



Family Handbook

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Dear Parents,

Thank you for joining our Early Learning family! This book contains many essential information you will want to refer to throughout the year, so be sure to keep it in a safe place. The handbook covers payment procedures, field trips, safety measures, health tips, opportunities for you to be involved in your child's school experience, and much more! If you have any questions or concerns about your child, please do not hesitate to contact Tonya Schlabach, our Early Learning Director. We are here to serve you!

Updated February 2026

No Way. The hundred is there.

The child
is made of one hundred.

The child has
a hundred languages
a hundred hands
a hundred thoughts
a hundred ways of thinking
of playing, of speaking.
A hundred always a hundred
ways of listening
of marveling of loving
a hundred joys
for singing and understanding
a hundred worlds
to discover
a hundred worlds
to invent
a hundred worlds
to dream.

The child has a hundred languages
(and a hundred hundred hundred more)
but they steal ninety-nine.

The school and the culture
separate the head from the body.

They tell the child:
to think without hands
to do without head
to listen and not to speak
to understand without joy
to love and to marvel
only at Easter and Christmas.

They tell the child:
to discover the world already there
and of the hundred
they steal ninety-nine.

They tell the child:
that work and play
reality and fantasy
science and imagination
sky and earth
reason and dream
are things

that do not belong together.

And thus they tell the child
that the hundred is not there.

The child says:
No way. The hundred is there.

-Loris Malaguzzi
Founder of Reggio-Emilia Appro

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1. Mission, Philosophy, Values, Goals & Certification

1.1 Mission Statement

At TLC-Early Learning, we are passionate about providing a loving Christian, developmental atmosphere where children are encouraged to see themselves as unique individuals created and loved by God, allowing each child to grow spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, socially, and physically. By incorporating a Reggio-inspired approach, we emphasize learning through play, observation, exploration, and investigation in an environment where children can learn at their own pace, reaching their full potential as lifelong learners.

1.2 Philosophy

TLC-Early Learning exists to nurture and educate children, affirm parents' work, and proclaim the truth of Christ in love so that each child grows spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, socially, and physically – through play, observation, exploration, and investigation. Our child-centered school believes that the process is as important as the product. Children work hard at play—through questioning, sharing, speaking, listening, dancing, singing, discoveries, experiments, and hands-on activities. Our students learn at their own pace through play that is geared toward their developmental stage, ensuring they feel valued and respected.

Our policies are rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Teachers uphold the understanding of and belief in the importance of the Law (consequence for misbehavior) and the Gospel (forgiveness for the repentant). This helps the children develop healthy relationships and patterns of adjustment—learning and growing in a warm, loving, responsive environment with experienced early childhood educators who provide attentive, nurturing, individualized, quality care.

1.3 Values

- *Bible Based*

We believe the Bible is God's inspired Word, revealing His plan of salvation for all mankind and teaching us His will and purpose for us in this life. When our students learn the story of God's love for them in the Bible, they learn that they are treasured creations of God, who loves them and has a plan for them. God planned them for a purpose.

Our teachers demonstrate what it means to live life with purpose. They are intentional in preparing classrooms, lessons, and activities for their students, striving for excellence in teaching and professional growth. Teachers serve as Christian role models, showing students how to read the Bible, pray, sing, and serve. They also show students how to apologize, forgive one another, and care for each other.

- *Academic Excellence*

When teachers and students know that God loves them and has a plan for them, they strive for excellence in serving God. The results of this desire for excellence are external, with measurable, concrete outcomes to show for the work, and internal, with the growth of character and values.

- *Appreciation of Nature*

Part of academic excellence will include exploring and appreciating God's creation. By focusing on spending time in nature and studying the outdoors, the students will learn more about themselves as unique beings created by God and grow in their appreciation for the beauty and complexity of God's creation. They will also begin to understand their role as caretakers of the world around them.

- *Relationship Driven*

Our teachers value building positive relationships with students and their families. This value for relationships flows out of God's relationship with people. God reaches out to people to offer salvation through Jesus and to provide for their earthly needs. In response, our teachers will reach out to students and families, offering caring communities in which students will flourish and learning environments where students will grow.

Our Reggio-based curriculum supports this relationship-driven model. Teachers take the time to observe students' interests and encourage their joy of learning and wonder by asking questions and tailoring specific activities and lessons that will foster and encourage exploration and growth. This approach also allows for exploration and growth through playtime, which encourages the expression of creativity, imagination, and cooperation.

- *Focused on Eternity*

The ultimate purpose of a Christian education is to teach about Jesus. Jesus is God's Son who came to earth to live, die for our sins, rise from the dead, and return to heaven. Jesus will take all who believe in Him to heaven for eternity. We desire that each of our students live in heaven with Jesus someday. This motivates us to share the love of Jesus through our teaching and the meaningful relationships we develop with students and families.

1.4 Goals and Objectives.

Objectives for Staff:

- Provide a nurturing and positive school experience for young children
- Helping to instill self-confidence that leads to a positive outlook on learning and life
- Providing safe and secure relationships with adults and children
- Sharing the Bible/God's Word in everyday classroom experiences
- Modeling prayer, praise, and appropriate law/gospel applications in classroom management
- Cultivating a developmentally appropriate play-based curriculum for each individual.

Goals for Students:

- Knowing the love of Jesus
- Having a genuine love for learning
- Learning to respect and cooperate with peers and teachers
- Being adequately prepared to enter kindergarten according to state standards

1.5 Certifications

TLC Early Learning is a Registered Ministry of the State of Indiana and a Level 3 Paths to Quality. Our involvement means we are committed to providing a safe, nurturing, and professional environment where children can grow and learn. We know that quality child care leads to brighter futures for all children, and we are honored to be entrusted with such an important responsibility.

2. Enrollment

2.1 Eligibility

Registration is open to all children ages two (Birthdate January 31, 2024, or after) through the year before entering kindergarten. If a student has a birthdate prior to Aug. 1, 2021, we will consider eligibility on a case-by-case basis.

