

Anchor Lutheran School Early Childhood Program Parent Handbook



Anchor Lutheran School

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www.ALSalaska.org

The Mission of Anchor Lutheran School is to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the children and families whom we touch and to provide quality, and relevant education and Christian awareness, which will prepare children to become lifelong learners and successful adults.

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INTRODUCTION

Anchor Lutheran School Early Childhood Program is a full day preschool program operated by Anchor Lutheran School. The program operates twelve months a year and during most in-service days and holidays.

Also offered by Anchor Lutheran School:

- Kindergarten to Eighth Grade tuition based Christian education
- Before and after school care (Child Watch)
- Full-day Summer Program
- Before and after school shuttle service to and from Campbell Elementary School.

FACILITIES

All programs are held at the Lutheran Center at 8100 Arctic Blvd. This building is specifically designed to house a school and church. The office is located to the right as you enter the building.

PURPOSE/PHILOSOPHY

All programs at Anchor Lutheran share the desire and responsibility to provide a sound Christian environment that strives to nurture each child treating them with love and respect. Sharing with children the message of love and forgiveness given to us by our Lord and Savior Christ Jesus, is an integral part of all programs. The purpose of our Early Childhood Program is to provide a safe, age and developmentally appropriate environment that enhances students development and learning.

GOALS

Our program goals include striving to instill self-confidence, to build self-esteem and to help provide for the growth and development of each child. We work to assist children in developing school readiness, faith in God and the ability to make positive life choices.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Children ages 3-5 with self rest-rooming skills are eligible for the Early Childhood Program. Children ages 6-12 are eligible for our before-and-after school program, Child Watch. All children and their families are welcome to our program, regardless of sex, age, pregnancy, color, race, ethnic origin, religion, physical handicap or any other legally protected status as per Alaska Statute (AS) 18.80.23 and Anchorage Municipal Code (AMC) 5.20.05.

ENROLLING YOUR CHILD

The required forms must be completed prior to acceptance and information must be kept current. To enroll your child, you must complete: Enrollment Application with one-time registration fee.*

- Financial Agreement*
- Up-to-date emergency contacts and information with a list of individuals authorized to sign your child out from our program.
- Current record of State Required immunizations or authorized documentation of exemption.
- Physical exam: Municipal licensing requires a current exam given by a licensed physician, certified nurse practitioner or physician's assistant to be on file for each child. *Physicals expire every year and must be maintained while your child attends our program.*

**These items are required in order to be placed on our waitlist.*

TIME OF OPERATION

Program Hours: 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM – Monday through Friday

Program Closure Dates Include: January 1st, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Memorial Day, one week in the spring before summer program, July 4th, three days prior to school starting each fall, Labor Day, Thursday and Friday of Thanksgiving week, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, December 26th, and December 31st. Additional days vary yearly, depending on proximity of holiday to the weekend.

Snow Days - Emergency Closures

If Anchor Lutheran School is closed for emergency reason, the Early Childhood and Child Watch programs will be closed unless notified differently. Closure information will be on our website ALSalaska.org as well as electronically broadcasted to parents. It is the policy of Anchor Lutheran School to close if the Anchorage School District closes due to weather conditions. In case of emergency requiring vacating the campus, our off site meeting place is Village Inn at Arctic and Dimond Blvd.

USAGE OPTIONS

The Early Childhood program is available on a part-time or full-time basis. Usage Forms are used to schedule space for your child that meets your specific needs. Families using the program on a full-time basis may select full-time use and billing plan on the first month needed and then not be required to submit monthly usage forms. Part-time use requires the completion of a new form each month. **To secure your scheduling needs, you must submit your Usage/ Form to the office by the 15th of the preceding month.** Families turning in late requests may find that spaces have already been filled. We may not be able to accommodate all part-time requests. **Please turn in your form as soon as possible.**

SELECT ONE BILLING PLAN

Usage Forms are available in the office. The forms are used to reserve space for your child and to select your billing rate. You may only select one billing plan (hourly, daily, or monthly) per month. These forms should be completed clearly indicating the days and times you would like to use our program. If you are requesting a rate change it must be submitted before the first day of the month, or you will be billed at the same rate you were billed the previous month.

