

Little Lambs Preschool

Handbook



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Table of Contents

Mission Statement.....	3
Guidelines.....	3
Registration	3
Tuition.....	4
School Year Calendar.....	4
Health Policy.....	5
Inclement Weather.....	5
Beginning of School Day.....	6
Ending of School Day.....	6
Learning Environment.....	7
School Rules and Procedures	8
Discipline	8
Snacks.....	9
Clothing.....	9
Toys, Games, and Books.....	10
Parental Involvement	10

Mission Statement

- Little Lambs Preschool endeavors to provide an affordable preschool as a service to our community, as well as to the families of Community Mennonite Fellowship, our sponsoring church.
- We will seek to teach the children basic Christian principles, to promote social and emotional well-being, and to foster constructive group behavior and individual relationships.
- We endeavor to strengthen the student's literacy and math skills, as well as provide exposure to art, music, and science and work to develop motor coordination and control.
- We desire to work as a team with parents. We encourage regular communication between the parents and teachers regarding the child's adjustment and progress.

Guidelines

- We accept students who are at least three years of age by September 1 of the school year for which they are applying.
- All children must be potty trained. This means they know when they need to use the bathroom and can normally get their pants up and down without assistance.
- **Classes will be held on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 8:30am - 11:30am.**

Registration

- Registration forms can be received any time after **March 1st** for the fall of the same year. Appropriate forms will be available at the church office and on the Little Lambs Preschool website (www.littlelambsmilton.com). We will also mail them to interested families upon request.
- Registrations will be accepted on a first come, first served basis. There will be no discrimination of enrollments based on ethnicity, income level, religion, or race.
- A spot on the class list will be reserved for a student when we receive their registration form **and** the required non-refundable registration fee. This fee will be applied toward the first month's tuition. The registration fee is approximately 50% of the current monthly tuition. For 2023-24, the registration fee is \$75.00. **Checks should be made payable to "CMF" with "LLP" and the student's name on the memo line.**

Tuition

- Tuition for each student is based on a nine-month school year. Tuition for the 2023-24 school year will be \$150 per month. A fee of \$5.00 will be charged for late payments.
- Tuition may be paid monthly or in two installments. **If paid monthly, the tuition fee for each month must be paid on or before the first preschool class day of each month.**
- **If paying the year's tuition in two installments, the first payment (covering 4 months) will be due the first class day in September and the second payment (covering 5 months) will be due the first class day in January.** There is a \$20.00 per year discount for choosing this payment option. The discount is deducted from the second installment payment.
- Please include the appropriate provided Tuition Coupon with your payment. All checks should be made payable to "CMF" with "LLP" and the student's name on the memo line. **Payments can be mailed to the church** (Little Lambs Preschool, Community Mennonite Fellowship, 2985 Broadway Road, Milton, PA 17847) **or can be dropped off at the church office.** They should not be sent to school with your child or given to the teacher.
- There is a "Need-Based Partial Scholarship" available each school year. A "Scholarship Application Form" may be obtained from the director or at the church office and must be submitted by **June 1**. The scholarship will be awarded as funds are available to the family that has the greatest need, based on financial information provided by the applicants. The family will pay a portion of the monthly tuition, the amount of which will be determined by the preschool director and financial director, in collaboration with the family.

School Year Calendar

- **The school year will begin the first Tuesday after Labor Day and end the last Thursday prior to Memorial Day.**
- Holiday vacations will generally follow the Milton School District schedule.
- A calendar highlighting holiday breaks and other important dates for the year will be provided to each family.
- An informal orientation for the children and their parents will be scheduled for the Thursday evening before the first day of school. The children will meet the staff and their classmates, while the parents meet with the preschool director to discuss important details. Parents also will have the opportunity to ask questions of the director and a teacher.

Health Policy

- All children should be free of contagious and infectious disease while attending classes. Please keep children with diarrhea, fever, or nausea at home. The child may return to school when they are fever and symptom free without the use of fever or pain reducing medicines for a minimum of 24 hours.
- **Please message the teacher on Class Dojo or call the church office (570-742-7315) if your child is ill and will not be in class.** An answering machine is available when the church office is closed. Please leave a message and the church secretary will give your message to the teacher.
- Children should be properly immunized. This includes primary immunizations for DTP and oral polio and at least one booster, and the MMR (mumps, measles, and rubella), Hep B, and varicella (chicken pox) vaccinations.
- Medications will generally not be administered to a child. Exceptions can be made in pre-approved special circumstances (for instance, an EpiPen for allergic reactions). Please consult the preschool director if you desire an exception to this policy.
- Please report any health conditions or concerns to the teacher.
- We reserve the right to do head checks if we have any reason to suspect the presence of head lice. The parent/guardian will be notified in the event this happens and informed of the results.

