



Handbook

2020-2021



Lititz Area Mennonite School

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Our Core Values

- **Christ is our Center**

Jesus Christ is the Son of God, gracious Savior, and loving Master. His power enables us to serve Him, and His perfect life is our model for character, thought, speech, and action.

(John 1:3-4) -- "Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made. In Him was life, and that life was the light of men."

- **The Bible is our Belief**

We believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God, accepting it as truth, and following its instruction as the authority on holy living.

(2 Timothy 3:16-17) -- "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

- **Prayer is our Posture**

Talking with God is essential because we need His wisdom, guidance, and provision. He is always faithful to lead us and meet our needs as we humbly trust and delight in Him.

(Matthew 7:7) -- "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."

- **Excellence is our Expectation**

We strive for the highest standards of quality, value, and creativity in our educational experience, and encourage this wholehearted effort from all, to the glory of God.

(Ephesians 6:7) -- "Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men,"

- **Community is our Commitment**

Genuinely loving God and one another is the foundation of our relationships. In this community of honesty and trust, we share our lives and support each other in family unity.

(Mark 12:30-31) -- "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself."

- **Serving is our Strength**

God gives each person varied gifts of time, talent, and treasure. Volunteering to share these gifts is necessary for the life and strength of this community.

(1 Peter 4:10) -- "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms."

- **Peacemaking is our Practice**

In accordance with our Anabaptist heritage, in gentle humility we endeavor to live honorably and above reproach, preferring and helping others, and seeking to bring mercy, peace, and justice in all we do.

(Micah 6:8) -- "He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of



you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

Section 1

Introduction

Welcome to the Pre-Kindergarten experience at LAMS! We are excited to offer you a high quality, Biblically based curriculum that will enhance your preschooler's natural desire to learn and discover.

The Little LAMS Pre-K program is designed to promote your child's knowledge and skills in all developmental areas—spiritual, cognitive, social/emotional, physical, and aesthetic—and to establish a foundation for lifelong learning. Our program reflects the belief that children are active learners. They build meaning and understanding through full participation in their learning environments. Our child-centered program combines high expectations for each child with respect for individual development.

This handbook gives you an overview of the goals, philosophy, and procedures in our Pre-Kindergarten program. You will want to keep this booklet for reference throughout the school year. If you have further questions or concerns, please feel free to call or set up an appointment with the LAMS administrator or the classroom teacher.

LAMS Vision

To help equip each student with the knowledge and skills necessary for purposeful Christian living.

Christian education at LAMS integrates faith with human experience by recognizing God, in Jesus Christ, as the creator and sustainer of all life. Our focus as educators and parents is on equipping our children with skills and understanding to become all God wants them to be. To accomplish this we focus on:

- High educational standards
- Faculty that is dedicated, trained and experienced
- Careful attention to the needs of each student
- A strong sense of community

We come alongside family and church in building up a generation of young men and women of quality character for the ultimate goal of preparing them for the kingdom of God.

Our Mission

To provide a Pre-K to grade 8 Christ-centered education within an Anabaptist framework to Christian families in our geographic area. Our academic program meets a variety of student needs in an environment that values the whole person.

LAMS began its service to the community in 1978. We are fully accredited by the Commission on Elementary Schools of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (CES/MSA). We are also affiliated with the Lancaster Area Council of Mennonite Schools (LACMS), Mennonite Schools Council (MSC), and the Mid-Atlantic Christian Schools Association (MACSA).

"Love...always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres". 1 Cor. 13:6-7

Pre-K Learning Environment

The Little LAMS Pre-Kindergarten program provides a learning environment that affords each child opportunities to develop:

- ❖ spiritually through Bible-based lessons, scripture memory, and prayer
- ❖ self-confidence through successful learning experiences
- ❖ responsibility for one's own behavior
- ❖ positive attitudes toward learning
- ❖ a sense of responsibility for completing assigned tasks
- ❖ the ability to share and cooperate with others
- ❖ language / literacy skills and strategies
- ❖ mathematical thinking about patterns and relationships, order and predictability, and logic and meaning
- ❖ the ability to observe, explore, discover, predict, and solve problems through concrete learning experiences
- ❖ an understanding of the many aspects of their cultural and environmental world
- ❖ health-promoting habits and routines
- ❖ physically through use of large and small muscle activities
- ❖ aesthetic expression and appreciation through art, music and dramatic play
- ❖ the natural curiosity young children use to make sense of their world
- ❖ the early concepts and skills that build the foundation for the LAMS Kindergarten curriculum and general preparedness for Kindergarten

Section 2

Operational Procedures

Arrival and Dismissal



Pre-K will begin at 9:00am and end at 12:00pm. Please be prompt when dropping off and picking up.

Drop-offs and pick-ups will be at the front of the school. You may drop your child off without getting out of your car and someone will be at the door to greet him/her and escort him/her to the classroom. At the end of the session, your child will be brought to the drop-off door. You are also welcome to walk your child to the classroom. The classroom door will be opened five minutes prior to the start of the session.

Attendance/Absence

Consistent attendance is important to your child's developmental learning. If your child is going to be absent for the day, please call the school office or email the teacher. Refunds are not given for absences.



Changes in Means of Transportation

At the beginning of the school year, parents will be asked to complete a form listing the names and contact information for individuals who are authorized to pick up their child and the days those individuals are scheduled to pick up. For the protection of the child, the teacher must be notified if there is a change in the way your child goes home from school. Please use our "Note to School Pad" enclosed in the packet received on the first day of school explaining any transportation changes. In the event of a last minute change, call the school office as soon as possible. A form of identification will need to be shown by anyone picking up your child. When completing the emergency cards, please list the names of individuals that you authorize to pick up your child.