PART-TIME SCHEDULING

Usage Forms should be turned in by the 15th of the prior month so that we are able to continue to accommodate your schedule. When you are accepted into the program you will be assigned a specific part-time schedule (e.g., Tues./Thur. or Mon./Wed./Fri.). Any changes in scheduling involving adding or changing days may be unavailable. We will place you on a waitlist for the days requested and notify you if space becomes available.

SCHEDULE CHANGES & CANCELLATIONS

Submitting a Usage Change Form allows you to add or cancel time that you have previously scheduled. **Two weeks notice is required for all cancellations or changes.** If we receive your cancellation notice at least two weeks before the scheduled reservation date, you will not be charged for the time you had reserved. If your cancellation is received less than two weeks before the scheduled use (including illness), **you will be billed for the time that you reserved.**

If you would like to add an additional day to your schedule, we will be happy to accommodate you – if space is available. You may request the additional day via phone or on a Usage Change Form available in the office.

Program Withdrawal - Complete the Withdrawal Form in the office to completely withdraw from the program and relinquish your space. Minimum of a two week notice is required.

FEES

Billing rates are determined by your Usage Form. Fee choices for the Early Childhood Program are: Monthly / full-time, Daily / part-time, and Hourly / part-time.

Late pick up fees: You will be charged a \$1.00 per minute if your child is picked up after 6PM.

Hourly billing is based on the classroom Sign-In Sheets; if you do not sign your child into or out of our program, you will be billed from the time that the program opens or closes. There is a minimum charge of one half hour for each time your child is signed into the program.

STATEMENTS & PAYMENTS

Payment is due at the beginning of each month. If you are using the program on a part-time basis, you are expected to make a pre-payment based on the space you have scheduled on your Usage Form. At the end of the month, you will receive a bill that will reflect your actual charges for the month. Any additional charges not paid by the 15th are subject to a \$25 late fee.

At the beginning of each month, **statements** are available in the office for pick up. If you do not have a chance to stop in within the first couple of days of the month, it will be mailed to you. The statement reflects your payments, usage fees and account balance. Any account that has a balance due after the 15th of the month will be charged a **late fee of \$25 per month**.

HOW TO PAY

Payments may be made in person at the office, by mail, or over the phone by Visa or Mastercard. Also, there is a lock box near the front doors where payments can be placed if the office is closed. Plan ahead to assure that your payment is received in time to avoid any late fees. If you are interested in Automatic Payment, there is the form available in the office.

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is important for the greatest possible academic, social, and emotional growth of your child. Parents are asked to inform the school when a child is or will be absent.

Extended absences - We ask for notification in advance. The return of your child will go more smoothly if the teacher knows the situation and can respond accordingly. Also, please remember to let the office know within two weeks of planned vacations/absences.

ILLNESSES

You will be notified and we will request you take your child home if he/she shows any of the following symptoms:

- Listlessness, confusion, or unusual behavior
- Severe runny nose, cough, and/or sore throat
- Fever
- Red eyes with discharge
- Abnormal irritability
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea
- Unknown rash
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Pain or discomfort
- Skin lesions
- Head lice
- Swollen joints or glands
- Stiff neck
- Or any symptoms as required by AMC 16.55.520

In the event we request your child be taken home due to illness, your child will be kept in the office under staff supervision until your arrival.

ABSENCES

Parents are required to inform the school when a child will be absent for any reason. In the case of illness, the staff would appreciate knowing the nature of the illness in case it might be contagious. When advisable, a release form from a physician will be necessary for a child to re-enter the program. Parents will be advised of any communicable diseases to which the children may have been exposed. *If your child has a fever or is vomiting, we ask that you keep them home at least 24 hours after symptoms subside.*

MEDICATION

Medication must be brought into the office and left with the secretary, administrator or program director. All medication must come to the office in the original container with instructions on the label. Medication must not be left in the child's bag, backpack or pockets.

If a child must take a non-prescription medication during the day, the school must have a written consent form on file in the office. Children may not take non-prescription medication for more than 4 days without a doctor's authorization form on file. Parents must also give written permission for topical products, which are non-prescription items applied externally, such as ointment, lip balm, sunscreen, insect repellent, skin creams, and lotions.

