

PARENTS

FAMILY HANDBOOK

Please read the Family Handbook (found [here](#)) carefully as many important aspects of our work with the families are described there. You are expected to know and follow all the guidelines we have outlined for the parents.

ESTABLISHING RELATIONSHIPS

Why are relationships important to quality?

Relationships with each child's family matter! Remember that we work in partnership with parents and family members. Engage in productive, sensitive, and informative dialogue with families to:

- show families that they are valued partners in the education and care of their child/children
- learn details of a child's home life that will help you better meet the child's needs and interests – race, religion, culture, home language, and family structure
- pay attention to and use information obtained through discussion with families as you teach and interact with individual children
- ensure a smooth transition between home and school with special sensitivity to reassure family members who are concerned about leaving children in non-family childcare
- know and respond to family concerns or questions with curiosity and openness rather than defensiveness or dismissal

Parent Orientation

The beginning of each school year is a critical time to get parents and children off to the best start for a successful experience in your class. Detailed procedures for Class Welcome Pages, Visitation Days, Parent Orientation, launching class REMIND, and Welcoming Calls are issued each year. Familiarize yourself with the many ways we share information about classroom expectations, routines, and rules.

Remember to continue to inform parents regarding classroom issues as needed throughout the year.

PARENT CONFERENCES

Conference Schedule

Fall: (generally scheduled in October)

Purpose: Getting to know you
 Goal setting
 Laying the groundwork for collaborating in the child's best interest throughout the schoolyear

- Parents will help the teachers "get to know" each child by discussing their thoughts on the child's development, family history, goals for the school year, and other information that will be beneficial to the child's school experience and to the teacher.

- Teachers will share information about the child's adjustment to school and broad goals for the school year. This is also a good time to review the daily school routine.
- Teachers and parents discuss how the family and the staff handle different aspects of child-rearing, such as discipline, feeding, toileting, and other pertinent issues.
- Remember that this conference is a time to listen as well as talk – a time to establish a relationship of trust with the parents.

Mid Year (PreK only)

Purpose: Progress review
Applications for Kindergarten; student's next steps

- Parents and teachers discuss the child's progress considering PreK is the last year at SLDS for most of the children.

Spring: (generally scheduled in April or early May)

Purpose: Progress review
Plan for upcoming year

- Parents and teachers will discuss the cognitive, social, emotional, spiritual, and physical development of the child as seen over the course of the school year.
- Parents and teachers will discuss the plans for the summer and upcoming year so that the child will have a smooth transition from one class to the next. The Director or Program Coordinators will be called in for consultation when necessary.

Mid-Year and Year-End Conference Report (I/T, Twos, Threes)

- A brief, mid-year update on children in part-day Infants-Threes classes is mailed to each family in January or early February, and an end-of-year conference report for all Luke's Place children is given to parents in August.

Ongoing:

In addition to these scheduled conferences, parents are encouraged to make an appointment with his/her child's teacher and/or Program Coordinator or Assessment Coordinator any time they have a question, concern, or idea to share.

Hints for Productive Conferences

- Conference format is preferably in-person but may be virtual (i.e. Zoom or FaceTime), or over the phone if absolutely necessary.
- Provide a digital conference sign-up via REMIND at least 10 days prior to conferences. If a parent has a scheduling conflict during your conference times, make special arrangements to meet at another time. If classroom coverage is needed, seek approval from the ProCo Champ and secure a room booking with the Registrar before confirming the new conference time with the parent.
- Schedule a pre-conference meeting with the Director, Program Coordinator, and/or Assessment Coordinator regarding children who may have need of development support, or any other major concern you may have about a child.
- Always aim to begin and end conferences on a positive note.
- Parent teacher conference forms are provided for all conferences. Make sure one is completed, printed, and signed at the end of each conference. Digital signatures are acceptable. Originals are filed in the child's folder at the end of the school year.
- Parenting articles are available for certain developmental milestones – potty training, going to big school, language development, etc. These may be helpful to you in your discussions with the

parents or you may want simply to take advantage of this opportunity to encourage parenting education. See the Director or Program Coordinators for help locating appropriate articles for your age group; all articles must be cleared by the Director before distribution to parents.

- Be prepared!