2.2 Tuition and Fees

A non-refundable registration fee will be charged for each child at registration. The registration fee must be paid to secure a spot for your student. Tuition will be set for the entire school term (September through May) and may be paid monthly or one payment for the whole year. No refunds will be given in the event of weather-related delays or cancellations, family vacations, illness, or withdrawal.

Tuition is the same monthly rate, based on the school schedule. Payment schedules for the tuition and fees for the current year can be obtained from the Early Learning Director. See the "Payment Procedures" section for more information on payment procedures.

2.3 Required Paperwork

Parents are responsible for providing TLC Early Learning with an accurate record of the child(ren)'s health, including vaccinations or religious exemption, allergies with a doctor's note, diet restrictions, medications, illnesses, and disabilities. Upon enrollment, a current physical (first-year students only) and a current record of vaccinations must be completed. TLC is not responsible for any incorrect information it may receive concerning a child's health.

2.4 Pick-up Policy/Authorized person to pick-up

Upon enrollment, the parent(s) is to provide TLC with a list of persons who are allowed to pick up their child(ren). Children will only be permitted to leave with pre-approved persons. If you need to arrange for a different person to pick up your child(ren), you must inform the school in writing.

2.5 Restricted Information

If you need to restrict the distribution of information about your child to another family member for any reason, you must communicate this to the school in writing, indicating the names of the persons not to receive information about your child(ren).

2.6 Early Withdrawal

Parents are asked to give a month's notice before withdrawing their child(ren) from school. There will be no refunds for early withdrawal.

2.7 Anti-Discrimination Statement

At TLC Early Learning, equal educational opportunities are available for all children, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, parent/provider political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation, or special needs, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state or local laws. Educational programs are designed to meet the varying needs of all students.

2.8 Inclusion Policy

TLC Early Learning believes children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance, and belonging. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage full and active participation of all children in our program based on their capabilities and needs.

TLC will work with parents to adapt activities and the environment to assist children with special needs. If children need special services, open communication with parents and service providers, including school programs, will be maintained. If desired, service providers are welcome to come to serve your child. If it is determined that we are not equipped to meet your child's needs, the Director will meet with you to discuss what would be in your child's best interest.

2.9 Respectful Behavior

All children and families will be treated with respect and dignity. In return, we expect the same from all our families. We will not tolerate hostile or aggressive behavior. If this occurs, we reserve the right to ask you to control your behavior or to remove your children from our care.

2.10 Book Bags/Folders

All students will receive a TLC tote bag as part of their registration fee. Each child should bring their tote bag to school every day. A folder will be provided at the start of the school year and needs to remain in your child's tote bag. The teacher will place all important papers in this folder for your review. Please check the tote bag each day. Please inform your child's teacher if you need a duplicate copy of all information sent home. We ask that you only use the provided tote bag and wash it as needed.

Notes to the teacher must be placed in the folder or handed directly to the teacher. The folders will be checked daily, and notes not in the folder could be overlooked. You can also leave a note on the Lillio App or email the teacher.

3. Tuition Payment Procedures & Fees

3.1 Tuition Payments

- Tuition payments are due on the **5th of each month**, or one payment may be made for the entire year.
- Payments may be made by check or money order to **TLC Early Learning** or by using the Lillio App.
- If using the online payment, each category will have a convenience fee. You can only pay using ACH withdrawal.
- Enclose your payment in a sealed envelope with the student's name and class. Place the payment in the student's folder, or payments can be mailed to:

**Trinity Lutheran Church ATTN: TLC Early Learning
1801 N. Main Street
Auburn, IN 46706**

- Current Fees

	Check or Cash	Lillio
○ 2-day class	\$125 monthly	\$125.75 monthly
○ 3-day class	\$200 monthly	\$201.20 monthly
○ 4-day class	\$245 monthly	\$246.47 monthly
○ 5-day class	\$280 monthly	\$281.68 monthly
- Sibling Discount - \$10 off monthly tuition for the second child enrolled at TLC this year.

3.2 Late Tuition Payments

TLC Early Learning expects that all payments be made on time. **If scheduling recurring online payments, set them for the 1st of the month so that the payment will be in by the 5th.** If, under extenuating circumstances, a family cannot make timely payments, they are responsible for contacting the Early Learning Director to arrange an alternative payment plan. If the family does not communicate their circumstances to the director and no alternative payment plan is made, the following procedures will take place:

1. Following the first missed payment, a communication will be sent home to the parents requesting that the payment be made in full within the next five business days.
2. If payment has not been received within five business days from the date of the first communication, a late fee of \$10.00 will be applied to the delinquent account. A second letter or phone call will be made to the parents informing them that their account is overdue and that payment in full, including late fees, will be expected within the next five business days.
3. If payment has not been received within fifteen business days, the child(ren) will be removed from the school roster and will no longer be allowed to attend classes until payment of the delinquent account, including all late fees, is paid in full.

3.3 Returned Checks/rejected Lillio Payments

A check returned with non-sufficient funds (NSF) will be considered a late payment. Parents who submit NSF checks will be charged a late fee of \$10.00 and are responsible for reimbursing the church for any NSF bank charges. If a check is returned for insufficient funds, it must be replaced by a money order. If a second NSF check is received within the same school year, the charges stated above will apply, and all future payments must be made with a money order for the remainder of the year.

If you paid through the Lillio App and there is an error, and your payment is returned for "lack of funds or wrong account," a \$7.50 fee will be invoiced to your account.

3.4 Scholarship

Scholarship applications are available from the Director. The Board of Directors will review applications. A limited number of scholarship dollars are available.

