Munising Public School District concerning Holidays and breaks. In addition, the Monday following Easter the center will be closed. The center has the discretion to close additional days for staff training and will make every effort to provide adequate notice to parents. **When Munising Public Schools cancel school due to inclement weather the center will also be closed. If they have a two hour delay we will be cancelled.** Tune into TV6 for school closings.***Note:** snow days will not be made up. In the case of an infectious illness, Good Shepherd Preschool will be closed based on 35% absenteeism or if illness leaves a lack of adequate staff members/substitutes.

FOOD POLICY

Our snack policy had always been that each family, on a rotating weekly basis, would be obligated to provide snacks and drinks for the entire class during their week. After some debate and looking at the issues that this sometimes presents, we sent surveys out to our three-year-old families who returned this year as four-year-olds with choices on changes in our snack policy. The overwhelming choice was to have families pay a lump sum for snacks and drinks at the beginning of the school year. We tried it this year and we felt it went well. It's a bit more work for us but it's fair and consistent money wise across the board for each family. Also, it avoids repetitions in the menu. We plan the menus and buy the food for snack and drink and do any necessary preparation, especially of fruits and vegetables. We are trying to make this more efficient, consistent and easier for our families.



EMERGENCY PROCEDURES/PARENT NOTIFICATION PLAN

A child should have all primary caregivers listed as emergency contacts. In addition, there should be at least two other contacts within the Munising area that can respond to any requests to pick up or transport a child when ill or other non-life threatening emergency occurs.

If your child becomes ill/injured or there is an accident/incident at school, the following procedure is followed:

1. The mother, father, or person listed on the emergency card will be contacted by a staff member of GSEC.
2. If the above people cannot be reached when the child is sick/injured, the child's doctor who is listed on the information card will be contacted.
3. If the child is seriously ill/injured at school and the above people cannot be reached, the staff will contact 911. GSEC is not responsible for any transportation or other expenses incurred.
4. A Minor Mis-hap Form will be completed for small incidents/injury (child cuts hair, small cut or bruise, biting, etc.) A written report will be made for larger incidents with a copy given to the parents and a copy remaining in the child's records should they need to be treated for either an injury or an illness.
5. In the event of a major emergency (fire, tornado, bomb threat, etc.) a member of GESC staff will contact all parents **after the emergency is under control.**

No child will be released to any person who is suspected to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs. The staff will call another adult listed on the contact list for assistance. If the person insists on taking the child, the staff will call the police.



FIRE AND EMERGENCY EVACUATION

The State of Michigan requires fire drills and tornado drills. The staff will go over the fire procedure with the children for the first time during the second week of school and as required each quarter thereafter. Tornado drills are also required at a minimum of 2 between the months of October-April.

In the event of any need to evacuate the building we have an agreement with Alger Transit Authority (Altran) for them to quickly bring a bus large enough to transport children and staff to Johnson Brothers Construction located in the industrial park. If for some reason they are not open at the time, Altran has agreed to be our back up facility to reunite children with families. Parents will be notified of the situation either by phone or Messenger and asked to pick up children.

SMOKING/VAPING

Smoking/vaping are prohibited in the center, on the center property or in vehicles on field trips when children are present.



SAMPLE DAILY SCHEDULE

8:30 a.m.-8:45 a.m. **Morning Wiggle Time** (Pre-k P.E. i.e.; freeze dances, yoga, aerobics, etc.)

8:45 a.m.-9:10 a.m. **Table work** (letter, number, shape or color, name practice, etc.)

9:10 a.m.-9:35 a.m. **Opening Prayer, Circle Time, Calendar and Weather**

9:30 a.m.-9:50 a.m.-**Jesus Time** in the church

9:50 a.m.-10:15 a.m. **Music Time**

10:15 a.m.-10:45 a.m. **Centers**

10:45 a.m.-11:05 a.m. Wash Hands/Prayer/**Snack Time**

11:05 a.m.-11:35 a.m. **Free Play**

11:35 a.m.-11:55 a.m. **Story, closing prayer and song**

12:00 p.m. **Dismissal**



Please read, sign and return this page and all required forms when you attend the mandatory Orientation.

I have received and read the Good Shepherd Early Childhood Parent Handbook and understand the policies and procedures included in it. This includes but it not limited to: the Criteria for Admission and Withdrawal, Toilet training readiness, Schedule of operation, denoting hours, days, and holidays during which the Center is open and services are provided; Fee policy; Discipline policy; Food service policy; Program philosophy; Typical daily routine; Parent notification plan for accidents, injuries, incidents, evacuation or illnesses; Exclusion policy for child illnesses; and Notice of the availability of the center's licensing notebook.

I understand that if I have questions or concerns I should contact the program director or my child's teacher..

Parent Signature _____

Child's name _____

Date _____

Annual Parent Authorization For Field Trips

This consent form gives your child's school and its staff permission to take the below named student off-site for field trips for the 2025-2026 school year. The permission applies to all field trips occurring within the school year by Altran bus, provided use of another school's bus, car or walking. This permission is valid for one school year.

Parents will be notified in advance of any field trips. At that time, parents will have the option to withdraw permission for any individual field trip by submitting written opt-out instructions to the director or teacher. If a parent chooses to opt-out of a specific field trip, the annual field trip consent remains valid for all other field trips.

Parental Consent

I hereby give permission for my child to participate in field trips with Good Shepherd Early Childhood Center during the 2024-2025 school year. I understand that field trips will require transportation away from school and travel may be by bus, car or walking. I authorize school employees or volunteers in charge of the students to obtain all necessary emergency medical care and authorize any licensed physician or medical personnel to render necessary emergency treatment for my child.

Student Name _____

Parent or Guardian _____

Parent or Guardian signature _____

Date _____

*Medications needed to have along _____