SUGGESTIONS TO OFFER FOR PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Support

Parents may:

- Offer to help the teachers by preparing materials for classroom activities. Simple things can be done at home. For example, gather dress-ups or other props to change the dramatic play center, or bring the ingredients for a class cooking project.
- Participate in volunteer activities that support the program, like the annual Book Fair.
- Talk to the teachers every day – keep the lines of communication open.
- Attend all parent conference opportunities to share hopes and goals and listen to what the teachers have learned about the child.
- Volunteer to read stories to the children before pick-up.
- Provide food/decorations/party favors for class parties (signup sheets on REMIND)

Parent Enrichment

- Invite to a parenting education session (SLDS PEP Talks).
- Offer educational practices to try at home.
- Highlight information about child development and education, as well as school news.

Organizational Roles

- Invite a parent or two to serve as the class room parent/s. The teachers will ask parents to assist in communicating with the other parents in the class and organizing class parties.
- Encourage sign-ups to organize a class party or volunteer to help at other events.
- Join a PAC committee to help organize a school-wide event or area of school enrichment.
- Make phone calls as needed for the teacher or the room parent.

Follow Up At Home

- Encourage each parent to take time to talk to the child about his day at school.
- Encourage participation in school events and other community activities that support the school experience.
- Emphasize the value of reading to the child every day.

PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

Job Descriptions / Information

Chairman: Oversees council; works closely with the Director.

Birthday Book Club:

Coordinates the Birthday Book Club program. Processes order forms, works with parents to choose each child's book, attaches book plates, deliver books (already checked out to the child) to the classroom on the child's birthday.

Book Bags:

Oversees the creation, distribution, and maintenance of the PreK book bags.

Book Fair:

Oversees the planning and execution of our annual Book Fair, which takes place in late fall, usually the week after Thanksgiving. The committee is large, with chairmen for different areas. In addition to a wonderful selection of books, there is a donation table (books donated to the St. Luke's library), photos with Santa, special events, and children's activities in the afternoons, and a Grandparents/Special Friends event.

The Book Fair committee depends on support from teachers to help make this event successful. The teachers are required to attend the night of the school-wide open house (Grandparents'/Special Friends Night).

Funds raised at the Book Fair are used for the purchase of books for the children's library, school-wide literacy initiatives, staff professional development, and children's scholarships.

Church Liaison/Secretary:

A Church member who attends the Children's Ministries Council meetings and is a "voice" for the Day School. This member also takes minutes at the PAC meetings and emails meeting notices.

Fundraising:

Organizes the small fundraising projects and serves as underwriting chair on Book Fair and Spring Picnic committees. Distributes information for supporting the school via grocery rebate programs (such as Kroger and Randall's), Box Tops for Education, and researches other small fundraising opportunities.

Transportation Day:

Working closely with the Facilities, Events and Resources Manager (FERM), the Chair will oversee the school's Transportation Day. The FERM maintains a list of established contacts, and the Chair may also add new contacts to the list. The Chair will coordinate all communication with vehicles owners, enlist parent volunteers, and manage event day set-up in close coordination with the Facilities, Events and Resources Manager.

Hospitality:

Will work to welcome new families and help them integrate into the SLDS community. On behalf of PAC, send notes of congratulations (births) or condolences (deaths) to SLDS families.

Library:

Oversees the committee that helps the SLDS Librarian by re-shelving books and processing new books that are donated through Birthday Book Club and during the Book Fair.

Busy Parents:

Coordinates meetings and activities for parents working outside the home (open to all parents, Luke's Place Full-day and SLDS Part-day).

PEP Talks (Preschool Education for Parents):

Coordinates PEP Talks programs that feature speakers who address parenting, child development, and other interesting topics. This committee is also responsible for publicizing and implementing each program. This committee relies on the teachers to help with publicity, reminding parents of upcoming programs. Teachers are welcome to attend any program and may receive in-service training hours for most programs.

Pictures & Screenings:

Oversees volunteers who assist on picture days, assisting the photographer as needed and escorting

classes to and from photo site. Oversees volunteers who escort small groups of children (PreK and some 3s) to and from on-site screenings for speech and language, vision, and hearing. Volunteers supervise children while they wait for screening; teachers stay in the classroom with the rest of their class.

