

Zion Early Education Center

HISTORY

The Kindergarten of Zion Lutheran Church was established in 1952 as a community outreach for all children in the area surrounding the church. The purpose was to provide a sound educational foundation in a Christian atmosphere. The original program focused on the kindergarten age child and was later expanded to include preschool classes for two, three, and four year old children. In 1999, an optional extended care program was added to meet the changing needs of our families. In 2004, the name of the school was changed to Zion Early Education Center in order to reflect our goals and mission statement.

PHILOSOPHY

Zion Early Education Center's philosophy has always been one that strives to foster the development of each child's fullest potential, socially, emotionally, physically, creatively and intellectually. We believe that each child brings his or her special strengths and interests to any situation; therefore our school is designed to acknowledge, respect and support the uniqueness of each child.

Our school supports the belief that a child's positive sense of self-esteem comes from experiencing success within an age appropriate environment enhanced by a rich stimulating curriculum. The curriculum engages children's learning in all developmental areas, while at the same time allowing for individual differences in learning styles and encouraging creativity through a variety of play-based experiences. Our overall goals for the children in our program are: a positive sense of self-confidence and self-esteem, development of the whole child with emphasis on social/emotional skills and independence.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Zion Lutheran Church is a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America and welcomes visitors. Sunday morning services and Sunday School for children and adults are offered. More information may be obtained by calling the church office at 658-5288, or visiting our website at www.zionluther.org.

The Early Education Center of Zion Lutheran Church is governed by a special Board under the supervision of the Church Council. All policies and procedures are set by this board and approved by the council.

Zion Early Education Center is fully licensed by the State of Delaware and accredited by the Nursery Kindergarten Association of Delaware.

CLASSES

Classes are available for the two, three, four and five year old child. To comply with Delaware law, children must reach the age of school entrance by August 31st to be enrolled. Morning preschool classes meet from 8:30 to 11:00 a.m. Afternoon classes meet from 12:00 to 2:30 p.m. Kindergarten meets from 8:30 a.m. to 2:50 p.m.

TWO YEAR OLDS

The goal of the two year old program is to provide developmentally appropriate activities for the children in an environment that provides opportunities for social interaction. Learning through play exploration, facilitating growth in a child's independence and developing and guiding positive peer interaction is a key component of our program. A physical environment, that is age appropriate, allows two-three year olds to practice self-help skills safely. Activities involve sensory exploration such as paint, glue, play dough, sand/water play and large motor development.

Two (Tuesday and Thursday), three (Monday, Wednesday, and Friday) and five day (Monday through Friday) morning classes are available for two year olds. Children who are two years of age by August 31st may be enrolled in our two year old program.

THREE YEAR OLDS

The goal of the three year old program is to provide a developmentally appropriate curriculum organized into theme based units. These units address topics that encourage children to develop their skills and confidence using hands on activities. Language development, math, science, creative arts, music, motor skills and social development are incorporated into these units. Our activities allow children to explore and play individually, in small groups, and in large groups, and are designed to involve the active participation of the children in the learning process.

Two (Tuesday and Thursday), three (Monday, Wednesday, and Friday) and five day (Monday through Friday) morning classes are available for three year olds. Children who are three years of age by August 31st may be enrolled in our three year old program.

FOUR YEAR OLDS (PRE-K)

Our four year old program is designed to provide a rich, nurturing environment that prepares children for Kindergarten. Independence is promoted in an organized atmosphere. Developmentally appropriate activities are provided to develop skills in emergent literacy, math readiness, and gross and fine motor development. Children are challenged to be their own thinkers, by exploring, writing, creating, talking, listening, and interacting with materials and concepts.

Positive social interactions are a focus of the four year old classroom as play becomes more cooperative. Problem solving skills, compromise, cooperation, and developing positive relationships with peers and teachers are encouraged through modeling.

Five day (Monday through Friday) morning classes are available for four year olds. Children who are four years of age by August 31st may be enrolled in our four year old program

KINDERGARTEN

Our Kindergarten program provides children with materials and experiences that foster the development of language, quantitative, and social skills. The full day and smaller class size enables our teachers to plan activities that reinforce different styles of learning that include language, art, music, nature, social or visual spatial modes. Our teachers provide opportunities to explore, question, communicate and create in a fun and supportive environment. The kindergarten curriculum ensures that our students are prepared to excel at the next level of education.

Five day (Monday through Friday) full day (8:30 a.m. – 2:50 p.m.) classes are available for Kindergarten students. Children who are five years of age by August 31st may be enrolled in our four year old program. Children who did not complete the four year old program at Zion, are required to have a current Childfind screening or screening done at our school.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Christian education is incorporated throughout the school day. Most students will attend a monthly chapel program led by the pastor of Zion Church. Information is age appropriate and non-denominational. Topics include self-esteem, loving one another, God's world, the Christmas and Easter story, and being thankful.