Inclement Weather

- Typically, we will follow the decisions made by the Milton Area School District regarding weather related delays and cancellations. **If Milton schools have a weather related 2-hour delay, Little Lambs will have an abbreviated day, beginning at 10:15am and dismissing at 12:15pm.** Delays and cancellations will be confirmed on Class Dojo. Phone calls will not be made.
- Little Lambs Preschool reserves the right to cancel class if the weather is a safety concern, regardless of the school district's decision. In this case, you WILL be called at the number you have provided on the student's Emergency Form.
- ***Most important – Use good judgment!*** If the road or neighborhood conditions seem dangerous, do not attempt to bring your child to school.
- We will make every attempt to reschedule classes missed because of inclement weather. Possible make-up days will be listed on the school calendar to be used as needed, and the teacher will announce when class will be in session for a make-up day.

Beginning of School Day

To ensure the safety of your child, please follow these guidelines for dropping your child off prior to the start of class:

- We will be using the doors on the east side of the building (toward I-80) and the west side of the building (toward Milton). **Children with last names beginning with A through L will use the east entrance. Children with last names beginning with M through Z will use the west entrance.**
- Parents will drive up to the assigned entrance in a single line, following a traffic pattern that will be marked with cones for the first week. **Parents and students should remain in their cars until a teacher comes to the entrance at 8:20am.**
- When the teacher comes outside, the first three drivers in line can allow their children to exit their vehicle. We prefer that children exit their vehicle on the side of the vehicle that borders the building. If a driver elects to unload from the opposite side of the car, it is the responsibility of the driver to escort the child to the building side of their vehicle. A teacher will assist, as needed, in getting children from their cars to the building. Other staff will stay in the building and supervise children as they come inside.
- At 8:30am, the staff will start class and no longer be available to escort children to class.
- Students who arrive after 8:30am can use the office entrance to the building, on the lower level. The parent will need to buzz the office to gain entry, sign in at the office, and escort the child upstairs using the elevator. The parent will also need to sign out in the office before leaving.

Ending of School Day

Please follow these guidelines for dismissal:

- **Please come for your child PROMPTLY at 11:30am out of respect for your child and the teachers.**
- Drivers will remain in cars following the same traffic pattern used in the arrival procedure. Parents will be given name signs at the orientation meeting to assist staff in quickly identifying the child being picked up by each vehicle. Use of these signs allows dismissal time to proceed quickly. Drivers should place the name tag on the dashboard on the side of the vehicle that faces the building.
- The staff will bring the children downstairs, so they are ready to be dismissed at 11:30am. A staff member at each entrance will identify which three children are being picked up by the first three vehicles in line, and those three children will be sent outside by the assistant. Cars will

load on the side of the car toward the building, with a teacher supervising the children as they walk to that side of their vehicle. If a driver elects to load on the other side of the vehicle, it is their responsibility to escort the child around the vehicle. The teacher can open the vehicle door on the building side of the vehicle if that is helpful, but at no time will the teacher assist with buckling the child into a car seat. That is the responsibility of the driver.

- Once the first three cars have been loaded, they will exit, allowing the next three cars to pull up. At no time should a driver pass the vehicle in front of them, even if they finish loading before the car in front of them. This procedure will be repeated until all children are loaded into vehicles.
- If you park in the parking lot and walk to the door to meet your child, your child will be dismissed after the cars have all departed (for safety reasons).
- The children will only be released to those persons designated on the approved list at the beginning of the school year. **If you have planned for someone to pick up your child who is unapproved or unfamiliar to the teachers, please advise the teachers in writing at the beginning of the day.** If the teacher is unfamiliar with that person, the teacher may ask to see a photo ID before releasing your child. Please keep in mind that this is strictly for the safety of your child.
- If a parent is late, the parent will need to enter the building at the lower level, buzz into the office, sign in, come upstairs to pick up the child, and then sign out in the office. When possible, please call the office or send the teacher a message on Class Dojo if you will be late.
- A late fee will be charged to parents who arrive late for pick-up at the end of class. The fee is \$10.00 for every 10 minutes late after the last car is loaded. This fee is calculated per child and an additional \$10.00 will be added every ten minutes. The adult picking up the child(ren) will be given a slip of paper with the student's name(s), time the adult arrived, and total amount owed. The payment and slip of paper detailing the fee amount is due before the last class day of the month. Place the payment in a sealed envelope with the payment slip and drop it off in the church office or mail it to the church office. It should not be sent to school with the child or given to the teacher.
- If there is an emergency and you will be late, please call the church office to inform us and the late fee may be waived.

Learning Environment

Little Lambs Preschool will work to provide a positive learning environment for all students. If we are not equipped to provide the services your child needs, we will offer support and make recommendations for you to pursue, which may or may not include Little Lambs Preschool.

School Rules and Procedures

Maintaining an orderly classroom is necessary for the well-being of your child and to promote an atmosphere for learning. Therefore, the following rules and procedures will be conducted in the classroom.