4. Communication & Lillio

4.1 Emails

TLC Early Learning/Director preschool@trinitylutheran-auburn.org
Explorers Class explorers@trinitylutheran-auburn.org
Scouts Class scouts@trinitylutheran-auburn.org
Discoverers Class discoverers@trinitylutheran-auburn.org

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/TLCEarlyLearning>



Lillio QR code

4.2 Lillio

Lillio is a program that helps track attendance, activity reporting to families, communication with families, billing, and more. An email will be sent to the parents of those provided on the enrollment form. Please register so you can receive notifications. We recommend downloading the Lillio App to your device. You will receive at least weekly reports from the teacher through Lillio. This report may include daily activities, notes, reminders, and more. You can communicate with the teachers and director using the program. You can find out more at www.Lillio.com



4.3 Monthly Newsletter

The director will send a monthly newsletter with essential dates and information. You will also receive the snack calendar and additional resources. Be sure to check folders.

4.4 Website

Our website is www.tlcearlylearning-auburn.com. Check out the Resource tab. There are reminders about essential policies, and you can access the handbook, too.

5. Schedules, Calendar, Delays & Cancellations

5.1 Classe Schedules

Discoverer Class	2/3-year-olds	Thursday & Friday	8:30 to 10:30 am
Scouts Class	3/4-year-olds	Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday	8:30 to 11:30 am
Explorers Pre-K Class	4/5-year-olds	Monday- Thursday	8:30 to 11:30 am
Explorers Pre-K Class	4/5-year-olds	Monday - Friday	8:30 to 11:30 am

Please note: Ages are as of August 1, 2026. Class sizes are limited based on age group. Once enrollment has reached its maximum per classroom, we will stop accepting registrations and place enrollment requests on a waiting list.

5.2 School Calendar

A calendar for the current school year will be provided. TLC follows DeKalb Central Schools for holidays, breaks, weather-related delays, and cancellations. The school calendar can be accessed on the website.

5.3 School Delays and Cancellations

TLC follows DeKalb Central Schools for school delays and cancellations due to weather. In the event of a 2-hour delay announced by DeKalb Central Schools, TLC Early Learning will begin at 10:00 am and dismiss at 11:30 am. Doors will open at 9:45 am. If DeKalb Central Schools are canceled, TLC Early Learning classes will also be canceled. Delays will be communicated through the Lillio App.

**The Discoverer class will meet from 10:00 am to 11:30 am if a delay is called on Thursday or Friday.

5.4 Attendance

We ask that if your child will be absent from school, you contact the school via the Lillio app, email, or phone (925-6544). If you choose to be gone for an extended period (For example, Vacation), you are still responsible for tuition for that time.

6. Arrival & Dismissal Procedures

6.1 Arrival

Children may arrive starting ten minutes (8:20 am) before class time. School doors will not open until 8:20 am each day. Children are not to be left until a staff member is present. All children will be dropped off at the curb by the school doors. You will pull around the building (see the map below). Then, the student will be greeted by a staff member and taken inside to hang up items and wash hands before class. Please stay in the line until it moves forward. Do NOT pull around cars unless directed by a staff member.

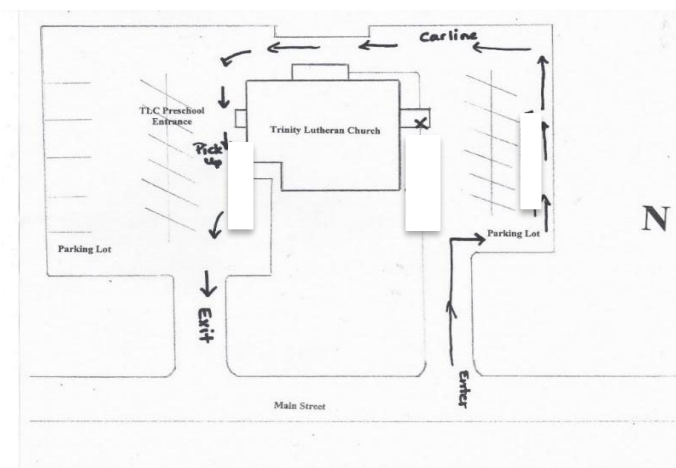
Arrival should be no later than 8:40 am. Please contact the school if you will be late due to an appointment or other delay.

6.2 Dismissal/Pick-up Carline

Class dismisses at 11:30 a.m. for Scouts and Explorers and 10:30 a.m. for Discoverers. Students gather their coats and bags and are taken to the appropriate doors for carline dismissal. It is the same procedure as morning drop-off. Have the child's name card visible in the front window.

6.3 Car-line Directions

Turn into the north entrance parking lot and circle the back of the church to the south parking lot. Children will be exiting at the south church entrance. Please pull forward to the end of the sidewalk. Form a car line, and when you reach the south entrance door, we will escort your child(ren) to and from the car. We will release 4-5 students at a time. You will be given a sign with your child's name on the first day of school. Place the name card in the **front** window so we can see it. If more cards are needed, please notify your child's teacher. Please assist your child in entering, buckling up, and closing the door. If you feel this may take some time, you may pull into a parking spot after your child is in the car. **Wait until the line moves to pull forward.** Please drive slowly in the parking lot. Please refrain from using your cell phone during the carline for the safety of the children. If you need to communicate with your child's teacher, notes, phone calls, or a message on Lillio are best.



6.4 Late Pick-up Fee

A \$15 fee will be charged if the child is not picked up within 10 minutes after dismissal. In case of extenuating circumstances, the family should contact the director. If a change in transportation is necessary, the person picking up your child(ren) must be on the pre-approved list on file in the office. It is the school's responsibility to ensure that no child is picked up without a staff member's knowledge and that no child is released to any unauthorized person. The school cannot be responsible for incorrect information during registration.

6.5 Locked Doors

We lock all doors 10 minutes after class begins. The doors will always remain locked during school hours to control access to the school and ensure the safety of students. If you need to enter the church, please ring the bell at the south entrance so staff can let you in.

7. Conduct, Discipline, and Behavior Management

7.1 Classroom Conduct

TLC seeks to foster a caring environment in the classroom that is conducive to the education of all children present. TLC is committed to each student's success in learning within a caring, responsive, and safe environment free of discrimination, violence, and bullying. We work to ensure that all students have the opportunity and support to develop to their fullest potential and share a personal and meaningful bond with people in the school community.