COMPUTERS

Each classroom has its own computer with age appropriate software programs. These programs reinforce a variety of skills including cognitive development, creativity, and eye-hand coordination. The computers are used as centers with limited time.

MUSIC AND MOVEMENT (GYM)

We believe that physical development occurs through repeated opportunities to use the body in various ways. A physical education program is offered that allows children to participate in activities such as bean bag skills, parachute play, running, hopping, skipping, jumping, etc. Music is incorporated into this program to encourage rhythm and enjoyment. Students are encouraged to participate in all activities but are not pressured to do tasks or skills beyond their level of development. Students are required to wear appropriate clothing, sneakers, pants, shorts and a special shirt on the days they are scheduled for Music and Movement.

SPANISH

Introducing preschool children to another language is one of the best ways to develop future skills. Basic Spanish vocabulary is introduced in a fun, entertaining program. Children learn words and phrases through rhyme, repetition, stories and song.

ADMISSION POLICY

No child is refused on the basis of race, creed or national origin.

Children are admitted to our school according to the date of each application and based on the following criteria:

- Priority registration is held and applications for families currently enrolled and for active members of Zion Lutheran Church will be given preference.
- Following priority registration, all applications are considered in the order in which they are received.
- Children admitted to our school must reach the appropriate classroom age by August 31st. Copies of birth certificates are required.
- The school requires a registration fee to be paid when an application for preschool/kindergarten is accepted.
- New applicants for kindergarten must be assessed for admission.
- Each must have a current health appraisal form on file with the school office prior to the beginning of school.

ATTENDANCE, ABSENCES AND HEALTH EXCLUSIONS

Regular attendance is important; but if your child is not feeling well, please keep him/her at home as they would not be at their best and would be unable to participate to the full extent of their ability, which includes outdoor play.

If your child has had a fever, diarrhea, or been vomiting within the last 24 hours, your child **MUST** remain at home.

If your child is absent, please notify the office by calling 655-7874. Please report any communicable diseases to the school office including head lice as quickly as possible. Students who have been exposed to a communicable disease will receive a "health notice" which explains the symptoms of the disease.

Reportable Communicable Diseases

Diphtheria	Giardiasis	Strep Throat
German Measles	Hepatitis A	Chicken Pox
Hemophilus Influenza Disease	Salmonellosis	
Measles (rubella)	Shigellosis	
Bacterial(spinal) meningitis	Mumps	
Pertussis(whooping cough)	Rubella	
Tuberculosis	Conjunctivitis (pink eye)	

Should a child become ill during the school day, the child's parent(s) will be notified and asked to come for him/her immediately. If a parent cannot be reached, we will contact persons listed in your child's emergency card. Please keep alternate contact names current on the emergency card.

A child exhibiting the symptoms of the illness specified below will not be admitted to school or allowed to remain unless written documentation from a licensed physician stating that the child has been diagnosed and poses no serious health risk to the child or other children. The symptoms of illness for possible exclusion shall include, but not be limited to, any of the following:

1. Pain or discomfort particularly in joints, abdomen, or ears.
2. Diarrhea or vomiting within the last 24 hours.
3. Severe cough or sore throat.
4. Oral temperature of 99.6 degrees or higher.
5. Red eyes with discharge.
6. Difficult or rapid breathing.
7. Severe itching of body or scalp.
8. Skin rashes, excluding diaper rash, lasting more than 1 day.
9. Swollen joints, visibly enlarged lymph nodes, or stiff neck.
10. Unusual behavior for the child characterized by no playing, confusion, persistent or inconsolable crying.
11. Loss of appetite characterized by refusing solids.
12. Symptoms which might indicate chicken pox, impetigo, lice, scabies or strep throat.

FIRST AID

The school office is equipped to handle minor ailments and injuries. Parents will be notified and asked to come for the child if the student exhibits any of the following: injury requiring further observation or treatment, temperature above normal, nausea or vomiting, severe headache, or evidence of communicable disease.

In the event of a health emergency, the following procedure is followed:

1. Parents are notified via phone. Home phone first, followed by work and cell phones. If they are not available, the person listed as an emergency contact on the child's record is notified.
2. If no emergency contact can be located and the student needs further emergency care, the school will call 911 emergency center for ambulance transportation.

MEDICATIONS

Whenever possible, medications should be given at home before and after school, providing this meets with your physician's approval.