- Children must help maintain an orderly classroom by putting things where they belong when the signal is given.
- Children should talk respectfully to one another and to adults.
- Walking feet and inside voices are necessary during indoor activities.
- Roughhousing, hitting, kicking, biting, etc. will not be permitted or tolerated.
- The use of foul language and using God's name in vain will not be permitted.

Discipline

Little Lambs Preschool endeavors to take a positive approach to discipline by noticing and commenting on examples of appropriate behavior.

We will utilize a **Stoplight Behavior Chart** to encourage appropriate behavior.

- Each child will start their day placing their name in the green area. Green means the child is ready to learn and follow the rules.
- When an inappropriate behavior occurs, the teacher will state what the appropriate behavior is.
- If the inappropriate activity/behavior continues, consequences will happen in the following order:
 1. The name will be moved to the yellow area.
 2. If the behavior continues further, the name will be moved to the red area.
 3. The name will be moved backwards toward the green area for subsequent good behavior.
- Parents/guardians will be notified if there are ongoing issues.
- If warranted, the teacher or guardian may request the involvement of the Preschool Committee in seeking a mutually agreed upon plan to address the inappropriate behavior.
- In the event of extreme behavior that does not respond to the interventions, the Preschool Committee may implement a suspension or expulsion from school.

Snacks

- Snacks will be provided by each child on a rotating basis. A calendar will be sent home at the beginning of each month to indicate when your child is responsible for providing the snack.
- Please send simple, nutritious snacks instead of sugary treats. Send snacks that are individually packaged or can be easily distributed by the teacher. The teachers will give ideas for snacks at orientation. The children will use their own water bottles, so no additional drinks are needed.
- **If your child has any food allergies or sensitivities, please inform the teacher.** We suggest alternate snacks be provided to the teacher to keep on hand to serve the child if the snack of the day is something the child should not eat.
- If we have a student whose food allergy does not allow them to be near a particular food (peanuts, for example), we will alert all parents to not send any snack that includes that food.
- Children will be invited to ‘celebrate’ their birthday by providing a special snack, generally on the class day closest to their actual birthday. Summer birthdays will be ‘celebrated’ at an alternate time. The teacher will take all this into consideration when making up the snack schedule and will include this information on the monthly calendar.
- We will encourage the children to say, “It’s not my favorite, but I’ll try it” instead of “I don’t like that.” To help children try new foods, we will encourage them to take one bite of the food they think they do not like, but we will not force the child to do that.

Clothing

- When sending your child to school, play clothes are most suitable. These should be comfortable, washable, and allowed to be dirtied or possibly stained.
- For the safety of the children and because the gym floor can be damaged by non-rubber soles, children should wear sneakers or closed shoes with rubber soles to school every day. **Please, do not send your child in boots, flip flops, or shoes that do not have a back that holds the shoe in place.** There will be no time to change, so please do not send sneakers along in your child’s backpack. If appropriate footwear is not worn, the child may not be allowed to participate in gym or outside activities.
- Appropriate outdoor clothing should be worn every school day, so that the child can be outdoors without discomfort. Weather permitting, we will plan to go outside for a period of time every class day. We will stay inside on very cold or wet days.
- Clothing such as sweaters, scarves, hats, boots, and raincoats should be clearly marked with the child’s name.

Toys, Games, and Books

- Keep in mind that the teacher cannot be responsible for breakage of toys. We suggest that all personal toys be kept at home, especially things that are precious to your child.
- Occasionally throughout the school year there will be times for “Show and Tell,” asking for a particular item to be brought in that is related to a theme or lesson. We aim to teach peace, love, and caring, so please do not bring to school any toys or books that are violent in nature (i.e., guns, swords, army men).

Parental Involvement

- Little Lambs Preschool uses Class Dojo as a means of keeping parents informed of what is happening at school. Information about Class Dojo will be provided at orientation.
- We hope to offer several events throughout the year that will provide an opportunity for parent involvement. Please make every effort to attend these events with your child.
- Progress reports will be shared with parents during the year. They will show the child’s growth toward meeting established goals.
- Parent teacher conferences will be offered in the fall. However, they can also be requested by either the teacher or the parent at any point throughout the school year. Children should not be brought to conferences. If childcare is not available, a parent can request a phone conference instead.
- The teacher is available for short informal conversations with parents before and after school. However, please be considerate of the teacher’s time and schedule an appointment for more time-consuming conversations.
- On occasion, during the first few days of school, children may cry as their parents are leaving. Usually, the crying stops shortly after the parent leaves. Often the longer the separation process, the more anxiety it causes. Be casual. Leave your child with the teacher after a pat or hug. If a separation problem persists, the teacher will contact you and discuss other arrangements to help make the adjustment easier.

We, at Little Lambs Preschool, strive to make the school experience the best we can. If you have any concerns over the course of the school year, please don’t hesitate to reach out to the preschool director at littlelambsmilton@gmail.com. We appreciate your feedback, but also covet your prayers as we prepare the children for a life of learning and fellowship with others.