In the case of prescribed medication, it is recommended that parents bring the medication to the office and complete an Authorization Form. The prescription must be labeled with doctor's name, child's name, name of medication, special care needed (such as refrigeration), date prescription was filled, dosage and dosage intervals.

All medication must come to the office in the original container with instruction on the label. We will only administer medication in the amounts printed on the label or indicated by a physician. Accurate records will be kept by staff of the date, time, and dosage of all medication administered.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE

In the event of an emergency, a trained staff member will administer first-aid and paramedics will be called if deemed necessary. We will contact the hospital/doctor of your choice if possible, but cannot guarantee a specific hospital/doctor if the paramedics are called. Parents will be financially liable for emergency service including ambulance and emergency room cost. However, if your child is injured while in our care, our insurance will cover what is not covered by the parent's insurance, up to limit of our policy.

RELEASE OF YOUR CHILD

If a parent is unable to pick up your child, we will not release your child to anyone who is not authorized on the emergency card or enrollment form unless prior arrangements have been made by the parent or guardian. Identification will be required. After authorization for release is approved, individuals will receive a form from the office and be directed or escorted to your child's classroom.

DAILY SCHEDULE SAMPLE

7:00 – Program opens in the Library

7:30 – Move to the classroom (Free Choice)

9:00 – Circle (Theme Based)

9:30 – Snack

10:00 – Themed Based Activity

11:00 – Outdoor Play

12:00 – Lunch

1:00 – Circle (Bible Story)

1:30 – Nap Time (2:15 non-nappers get up)

3:00 – Snack

3:30 – Outside or gym

4:30 – Free Choice in Classroom

5:30 – Move to the Library

6:00 – Program Closes

CLOTHING

Children should be dressed in comfortable play clothes. Parents are asked to use their discretion in choosing appropriate clothing for their children considering weather conditions, floor activities, and outdoor play.

Each child must also have a change of indoor clothing (underwear, pants, socks, and a shirt) at school for emergencies. Please mark all items with your child's name and place them in a ziplock bag to be kept in their cubby.

OUTDOOR CLOTHING

The children will spend time outdoors each day, weather permitting. Outdoor recess is canceled if the temperature falls below 10 degrees Fahrenheit including wind chill factor. Please provide appropriate outdoor clothing which may include hat, coat, mittens, snow-pants, and footwear. Footwear includes boots *and* shoes for indoor play. Shoes for outdoor play are required to be closed toe.

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

Children must be brought into the building by an adult and physically signed in on the Sign-In Sheet. Please escort your child to his/her teacher as needed. When your child is picked up, they must be signed out on the Sign-In Sheet by an authorized person 16 years or older. Signing In/Out is required for Municipality compliance and attendance in case of emergency.

*The Early Childhood program does not offer transportation to and from the facility. Families are responsible for all transportation.

DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES

Your child will be assigned a specific classroom based on your child's date of birth. The staff members plan schedules, weekly themes, and age appropriate learning activities based on the developmental level of the group.

DISCIPLINE

Discipline action is intended to correct misbehavior rather than punish. Our first steps to discipline will be through re-direction and positive reinforcement of acceptable behavior. Other corrective measures may include, but are not limited to: a reminder of the rule or sitting with an adult to discuss other possibilities for their action.

When a child physically harms another individual or continually breaks rules, corrective measures include, but are not limited to, separation from the group (within the room), a denial of some privileges, discussions with the child, and timeout.

In timeout, the child is removed from the situation where he/she is having difficulty and asked to sit for one minute per year of age up to five minutes. This gives the child the opportunity to cool down and communicate with the caregiver. Together, the child and the caregiver work on resolving the problem. The child is allowed to return to activities when the behavior is under control.

Parents will be contacted and consulted in the event that there are reoccurring behaviors. In no instance will corporal punishment be administered.

If our program is not able to adequately fill the behavioral needs of a child, the Director or the Anchor Lutheran School Administrator may decide to dismiss the child from the program.

CHAPEL & PRAYER

Participants of our Early Childhood program will join the rest of Anchor Lutheran School for chapel weekly. Spiritual songs and a short message will be shared. Parents are welcome to join us Wednesdays at 9:10 a.m. for chapel.