Thoughtful direction and planning are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Communicating clear and consistent rules and assisting children with problem-solving will help children develop their ability to become self-disciplined. We encourage children to be fair, respect other people and property, and learn to understand the results of their actions. However, while caring for your children, we may have to respond to your child's misbehavior.

The guidelines below are set standards for the classroom and taught in the school. Guidelines positively reinforce standards and teach children what they can do to fit into and participate as class members.

- We can listen to the teacher and follow directions the first time they are given.
- We are friendly to each other and ourselves and can treat others with respect.
- We can wait for our turn.
- We can make good choices.
- We can put our materials back in place, clean our area, and help to take care of our classrooms.
- We can stay in our seat/personal space/sit spot and sit quietly.
- We can use our inside voices in the building.
- We use friendly touches only.
- We use words to solve problems.
- Sometimes, we need to stop, look, and listen.

At TLC we understand that our students are still in development. Making mistakes is okay, so long as students learn from those mistakes. Students should be held accountable for their behavior. TLC will work with your child to assist them in learning to be good students. Our teachers will use a combination of strategies, including but not limited to:

- Positive reinforcement and giving clear choices.
- Establish clear rules and be consistent in enforcing the rules.
- Our teachers will use guidance to teach children cooperative skills.
- Redirect your child to a new activity.
- Use positive language to explain desired behavior.
- Consequences for undesired behavior will include loss of privileges, a time to calm our bodies, and visiting the director's office.
- The teacher will regard classroom conflicts as mistake behavior and use them as teaching opportunities.

Undesirable classroom behaviors that cannot be resolved may result in the child being removed from the program. The director will contact parents if undesired behavior patterns are repeated or fail to improve.

7.2 Challenging Behavior

Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self-control and kindness.

Each student at TLC has the right to:

- Learn in a safe and friendly place
- Be treated with respect
- Receive the help and support of caring adults

When a child becomes verbally or physically aggressive, we intervene immediately to protect everyone involved. Our usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to show them how to solve problems using appropriate interactions. When discipline is necessary, it is clear, consistent, and understandable to the child. We maintain a zero-tolerance policy for bullying.

7.3 Discipline and Behavior Management

While behaviors can be a developmental stage for all children, we have found it necessary to implement a behavior policy. Our priority is the safety and well-being of every student and staff member, and we will make every effort to redirect any bad behavior. The following rules are in place to protect our children and staff here at TLC.

The behaviors that WILL NOT be tolerated include biting, hitting, kicking, scratching, pinching, head butting, spitting, or any other conduct that could cause harm to another.

The following disciplinary procedures will be followed:

- I. When a child's behavior at school cannot be redirected, the child will be sent to the director's office for further guidance, and the incident will be documented.
- II. When a child's behavior at school cannot be redirected a second time, TLC staff will contact the child's parent or guardian, and the incident will be documented.
- III. When a child's behavior cannot be redirected a third time, TLC staff will contact the child's parent or guardian, and the child may be suspended from attending TLC for three (3) school days.
- IV. If a child's behavior cannot be redirected after a three (3) school day suspension, the child will be suspended from attending TLC until the next school year. Their readmittance is pending approval of the TLC Board.

The rules and disciplinary procedures set forth herein are essential to ensuring the safety of all students and staff at TLC. Before taking any disciplinary action as set forth above, teachers will use their best efforts to urge children to use their words to express themselves or to ask for help. Your help and cooperation in dealing with the above behavioral issues is appreciated.

7.4 Physical Restraint

Physical restraint is not permitted for discipline at TLC. There are rare instances when restraint may be necessary to ensure a child's safety or that of others. In such a situation, we may restrain a child by gently holding them only for as long as necessary to take control of the situation.

7.5 Notification of Behavioral Issues to Families

If a child's behavior becomes a concern, communication will start with the parents to understand the child's needs and challenges. We will work together to evaluate these needs in the context of our program. Classroom behaviors that do not have a positive change or become an ongoing classroom distraction may result in the student being removed from the program. The Director will contact parents if patterns of undesired behavior are repeated or fail to improve. Together, we will make a plan and provide resources as needed to assist the teachers and families.

7.6 Dismissal from the Program

If we have concerns about challenges a student faces at school, we will discuss them with the child's parent(s) and develop a plan to help the child succeed in our program. If the child does not make progress, or we are not receiving cooperation from the parent(s), we reserve the right to require that the child be withdrawn from our program.

Resources may be provided to the family when dealing with a suspension or expulsion from school.

8. Potty Training Policy

Children enrolled in our program must be fully potty-trained and fully independent with bathroom hygiene to attend the Explorers Pre-K class. We feel that children of these ages deserve privacy. We realize that “accidents” are unusual and should only happen infrequently. If a documented medical issue prevents your child from being potty-trained by the start of Pre-K, please contact the director to discuss the issue.

Potty-trained preschool children:

- No longer wear diapers (disposable or cloth) or disposable underwear (pull-ups).
- Can tell the teacher when they need to go to the bathroom.
- Can attend to their own hygiene. (i.e., students can clean themselves independently after using the restroom. Staff will not clean a child after using the restroom.)

Explorers Class - FULLY POTTY-TRAINED means that the child knows when they must use the bathroom and does not need any assistance in the bathroom. (The student needs to be able to wipe themselves and wash their hands independently)

If your child is not completely potty-trained as described above when school starts, you may choose one of the following options:

- i. You may withdraw your child from preschool and place their name at the top of our waiting list. Registration is non-refundable; however, if your child is placed in a class at a later date (in the same calendar year), you will not need to pay an additional registration fee or
- ii. You may continue to pay tuition to hold your child’s spot until potty training has been completed.