Any student who is required to take medicine during the school day must be transported by an adult only and must be accompanied by a completed medication form (available in the school office). The medication must be in its original package with full information on the label including date dispensed, physician's name, student's name, medication, dose, and instruction for administering the medication.

SCHOOL OPENINGS AND SCHOOL CLOSINGS

Regular classes usually begin after Labor Day. Our calendar closely follows that of the public and parochial schools, although we end our school year in May. Extended Care meets on days the school is in session and is closed when school is closed due to holidays or inclement weather. Preschool hours are 8:30 to 11:00 a.m. with Before School Care beginning at 7:30 a.m. and Extended Care beginning at 11:00 a.m. for those children enrolled. Kindergarten classes are 8:30 to 2:50 p.m. Families enrolling in Extended Care may choose to have their child remain at school until 1:30, 3:30 or 5:30 p.m.

Our school doors open at 8:30 a.m. Students needing to arrive before this time must be enrolled in Before School Care which begins at 7:30 a.m. Students should be picked up promptly at dismissal time. In the event that a child is not picked up on time, a late fee will be assessed.

When inclement weather forces a school closing or late opening, radio stations WDEL (AM 1150), WSTW(FM 93.7), and WJBR(FM 99.5) will be called. The answering machine will also carry the appropriate information.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

Our behavior management policy is to provide helpful guidance, support, and encouragement to children as they learn and achieve self-control and acceptance by adults and peers. We help children to understand why certain behaviors are more desirable than others and set realistic expectations in a giving, sharing, teaching and loving environment.

Teachers establish environments where all children have access to ongoing positive relationships. A simple, logical set of rules are provided to set limits in positive terms. Rules are enforced lovingly and consistently but not rigidly. Often careful supervision gives teachers an opportunity to see a problem developing which allows them to intervene before misbehavior occurs.

Depending on the age of the child, distracting, reasoning and redirecting may be tools used by the teacher to produce the desired behaviors. Our teachers are firm, gentle, patient and understanding.

Parents can provide valuable insight into their child's behavior. Parents will be consulted when behaviors are recurrent and disruptive or potentially harmful to the child or others. A general strategy for handling problem behaviors is to understand the cause, eliminate situations where the behavior is likely to occur, and offer acceptable alternatives.

PARENT/FAMILIES

Parents and other family members are viewed as essential partners at Zion Early Education Center. We welcome you to participate in our many programs and specials such as the Halloween Parade, Thanksgiving Feast, Christmas and Spring Program, fundraising activities as well as assisting in the classroom. Every spring, a family picnic is planned for all our families to come together to celebrate the year's end.

We ask that you share your thoughts and feelings concerning your child's educational, emotional, and social development with us. Individual parent/teacher conferences are held three times during the school year, and teachers are often available after school hours to discuss your concerns. When there are concerns on the teacher's part, all possible assistance is given to direct families to available resources in the community.

We encourage families to share special skills, cultures, and interests with the students. Our Parent Participation Form allows families, both working outside the home and in the home, a chance to become involved in our school.

Information comes home frequently in your child's book bag. Please check them regularly for important notes and bulletins. Our monthly newsletter will provide important information such as recent and upcoming events as well as classroom news. This newsletter is also available on the school's website: zionluther.org and connect with the Early Education Center.

Concerns raised by families involving their child's classroom experience should be resolved as quickly as possible. Families are urged to discuss their concerns directly with the teachers when these concerns arise. If the concern is not resolved at this level, an appointment should be made to discuss this matter with the director.

BEFORE SCHOOL CARE AND EXTENDED CARE PROGRAMS

Our school offers an optional Extended Care program. This program ensures a continuation of our school day with planned activities and curriculum. Our Extended Care classrooms are grouped by dismissal times rather than ages to provide our students the benefit of socializing with both older and younger students. Families may choose to send their child to our morning program, or may choose to lengthen their child's school day by enrolling in either part time or full time extended care.

A non-refundable registration fee per family is due to register in this program. This fee is not applicable to preschool/kindergarten or extended care tuition.

Students may be enrolled in the Extended Care Programs only on the days that they are enrolled in the preschool. Optional dismissal times are available for those not needing full time. Contracts are completed and signed indicating the desired option. Extended Care tuition is based on this permanent schedule. Payment is expected regardless of whether the student actually attends that day.

BEFORE SCHOOL CARE PROGRAM

An extended care option available to families is a Before School Care program which begins at 7:30 a.m. This program is available free of charge to our Extended Care students. There is a cost for those students not already participating in Extended Care. Families wishing to enroll in this program must include this schedule on their Extended Care contract.