Additionally each day, bible stories are shared in class. Prayers are said before snack and lunch.

SNACKS

We provide healthy snacks each morning and afternoon. Each snack consists of two components from the following list: a dairy or protein product, a grain product, a vegetable, a fruit, fruit juice or milk. Please remember to indicate on the application form if your child has any food allergies. We will substitute another food or drink if needed or ask you to provide snacks for your child in the case of extreme allergic reactions.

LUNCHESES

Anchor Lutheran School Early Childhood Program does not have a hot lunch option. We ask that you send a lunch with your child. We have a refrigerator, a hot water tap, and a microwave if your child needs lunch heated. Please send utensils as needed.

Nutritious lunches are important in helping children grow and learn. We urge you to send a lunch that meets USDA requirements, which include:

- Protein (meat, cheese, egg, fish or peanut butter)
- Bread (or other grain product)
- Milk
- Two fruits, vegetables, or one of each.

We also ask that you only send one dessert with your child, for example if you send cookies in the lunch do not also send candy. We will encourage your child to eat most of their “healthy” food before they eat their sweet treat.

MILK CARDS

Punch cards for half-pints of milk are available for purchase in the office. Teachers will keep the milk cards in the classroom and punch the cards as served with lunch.

NAP TIME

The children will be asked to lay down on their cots and rest quietly for 45 minutes each day from 1:30 to 2:15 p.m. At 2:15 p.m., children who have not fallen asleep will be allowed to get up and play quietly. The children who have fallen asleep will be allowed to sleep and then awakened at 3 p.m. Your child may bring a blanket, small pillow, and favorite stuffed animal for a “nap time buddy”.

ITEMS FROM HOME

Show-n-Tell is an important part of language development and your child will be invited to bring items from home to share with the class during circle time on Show-n-Tell days. Items will be kept in their individual backpacks until share time. Consider carefully your decision to send items of value with your child because we will not assume responsibility for any items your child may bring from home. We provide plenty of toys and games for the children to use, so we try to discourage bringing items from home for general play. We ask that when you decide to send personal items from home, that you have them well marked with your child’s name.

Electronic games/phones and are not allowed. For safety reasons at no time will the children be allowed to wear headphones brought from home.

ANIMALS

On occasion, animals are brought into the program for exhibit. Parents will be notified of these times. Please be sure to inform the office if your child has any allergies. From time to time a classroom may have pets. If a pet is a part of a particular classroom environment, a notice will be posted outside the classroom door.

TECHNOLOGY

Computer learning or iPad activity may be an occasional part of the classroom curriculum. Content must be of educational value and screen time is limited. G-rated movie viewing is sometimes a part of program activities. Children will be offered an alternate activity to the movie.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips will be held on a regular basis during the summer. Parents will grant permission for their child to participate by signing a permission form for each event. Parents will be notified of the nature of the trip, date, time, cost, etc. Parents are welcome to join us on any field trip. If at any time you would rather your child not attend a planned field trip, you should contact the Program Director so that alternative arrangements can be made for your child.

Our program is equipped with school vehicles for field trips, all regulations will apply. When transportation is needed, parents will be notified in the permission slip as to the type of transportation being used. You may be required to provide a car safety seat labeled for your child's use.

VISITING

Families are encouraged to visit the program at any time. Parental input, as well as that of your child, is valued as we always are building and improving the quality of our programs.

SUBSTITUTES & VOLUNTEERS

We strive to maintain consistent staff in the Early Childhood Program. In some instances the Director will fill in for an absent caregiver, but if the need arises we will bring in other paid substitutes. Substitutes and volunteers will be required to meet the same standards as regular caregivers. Parents wishing to volunteer in the classroom on a regular basis should see the Program Director for information on additional licensing requirements for volunteers.

REGULATORY AGENCY

Anchor Lutheran School Early Childhood Program is licensed by the regulatory agency for licensed child care centers in Anchorage (Municipality of Anchorage, Department of Health and Human Services Child and Adult Care Office) as a Care and Education Center. This agency supervises, monitors, and investigates complaints involving child care centers. A licensing specialist is assigned to our program. You may contact (907) 343-4758 or 343-4206 for additional information or stop by the office located at 825 "L" Street, 3rd floor.