Scouts Class - Actively Potty-Training means “almost” toilet trained. They can tell the teacher when they need to go to the restroom. They may not be 100% trained. Teachers will assist where needed. Students should be able to wipe by themselves. They should come to school in a pull-up until they are fully trained. NO diapers.

Discoverers Class – This age may be trained, or they may be just starting. Students will bring additional diapers/pull-ups and wipes. Teachers will encourage them to sit on the potty.

9. Curriculum/ Learning Goals

9.1 Curriculum

TLC curriculum is a Reggio-inspired, emergent, play-based program that incorporates the Indiana Early Learning Standards. Throughout the program year, all children will gradually learn to maintain an increased attention span, develop self-regulation and independence, and develop age-appropriate fine and gross motor skills. Children will be introduced to safety rules, good health and nutrition habits, and healthy interpersonal skills. They will learn about sharing, listening, and the love of God. In addition, each age group will have specific learning goals that align with the Early Learning Standards and Indiana Academic Standards.

9.2 Reggio Emilia

The Reggio Emilia Approach originated in the town of Reggio Emilia in Italy out of a movement toward progressive and cooperative early childhood education. Outside of the city of Reggio Emilia, *all schools and preschools are Reggio-inspired*, adapting their approach to the needs of their community. The Reggio Emilia Approach values the child as strong, capable, resilient, and rich with wonder and knowledge and is guided by the following fundamental principles:

- *Children are capable of constructing their learning.*
- *Children form an understanding of themselves and their place in the world through their interactions with others.*
- *Children are communicators.*
- *The environment is the third teacher.*
- *We observe the children, listen to their questions and stories, discover their interests, and provide them with opportunities to explore them further.*
- *Emphasis on documenting children’s thoughts, works, and progress.*
- *Children have rights.*

- *Children are competent & rich in potential.*
- *Children have 100 languages.*

The Reggio Emilia Approach emphasizes hands-on discovery learning that allows the child to use all their senses and all their languages to learn.

9.3 Daily Routines include:

- Choice Time/Centers (Reading/Listening, Science/STEM, Writing, Math, Art, Sensory Play, Dramatic Play, Music, Small Motor/Manipulative)
- Community Meeting (large group)
- Outdoor Exploration (weather permitting)
- Gross Motor
- Music and Movement
- Small group/ Individualized Instruction
- Fine Arts Enrichment
- Bible Time
- Snack
- Chapel – twice a month (All families welcome)
- Fine Arts Class – Weekly (Scouts & Explorers)
- Library – weekly (Scouts & Explorers)

9.4 Outdoor Learning Environment and Exploration

Time will be allotted daily (weather permitting), giving children opportunities to explore, discover, and learn about the natural world while providing positive and meaningful play opportunities. Teachers become facilitators of children’s learning about the natural environment by providing materials and embedding the required standards and skills while engaging children during this outdoor exploration time. Classes will spend time on the church grounds and possibly travel to the “Beyond” (Greenhurst Commons).

Students should come dressed for daily time outside.

We will use a weed killer when we spot poison ivy. Students will be taught to identify and report any poison ivy.

9.5 Chapel/Bible Time

Chapel is led two times a month by Pastor Jon Nack. Teachers will send home a “Bible Story Take-home sheet” after each chapel to review the story with your child. We will focus on a story and theme for two weeks. These will be listed in the monthly newsletters. We will also be sending home additional resources throughout the year. Each student will be provided a Bible during their first year at TLC. Families are invited to join our chapel times. You may enter through the north doors. Typically, Chapel is on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month at 11 am. Watch the newsletters for dates.

9.6 Library Books

During the school year, students in the Scouts and Explorers classes can check out books weekly. They may check out new books when they have returned check-out books. Children cannot check out new books until the previous books have been returned. Scouts may check out 1 book, and Explorers may check out 2 books. Library is on Tuesdays. Please help students return books on Monday in their bags.

9.7 Discoverers Class Description & Learning Goals

Student birthdays are August 1, 2023 – January 31, 2024. Classes meet on Thursday and Friday from 8:30–10:30 am. Tuition is \$125 per month. This class allows students to become familiar with a school and classroom environment while learning how to cope with the anxiety of being separated from familiar surroundings.

Discoverer Learning Goals

- Socialization skills
- Active listening/following directions
- Beginning math and language arts development
- Songs & movement
- Potty-training
- Independence
- Creative expression through art, music, and dramatic play
- Interaction with nature and science

9.8 Scouts Class Description & Learning Goals

Student birthdays are August 1, 2022 - July 31, 2023. Class meets Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday from 8:30–11:30 am. Tuition is \$200 a month. Students will be mostly potty-trained and completely trained by the start of Pre-K. (see the Potty Training section for details)

Scouts Learning Goals

- Develop self-regulation and independence
- Socialization skills
- Active listening/following directions
- Beginning literacy
- Early Language, pre-reading & pre-writing skills
- Beginning math skills
- Interaction with science and nature
- Creative expression through art, music, and dramatic play

9.9 Explorers Pre-K Class Description & Learning Goals

Student birthdays are August 1, 2021 – July 31, 2022. Students in the Pre-K class plan to attend kindergarten in the fall of the next school year. Students will be working on skills in preparation for entering kindergarten. Classes meet Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 8:30 – 11:30 am. Tuition for 4-day is \$245 a month. A 5th-day option is available for \$280 a month. This day will continue to focus on kindergarten readiness and have additional fine arts enrichment activities.

Pre-K Learning goals

- Personal and social development
- Self-regulation and independence
- Active listening/following directions
- Early reading skills
- Early writing skills
- Age-appropriate math skills and number sense concepts
- Interaction with science and nature
- Creative expression through art, music, and dramatic play

9.10 Study Trips & Guest Speakers

TLC offers a variety of experiences both at and away from school. Study trips are a creative way to enrich a theme and expand the learning environment. Study trips are scheduled by the teacher and approved by the Director. Study trips will only be taken by the Explorers class. Teachers will schedule trips based on student interest.