EXTENDED CARE LATE PICK UP FEES

Students must be picked up on time according to the Extended Care option chosen. Late pick-ups for Option 1:30 or 3:30 will be charged for the next Extended Care option.

Extended Care closes at 5:30 p.m. Parents should contact school if an emergency causes them to be late picking up their child. All students picked up after 5:30 p.m. are charged a \$15.00 late fee per student for the first 15 minutes (5:31 to 5:45 p.m.). After 5:45 p.m. the late pick-up fee increases to \$5.00 per minute. This fee is due before your child returns to Extended Care.

EXTENDED CARE LUNCHES

Students in Extended Care bring their lunch from home in a container clearly marked with his/her name. Lunches are refrigerated. While other items may be included, child care licensing regulations require that each lunch contain at least:

1 cup fluid milk

2 servings fruit or vegetables (½ cup ea.)

1 serving bread (1 slice), pasta (½ cup), dry cereal(¾ cup), cornbread, biscuit, roll or muffin(1 serving)

1 serving meat/meat alternative: meat, poultry, fish (1 oz.), cheese(1 oz.), egg (½), peanut or other nut or seed butters (2 tbsp.), yogurt (2 oz.)

The school is required to monitor and insure that lunches comply with these nutritional guidelines.

If you would like to send in a hot lunch for your child, please place the heated food in an insulated thermos and mark the outside of his/her lunchbox so that this thermos is not refrigerated. We are unable to heat student's lunches individually.

EXTENDED CARE PAYMENTS

Extended Care payments must be separate from preschool tuition payments. Extended care payments for children attending extended care five days a week may be paid weekly. This fee is due by the previous Friday for the following week of care. A \$10.00 weekly late fee will be charged if this tuition becomes five or more days in arrears. For children attending Extended Care one, two or three days a week, tuition for the entire month is due the first of each month. Fees received after the fifth of the month will incur a \$20.00 monthly late fee.

Once a student's Extended Care schedule is determined, the fee is to be paid regardless of whether the student actually attends extended care. No credits are issued if school is closed unexpectedly due to weather or other emergency, but days in excess of five(5) are made up at no additional charge. The school's calendar shows planned school closings. Extended Care payment is not expected for those days.

Extended Care rates depend on the option chosen:

Option A (11:00 – 1:30)

Option B (11:00 – 3:30)

Option C (11:00 – 5:30)

Students enrolled in our Kindergarten program have separate rates. There is a separate per family Extended Care Registration fee.

Students may not attend Extended Care if their Extended Care tuition becomes more than one week in arrears. Current payment of school tuition is a prerequisite for Extended Care attendance.

EXTENDED CARE REST TIME

Extended care students remaining after 1:30 p.m. have a daily rest time on a mat or cot provided by the school. Each child must bring a crib sheet and small blanket or towel. These items must be clearly marked with your child's name. They will be sent home weekly for laundering and must be returned when your child returns to Extended Care. Please place your child's rest items in a canvas (please no plastic bags) with his/her name clearly marked on the outside. Rest bags are to be placed on the stage in the Hall on the first day your child returns to school.

EXTENDED CARE SCHEDULE CHANGES

Parents sign a contract to reserve a place for their child in our Extended Care Program. Requests to change a student's Extended Care schedule permanently (i.e. for more than one month) must be made in writing to the school director at least one week in advance. Increases in a student's Extended Care schedule will be accommodated if space exists and if the student has adjusted well to the program. A new contract will be signed reflecting this change and the regular Extended Care rates will be charged.

All temporary (i.e. for one month or less) extensions, additions or changes to a student's existing Extended Care schedule must be made in writing at least one day in advance using the "Extended Care Schedule Change Request" form located in the office. Payment for this change must be made at the time of the request, and must be approved by the school director. Temporary changes will be charged the Schedule Modification Rate.

Extended Care does not accept students on a "drop in" basis.

TUITION PAYMENTS

Tuition and rates are determined by the school governing board. A non-refundable registration fee is due for each child enrolled in our school.

There is a books and materials fee for our Kindergarten students.

If two or more children in a family are enrolled in the school program at the same time, a discount is given each additional child. A tuition discount is also given to children of active members of Zion Lutheran Church, as well as ZEEC staff members. There are no discounts given to children in the Extended Care Program.

Parents should place payments in the tuition collection box, using the tuition payment envelope. Payments may also be mailed directly to the school. Please include the payment slip in the envelope. No payments should be sent with students in book bags for teachers to retrieve. Preschool tuition payments are due the first of each month even if your child is absent. A late fee of \$20.00 is charged for payments received after the fifth school day of the month. Payments are due monthly but may be paid in advance if desired.