LICENSING & INSURANCE

The Early Childhood Program is covered by liability insurance in an amount equal or greater than that required by the Municipality of Anchorage. A copy of the policy is in the school office for your review.

PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITY

The Program Director is responsible for supervision of planning and implementation of the program. The Director is the immediate supervisor of all program personnel. Lutheran School Association of Anchorage, Inc. owns and operates Anchor Lutheran School as directly supervises the Program Director.

PROCEDURES & POLICY CHANGES

Parents will be notified in the form of a written letter, electronic notification and/or school newsletter at least 30 days prior to any change in procedure or policy that will affect their family. Parents who want to make suggestions are welcome to share them with the Program Director.

PROGRAM SIZE & RATIOS

The licensed program is presently limited to a maximum of 155 children. Early Childhood classroom group size is twenty students per classroom. An adult to child ratio of 1 to 10 is always met or exceeded. Your child is assigned to one of our four classrooms and staff based on his/her age.

STUDENT RECORDS

All personnel will maintain confidentiality regarding a child and the child's family. However, Municipality of Anchorage Child & Adult Care Department & designees will review compliance of our records and examine records during inspections.

NON-SMOKING

Smoking is not allowed on school grounds, in the building, vehicles used to transport children, parking lot, or play areas. Our program is smoke free. Caregivers are not allowed to smoke in the presence of any children enrolled in our program during hours of operation.

LEARNING OR PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

We strive to meet the needs of all children. If staff cannot meet a child's needs, we will suggest agencies through which parents can find a program better qualified to meet their needs. Our program is limited by the restroom facilities and requires that all children are able to use the restroom independently.

REQUIRED REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT

Alaska State Statutes and Anchorage Child Care Center Regulations require that all licensed child care providers report all incidents of suspected or actual abuse or neglect of children, regardless of whether they occur or are related to the facility. We are obligated by law to report such instances within 24 hours to the Child Protection Office of Children's Services (Alaska Department of Health and Social Services) at 907-269-4000.

Centers are also required to notify the Municipal Child/Adult Care Licensing Office at (907) 343-4758 or (907) 343-6730, of any incidents that allege that a child was abused or neglected during any time the center is responsible for the child.

GLOSSARY

Administrator –The school administrator is the chief administrative official of Anchor Lutheran School and is the direct supervisor of the Program Director of the Early Childhood Program and Before-and-After School Program.

Anchorage Lutheran Church – One of the three Missouri Synod Lutheran Churches that own and operate the Lutheran School Association of Anchorage, Inc. Anchorage Lutheran is located at 1420 “N” Street.

Anchor Lutheran School (ALS) – The school owned and operated by the Lutheran School Association of Anchorage Inc., that meets in the Lutheran Center. ALS offers enrollment for students in kindergarten through eighth grade, as well as operating the Early Childhood and Before-and-After School Programs.

Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church – One of the three Missouri Synod Lutheran Churches that own and operate the Lutheran School Association of Anchorage, Inc. This church is also located in the Lutheran Center.

Early Childhood/Child Watch Staff (EC) – Typically refers to the staff of the Early Childhood and Child Watch, who directly supervise the children.

Early Childhood Program – The name given to the all-day, licensed care care and education program for children ages 3-5.

Child Watch (CW) - The before and after-school program for students attending kindergarten through sixth grade. Child Watch operates full time in the summer months and most days school is not in session.

Lutheran Center – The name given to the building at 8100 Arctic Blvd., that is owned by Anchor Lutheran School and Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church.

Lutheran School Association – The owner and operator of Anchor Lutheran School and the Early Childhood program at ALS. The association is composed of Anchorage, Beautiful Savior and Zion Lutheran Churches.

Multi-Purpose Room – The room which serves as a worship facility and gymnasium. Students sometimes call it the “gym”, church members sometimes call it the “church”.

Program Director – The administrator of the Early Childhood Program and Before-and-After School Program who supervises the operation of both programs.

Zion Lutheran Church – One of the three Missouri Synod Lutheran Churches, that own and operate the Lutheran School Association of Anchorage, Inc. Zion is located at 2100 Boniface Parkway.