Publicity:

The Publicity Chair coordinates school communications with the goal of ensuring parents are well informed and engaged in the life of the school. Tasks include publishing a monthly PAC newsletter, streamlining room parent messages in partnership with the Room Parent Chair, recommending posts for the SLDS Instagram account, and coordinating other school-wide event publicity for activities such as PEP Talks and PAC Perks.

Room Parents:

Oversees the training of room parents. Updates and distributes the room parent guidelines so that parties, gifts, etc. are more uniform across classes and age levels. Communicates with room parents about upcoming events throughout the year.

Spring Picnic:

Oversees the Spring Picnic which is the school's annual picnic, celebration, and fundraiser. The large committee has chairmen for different areas of the event. This committee depends on teachers to help make this event successful. Classroom projects and/or activity booths may be expected. Teachers receive complimentary dinner at the event.

Funds raised at the Spring Picnic primarily support the outdoor classrooms, children's scholarships, and other school initiatives such as classroom iPads.

Teacher Appreciation:

Plan and implement the PAC monthly lunches for staff, as well as special luncheons during in-service at the start and end of school and at Christmas.

Safe Sanctuary: St. Luke's Safety Policy for Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults

In accordance with the Safe Sanctuary program of the United Methodist Church, St. Luke's has initiated a training and registration plan for all volunteers who work with children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

All Day School volunteers must be approved and registered by our church before they can volunteer on our campus in any capacity. The registration process includes an application and a clear criminal background check. Parents who are registered with Children's Ministries are automatically approved to volunteer in the Day School.

When the initial registration process is complete, teachers will receive a list of registered volunteers. The list will be updated as necessary during the school year.

Once a volunteer has been registered, that person will remain on the list each school year as long as they complete an annual renewal form.

Teachers **may not** have volunteer readers, party helpers, or any other adult volunteers in the classrooms unless they are registered. Please refer the parents with questions to the office.

All short-term visitors to the classrooms must sign in and wear a visitor name tag. Examples include a grandparent visiting from out of town who is joining the child for lunch, a dad who does not volunteer regularly but is coming for Dads Breakfast, or a teacher from another school that is observing in the classroom. Please be sure that sign-in sheets and name tags are available in the classroom for events such as class parties and Dad's breakfasts.

Both teachers must remain present in the classroom when a volunteer or visitor is present unless otherwise approved by the Program Coordinator.

Any parent questions regarding the volunteer registration process should be referred to the Day School office.

Transition to the Next Class or Next School

Please assist families when the time comes to transition to the child's next class or school.

When a parent asks you for guidance about our school, **do not recommend** specific SLDS teachers for the child's next class. This is frustrating to the parent since we do not take parent requests for specific teachers. Instead, talk to the parent about teaching qualities the child responds well to – and, again, do not name SLDS teachers who have these qualities.

Our administrative staff regularly communicates with other early childhood programs and elementary schools to help our families prepare for and manage their children's transitions between programs. Refer the parents to administrators as needed to provide basic general information on enrollment procedures and practices, visiting opportunities, and school options.

The Registrar manages the teacher recommendation process. The first step for parents needing teacher recommendations is to fill out a form on our website. Classroom teachers will complete recommendation forms with parent permission as requested by the school to which children are applying. Most schools have switched to an online system, so parents are asked to use her email (hnguyen@stlukesmethodist.org) instead of individual teacher emails. If teachers receive a request from a school or directly from a parent, they must forward it to the Registrar immediately.

We have asked parents to request teacher recommendations at least 2 weeks prior to the due date and no later than December 9. The Registrar will give them to you once received. Please complete the form in pencil and return it to your Program Coordinator for review and the Director's signature. A copy will be kept in the child's file in the office.

ADULT CONDUCT

We expect parents, grandparents, nannies, and other adults to join us in appropriate and respectful conduct at all times. The following actions while on our campus will result in either a meeting with the Director or Assistant Director or dismissal from the program:

- Harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child
- Threatening, harassing, or demonstrating disrespectful behavior (speech or gestures, verbal or written) to staff, parents, children, or other guests on our campus
- Making negative or disparaging comments regarding the school, and/or disregarding proper procedures for grievances and conflict resolution
- Disregarding policies designated to provide safety and security on our campus

If you witness inappropriate conduct by an adult, including fellow staff members, please report this immediately and directly to the Director or Assistant Director.