Many times it is a better educational experience to bring in a guest speaker to educate students on a specific topic of interest. These are scheduled during the school time and in accordance with student interest.

If a study trip is scheduled, all parents must sign a *Study Trip Permission Form* before the trip. In compliance with Paths to Quality, a guardian must attend and drive their student to and from the study trip. No student will be transported by TLC Early Learning staff at any time for study trips. If the trip is local, DART arrangements can be made for the student. If arrangements cannot be made, the student will stay at school with another class or the Director. The teacher must account for all children before leaving and returning to school.

Teachers may decide and are encouraged to conduct short, unannounced study trips, including but not limited to walks as a class around the perimeter of the building and trips to Greenhurst Commons. Appropriate teacher-child ratios must always be maintained. Parents provide permission at enrollment for this type of field trip and do not need to complete a separate form for the instances mentioned earlier.

9.11 Developmental & Social Emotional Screening

TLC uses ASQ-3 and ASQ SE-2 to monitor each child's achievement of developmental milestones (ASQ-3), social-emotional development (ASQ SE-2), share observations with parents/guardians, and provide resource information as needed for further screenings, evaluations, and early intervention and treatment. The developmental screening process is a collaborative one, involving parents/guardians and done in conjunction with the child's primary care provider and health, education, and early intervention consultants. As a parent or caregiver, you are the best source of information about your child. When children get support as early as possible for behavioral concerns, problem behaviors may be prevented from getting more difficult as children get older. You play an important role in your child's learning and development. More information will be provided to parents.

9.12 Birthday Traditions

Birthday Traditions are an important part of celebrating the child on their special day. Each classroom will celebrate in a unique way. Teachers will contact you when they will be celebrating your child. If your child has a summer birthday, we will celebrate it during the school year.

10. Snack Time

10.1 Snack

Snacks are provided for the whole school by one student each day. The number of snacks needed will be located on the snack calendar. The calendar will be sent home monthly and can be accessed on the Lillio App. The school provides water as a drink. All families will be required to sign a Safe Food Transportation policy. Food cannot be homemade. All fruit and vegetables MUST be pre-washed and pre-cut/ready to serve. You may send 2 healthy snack choices. They must be from 2 different food groups. You must email the school to notify us of what you will bring one week prior to your assigned day. We practice family-style dining. The children are encouraged to serve themselves. Children are encouraged to try foods but are never forced to eat foods they don't like. All food must be disposed of after snack time.

10.2 Suggestions for Nutritious Snacks

animal crackers	crackers	pretzels	granola bars	salami
fresh fruit	dried fruit	pudding	graham crackers	yogurt
applesauce	vegetables	cheese	trail mix	

10.3 Allergies/Special Diets

Children requiring special diets (i.e., allergies, food sensitivities, supplements, or other changes outside of state guidelines) must have an allergy/intolerance note from a doctor on file.

11. Safety Measures

11.1 Clothing & Shoes

Children learn through their play (sometimes messy) and by exploring the world around them. Please have your child dressed in clothing that is made to explore materials such as paints, sand, dirt, water, etc. We try to use washable materials, but we cannot guarantee that children will not get messy. Have children ready for active play with play clothing and shoes conducive to running, tumbling, and climbing. **Children should be dressed for outdoor activities.** Children will be spending LOTS of time outside. We ask that you send a spare change of clothes. Rainboots or “play shoes” are recommended. If it is light rain, they may still go outside. Check the weather for the morning temperatures. Many times it's often cooler in the morning than what the high temperature for the day may be. Students may be outside as early as 9 am.

For your child's safety, they should wear closed-toed, closed-backed shoes (no flip-flops or Crocs). Crocs are not a safe choice for school due to the slick soles. Please send your student with shoes that have soles with grip.

For the children in potty-training, please ensure they can independently maneuver buckles, buttons, and snaps. Clothing should be easy to pull up and down, especially during potty training.

11.2 Winter Clothing for Play

During the winter months, we will go outside if the wind chill is above 20°F. Send water-proof gloves, hats, boots, and snow pants in a **separate** water-proof bag. Please label items. Remember to take things out daily to dry. Even if there is no snow, please send items to help your student stay warm and dry. Check the weather for the morning temperatures. Many times it's often cooler in the morning than what the high temperature for the day may be. Students may be outside as early as 9 am.

11.3 Objects from Home

Students should do not bring items from home to school. If they do, they may be asked to keep it in their bag for the school day. Any object that a child brings to school that a teacher deems dangerous or otherwise inappropriate (toy guns, sharp or breakable items, knives, matches, unauthorized medications/drugs, etc.) will be held by the teacher and returned to the parents at pick up.

11.4 Emergency Contact Information

We must have contact telephone numbers for parents while children are in our care. At least two alternate emergency contact numbers other than a parent or legal guardian must be provided. We will always contact the parents first.

11.5 Child Protection Policy

TLC Early Learning and Trinity Lutheran Church have adopted a child-protection policy to help ensure the safety of your children. As part of this child protection policy,

- All teachers and assistants have passed a criminal background check.
- TLC is a drug and alcohol-free zone. Any adult who appears drunk, intoxicated, or otherwise under the influence of mind-altering or polluting substances must leave the premises immediately.
- Smoking/vaping is prohibited within the TLC facility and fifty (50) feet of the facility's entrance, as well as on the playground or any other outdoor area accessible to children during hours of operation.
- A dangerous weapon is a gun, knife, razor, or any other object, by the manner it is used or intended to be used, capable of inflicting bodily harm. Families, children, staff, or guests (other than law enforcement officers) possessing a dangerous weapon will not be permitted onto the premises.
 - In cases that involve a gun or any other weapon on our premises, the police will be called, and the individual(s) involved will immediately be removed from the premises. The policy applies to visible or concealed weapons.

- We are required by law to report all observations of child abuse or neglect cases to the appropriate state authorities if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It then becomes the agency's role to decide if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. TLC will cooperate fully with any investigation and maintain confidentiality concerning child abuse or neglect reports.