Payments are due whether or not your child is in attendance.

If tuition remains unpaid at the end of the month, the child will not be admitted for school beginning the first of the next month. He/she may be permanently dropped from the class roll and another child allowed to enroll in his/her place. Only families whose tuition accounts are current may re-enroll children during the priority registration period.

If one check is returned unpaid by your bank; all future payments must be made in cash or money order. There is a \$25.00 fee for each returned check.

WITHDRAWAL OF STUDENTS

Registration in Zion Early Education Center and its Extended Care Programs is considered a year's commitment. However, when special circumstances necessitate the withdrawal of a student from either program, two weeks written notice is required. Tuition is payable through this date.

REGULATIONS

No student will be permitted to go home with unauthorized persons. If you wish your child to be picked up by someone other than yourself, or the regular car pool driver, a written note from the parent, is required. This person must provide picture identification to the staff upon arrival. All students must be signed in and out by an authorized adult.

If the school staff suspects that the adult picking up a student may not be able to deliver him/her safely to his/her destination, the staff member will request that the student remain at school until other arrangements can be made. The school reserves the right to notify the proper authorities of their concerns.

Smoking is not permitted in or near our buildings or on trips.

CLOTHING AND RECESS

Students should be dressed comfortably and appropriately for the weather. Outdoor recess occurs all year long. If your child is not well enough to participate in all activities, including outdoor recess, please keep him/her at home. **WE ARE UNABLE TO KEEP RECUPERATING CHILDREN INDOORS DURING RECESS.**

Play clothes are acceptable and appropriate for the type of activities that we have. Students are encouraged to dress themselves and to fasten their own clothing after bathroom time. Please help them accomplish this task by having them wear clothing that is easy for them to fasten and unfasten. All clothing which can be removed (hats, coats, boots, sweaters, mittens, etc.) **MUST** be marked with your child's name.

Sneakers are the shoe of choice for school and required for gym days. Students should be comfortable and able to run, and play actively in the shoes worn.

PERSONAL ITEMS

Students need to leave personal toys at home. If a student requires a "security" item, it must fit into a cubby. Students are asked to keep that item in their cubby during school hours. Arrangements can be made with the teacher to share special event, or cultural items.

REPORT CARDS-CONFERENCES

While a conference may be scheduled at any time, regularly scheduled conferences with teachers are held during the fall and spring. Written evaluations are issued those times and at the end of the school year. Teachers of Extended Care students will contact families as needed.

OPEN HOUSE

An Open House for current and prospective families will be held during school hours in winter.

SPRING ARTS NIGHT

An arts night will be held in the spring. This is a time for children and their families to visit the classrooms to view current projects. All interested persons are welcome to attend.

SNACKS, JUICE AND BIRTHDAY PARTIES

Each day, children are offered a snack consisting of a natural juice or water, plus one item from the four food groups. Families may volunteer to provide a special snack by contacting their child's teacher. It is important that families notify their child's teacher in writing about any food allergies or restrictions.

Twice each year, families are required to supply juice for their child's preschool class. The amount of juice needed is based on the number of days the students attends our programs. A detailed letter will be sent home after the start of

school stating the types of juices needed and the schedule for contributing. A juice fee of \$5.00 per bottle due is charged for those who do not contribute juice during their assigned months.

Birthdays are celebrated once a month in the classrooms. Homeroom parents will arrange these celebrations. Parents of children being honored are invited to attend and asked to bring one simple food such as cookies or cupcakes ready to serve (no whole cakes). Please bring enough for all to share. Bring individual servings of the same size and kind of treat. Please be advised of any allergies or food restriction. Parents may also bring a special napkin if desired. Please no party bags with other treats. No party invitations or prizes may be distributed in any class.

FIELD TRIPS

Various educational trips are scheduled throughout the year. These trips occur during school hours. Students, teachers and chaperones travel by school bus or walk to the trip's destination. Parents are often asked to help with supervision. When asked to chaperone, we ask that parents attend the field trip without other children or siblings. Trips are often planned to coincide with a particular field of study. A permission slip will be sent home in advance of each outing. Please return this form promptly. Students will not be permitted to participate without the signed slip.

TRANSPORTATION

The school does not provide transportation but will aid in the formation of car pools. Final arrangements are left to parents.

It is hoped that this booklet will be useful as we all work together to help your child develop a foundation upon which later learning can be built.

Guidelines and regulations governing Early Childhood Centers can be found by visiting the Office of Child Care Licensing at www.kids.delaware.gov

Please contact the school director at 655-7874 with questions or for more information regarding our policies and programs.

Mrs. Saralee Hawk

Director

Revised August, 2008