11.6 Safety Policy

TLC Early Learning has established the following precautions to help ensure your child's safety:

- No child will ever be left alone or unsupervised. Children will always be within sight and sound.
- Monthly fire drills are performed.
- During times of emergency, all staff will remain in the facility until the danger has passed.
- Staff are trained in CPR, First Aid, and Universal Precautions (UP).
- Only persons who are named as authorized will be able to pick up children.
- Doors are locked during the school hours.
- Safety and security film has been installed on all windows and doors.
- The Director is responsible for maintaining all interior and exterior surfaces, including walls, floors, ceilings, equipment, toys, and furnishings, in a safe condition, free of sharp points or jagged edges, splinters, protruding nails, or wires, loose or rusty parts or materials containing poisonous substances.

11.7 Indoor Safety Policy

Children's curious nature and inability to determine potential risks require their environment to be safe. Coupled with good supervision, children can freely explore and test their abilities. A safe environment reduces the risk of injury to children and staff.

- Staff will regularly do safety checks in the rooms.
- The Director will be notified of any hazards that the staff person cannot resolve.
- The Director will immediately address the hazards and act upon a resolution based on the issue's importance to make the correction as quickly as possible. The Director will ensure that the hazards are removed, made inaccessible, or repaired immediately to prevent injury.
- Staff will assist children with the cleanup of all activities before moving on to another to prevent injury.
- Equipment, materials, and furnishings will be sturdy, safe, and in good repair.
- All broken, damaged items will be removed to prevent injury.
- All toys mouthed during play will be thoroughly washed and disinfected before another child plays with the toy.
- Art materials will be non-toxic for general use.
- Electric fans, if used, will be inaccessible to children.
- The water heater temperature will not exceed 120 degrees F to prevent scalding unless a scald prevention device is installed to regulate the temperature at the handwashing sink.
- Electrical outlets will be inaccessible with the use of safety covers. Electric cords will be placed out of children's reach.
- Water play will be supervised and emptied after use.
- Exits will not be blocked to allow quick emergency evacuation.
- A well-stocked first-aid kit will be in each classroom for emergency use.
- All injuries will be documented on an Accident/Injury Report form and handled according to the injury policy.

11.8 Outdoor Safety Policy

Outdoor play is integral to a child’s physical development and provides learning opportunities different from the indoor environment. Adequate supervision in a safe environment allows children to explore more freely. Play in a safe outdoor environment promotes good health and reduces the risk of physical injury to children and staff.

Procedures and practices, including responsible person(s):

- The playground will be checked regularly. This includes checking for standing water, debris, glass, beehives/wasp nests, tripping hazards, other harmful materials, or damage to any equipment. Loose surface fill will be evenly distributed and removed from sidewalks/pathways.
- Staff will ensure that sidewalks and entrances are free of standing water, ice, and snow.
- The Director will be notified of any hazards and act upon a resolution based on the issue's importance to make the correction as quickly as possible. The Director will ensure that the hazards are removed, made inaccessible, or repaired immediately to prevent injury.
- Basic rules that all children and staff are aware of will be enforced to ensure safety on the playground.
- The playground equipment will be developmentally appropriate, in good repair, and installed according to the manufacturer’s instructions.
- The impact-absorbing ground surface will be installed below play equipment at the appropriate depth for the height of fall according to the type of surface fill in the Consumer Product Safety Commission Guidelines.
- Sandboxes will be covered when not in use.
- Helmets will be used for all riding toys with a wheelbase of more than 20”. Helmets will meet CPSC or American Safety for Testing Materials guidelines.
- Riding toys will be capable of being steered, sized appropriately for the child, have a low center of gravity, and be in good condition and free of sharp edges and protrusions.
- Shaded areas are provided to protect against overexposure to heat and sun.
- Parents must dress their children appropriately for outdoor play every day. Outdoor time may not occur or be shortened due to weather conditions. This includes a wind chill at or below 20 degrees F and a heat index at or above 90 degrees F, as the National Weather Service identified. The Director will be responsible for determining if any outdoor play limitations need to be considered.
- A first aid kit will be taken out on the playground. Special medication will be available for children with asthma, bee allergies, or other conditions that may require immediate treatment.
- The Director will inspect the playground regularly.
- All injuries occurring during outdoor play will be documented on an Accident/Incident report.
- The Director and staff will regularly evaluate a Risk Assessment for outside activities

11.9 Child/ Staff Classroom Ratios

Age of Youngest Child in Group	Max number of children supervised by one caregiver
2 years	8
30-36 months	9
3 years	11
4 years	13
5 years	17

12. Health Policies

12.1 Health History

All children are required to have a physical for enrollment. This must be completed and signed by a physician and on file within 30 days of school starting. Currently, vaccinations or a religious exemption form need to be submitted for the student’s file yearly. Each child must have a current and accurate Enrollment form on file with the school detailing their

personal health information, including allergies, diet restrictions, medications, illnesses, and disabilities. TLC Early Learning is not responsible for any incorrect information it may receive concerning a child's health.

12.2 Medications

If your child must receive prescription medication while at school, the parent must drop the medication off with the Director in its original container. Original containers should be placed in Ziploc bags. A "Medication Authorization Form" must be completed for all medication administered during school hours. All medication must have a doctor's note to be administered at the school. No over-the-counter medication brought from home will be administered without a doctor's note.

12.3 Preventative Products

Signing the "Family Handbook acknowledgment" permits TLC to use sunscreen, insect repellent, A & D ointment, or petroleum jelly as needed. You may also send these items from home to be applied as needed.

12.4 Child/Staff Illness

Our priority at TLC is to provide all children with a healthy, safe learning environment. Children or staff members will be sent home as soon as possible if any of the following is experienced: an illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities (as determined by the staff); an illness results in a greater need for care than the staff can reasonably provide without compromising the health or safety of other children in the classroom, or a child is experiencing any of the following conditions:

- Fever of 100.4 or greater, until 24 hours symptom-free without fever-reducing medication.
- Signs/symptoms of severe illness: including lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, inexplicable irritability or persistent crying, difficulty breathing, and wheezing
- Nasal discharge other than clear.
- Diarrhea.
- Vomiting.
- Blood in stools.
- Persistent abdominal pain.
- Mouth sores, unless a health care professional determines the sores are not contagious.
- Rash does not indicate a communicable disease until a physician determines these symptoms.
- Pink eye (conjunctivitis) until the treatment has been initiated for 24 hours.
- Head lice from the end of the day until after treatment.
- Hand, foot, and mouth until sores have dried and crusted (usually six days).
- Strep throat until 24 hours after initial antibiotic treatment and cessation of fever.
- Flu or COVID symptoms

A child who becomes ill at TLC must be removed from the classroom to limit exposure of other children to infectious diseases. A sick child will be sent to the office and remain under the supervision of the Director until the child is picked up. If a parent cannot be reached, the individuals listed as emergency contacts/authorized persons on the Authorization and Consent Form will be called.

TLC reserves the right to make the final determination of exclusion due to illness.

Parents must contact TLC when their child will not be in attendance due to illness or other reasons (i.e., doctor appointments, dentist, etc.)

If your child has asthma or any other underlying health plan, please seek a "health action plan" from your child's doctor that we can implement at school if needed.

A qualified substitute will be available if your child's regular teacher is unavailable or becomes ill during the day.

13. Emergency Procedures

13.1 Fire

Monthly fire drills will be conducted. Children will be evacuated out of the nearest exit. In an actual fire or emergency, parents will be contacted immediately and will pick their children up. Students and staff will go to the pastor's home on the church's north side.

13.2 Lockdown/Shelter in Place

In the event there is a threat within the community by a person or persons to commit harm, TLC Early Learning will go into lockdown. The TLC Early Learning entrance doors will be locked along with classrooms and all interior access points of entrance to the church building. Children will only be released to parents or authorized adults when it is safe to leave the building.

13.3 Tornado/Severe Weather

During a tornado warning during school hours, all children will be evacuated from the classroom and proceed to the women's restroom, school office/library, and school restroom. All doors will remain closed until staff members receive the "all clear" from the Director that weather conditions have improved, and children may return to the classroom. All children must immediately return indoors when lightning is observed.

13.4 Power Failure

The school has enough light and should not be impacted during a power outage. Staff members and children should remain in the classroom and, if possible, proceed with activities as usual or may go to the outdoor playground until power resumes. Parents will be contacted to arrange early pick-up if the building is deemed too cold for the children to remain at school.

14. Parent Involvement

14.1 Parent Volunteers

Each family is a child's first teacher. We value families as partners in the growth and development of children in our program. We encourage parents and other family members to be involved in the program, visit children's classrooms, participate in events, and provide feedback on the program. We offer a variety of ways in which families can participate in helping us establish and reach our program goals. Volunteer forms will be handed out at the beginning of the year.

14.2 Parent Visitation

Parents are always encouraged to visit their child(ren)'s classroom. You must sign in at the Director's office and receive a "visitor" badge. However, we recommend parents avoid visiting the classroom during the first few weeks of a new school year as the children need time to adjust to their classroom environment.

14.3 Family Events

Throughout the year TLC will host family nights (For example: Fall Family Night, Munchies with Moms, Desserts with Dudes, Spring Family Night, Grandparents Day) The purpose of these events is for families to interact with their children and learn together through play, observation, exploration, and investigation. We also encourage families to interact with others.

14.4 Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are held in the spring for Scouts and Explorers students. Teachers or parents/guardians may request conferences as needed throughout the year.

14.5 TLC Early Learning Parent Committee

The TLC Early Learning Parent Committee is open to all parents with children enrolled in TLC Early Learning. The committee aims to support and encourage the program staff and help raise funds for student scholarships and school needs. Parents undertake various roles voluntarily. The Director is also invited to meetings and is a liaison between staff and the parent committee.

A Chair and Vice Chair are appointed each spring for the next school year. The Chair is responsible for organizing and setting the meeting agenda, recording the minutes, ensuring the committee knows the financial position, and supporting committee members in completing work. The Vice-Chair supports the Chair and anticipates moving to the Chair position in a future year.

14.6 Filing Complaints

If at any point you have a complaint against TLC Early Learning or one of its employees, the following procedures should be observed:

1. Address your concern directly to that individual and try to resolve the issue.
2. If the issue remains unresolved, please detail your complaint in writing and contact the Early Learning Director or a board member for a conference.
3. **Please do not post complaints on social media.** We ask that all complaints be handled professionally.

15. Trinity Lutheran Church & TLC Early Learning Relationship

15.1 School Church Partnership

The TLC Early Learning program is an outreach ministry of Trinity Lutheran Church in Auburn, Indiana. The church and school will collaborate to provide your children with a quality Christian early learning education. Trinity invites you to join their church family if you have not found a church home. Service times are posted on our sign-in in front of the church and on the church website.

15.2 TLC Early Learning Board of Directors

The TLC Early Learning Board of Directors meets regularly to support the school and its mission. They guide the Early Learning Director, who reports to the board. The board reviews the financials, curriculum, policies, procedures, and sets tuition rates.

2025-2026 Board Members

Jessica Pickard – Chair
Pastor Jon Nack

Connie Fullerton

Cindy Schmacher

TEACHER'S BEST ADVICE

1. *Be on time to bring your child to school. A child feels uncomfortable and left out when entering a classroom late.*
2. *LET'S COMMUNICATE: Read all notes and emails carefully to inform you of dates, study trips, and school happenings. We don't want you to miss out on anything.*
3. *You must check your child's tote bag after every class day for notes and projects.*

****All information about a child's admission, health, family, or discharge is kept confidential between the Parents or Legal Guardian and the staff of TLC Early Learning.**