Snack

Parents are asked to pack a snack for their child each day.

We also ask that each child bring a filled water bottle to Pre-K each day. They will keep them in their cubbies and get them out at snack time. They may also go to their cubby for a drink at any time during the session. Please try to keep snacks healthy. Fresh fruits and veggies are always a wonderful idea, such as carrot, cucumber, celery slices or apple, orange, pear slices, etc. Other ideas include raisins, pretzels, animal crackers, etc. Please avoid anything sugary like cookies, cake, etc... we'll save those sweet treats for special times like parties and birthday celebrations. While we are not a peanut free school, when a student within a class has a severe allergy accommodations may be necessary.

Birthdays

Children are invited to celebrate their birthday with their friends at school by bringing in a special treat for our snack time. We will plan to celebrate your child's birthday as close to the actual date as possible. Summer birthdays will be celebrated according to the date of your child's 'Half Birthday'. Please do not distribute birthday party invitations at school.

Pre-K Dress Standards

Pre-K students are not required to wear a uniform, but will be expected to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Clothing and shoes shall be comfortable for active participation in class and shall be neat and modest in appearance. No holes.
- Clothing shall not contain any offensive words, logos or messages that are not in keeping with the Anabaptist traditions/beliefs of LAMS.
- All clothing shall be modest in all ways (necklines, lengths, non-clinging, no sheer, sleeveless, or shoulderless blouses).
- No flip flops, sandals or shoes without an enclosed heel. Sneakers are preferred.
- Girls wearing skirts or dresses shall be required to wear shorts or leggings under them.
- No jewelry.

Appropriate Clothing for School

Pre-Kindergarten children need to wear clothing and shoes which allow for easy movement. It is advisable that your child dress in clothing that is easily washed since much time is spent painting, cooking, and sitting on the floor. Clothing should be easy for your child to remove for bathroom purposes.

Outdoor play is an important part of the Pre-Kindergarten program. Each playtime will be spent outside unless it is raining or extremely cold. Please see that your child's clothing is appropriate for the weather.

Change of Clothing

Occasionally, accidents do happen. For this reason, please send a change of clothing (shirt, underwear, pants, and socks) to school to keep in your child's cubby. Please make sure it is appropriate for the current season.

Backpack

Your child needs to bring a school bag or backpack every day. Please choose a backpack that is large enough to carry a 9x12 inch size folder and a large library book.

- Please write your child's name on the backpack.
- We discourage students bringing toys from home to school.
- Please empty your child's backpack every day.
- For children's safety, backpacks with wheels are discouraged.



Snow Delays

In the event of a **one hour delay** for LAMS, we will have '**Modified Pre-K**' which will mean a start time of **9:30am and finish at 12noon**. In the event of a **two hour delay**, **Pre-K will be in session from 10:30am – 12:30pm**. And of course, if LAMS is cancelled, we are too.

Emergency Preparedness

LAMS and Little LAMS Pre-K have emergency procedures in place for the following: extreme weather, fire, and intruder. During any emergency situation, our first priority is the safety and welfare of all children, staff, and visitors to the building. If you are visiting our classroom or the school building, you are required to sign-in and sign-out at the school office. This allows us to account for all people in the building in the event of an emergency.

School Pictures

School pictures are taken each year as a service to the family and to document our Pre-K year in the LAMS yearbook. All children will be photographed with no obligation to make a purchase.

Field Trips

Little LAMS field trip procedure is as follows:

1. The class will meet at the determined field trip location at the designated time.
2. Parents will be responsible for getting their child to the field trip location or for setting up carpooling with other families.
3. Parents will be responsible for picking up their child at the field trip location or for setting up carpooling for their child.

Section 3

School Calendar

Pre-K Orientation

Pre-K Orientation is a one-hour introduction to the classroom and teacher. It is held for all registered students and their parents on a morning prior to the opening day of Pre-K and will be announced via email about a month before school starts.

First Day

The first day differs according to which class your child is in. Please refer to the LAMS school calendar or website for your child's first day.

Vacation Dates

Little LAMS Pre-K will follow the operating schedule of LAMS with a few exceptions. The Pre-K will be closed on the LAMS Trash-A-Thon day in October and for 3-5 days in March or April for Kindergarten screening.

Field Trips

Field trips are scheduled to correspond with themes and concepts that are taught in the classroom. We will plan to take at least two field trips during the school year – one in fall and one in spring. Parents are responsible for transporting their child to and from the field trip or arranging transportation in advance for their child.

Grandparents' Day

Each October, LAMS designates a day for grandparents to come and visit the school. All grades, including Pre-K, participate in a special program performing songs and poems to honor grandparents. Grandparents are then invited to visit the classroom and there is an early dismissal at 11:30am when children are encouraged to "take their grandparents out for lunch." All Pre-K classes will be invited to come and participate in this special day.

Donuts with Dads and Muffins with Moms

Pre-K will have the opportunity to participate in the LAMS Donuts with Dads and Muffins with Moms events.



Year-End Celebration

On your child's last day of Pre-K, we will plan to have a special Year-End Celebration. It will include a short program followed by a time of refreshments, fellowship, and good-byes. Family and friends of our preschoolers are invited to join us for this special event. It will be held at approximately 11am and last for about one hour. Children come to school at 9:00am on that day.



Section 4

Curriculum

Curriculum Goals

- To develop a growing respect and love for God and His Word.
- To build connections between Bible teachings and other academic areas of learning.
- To expound upon your child's sense of awe and wonder about how his/her world works.
- To hear, recognize, reproduce, and manipulate the sounds of language in a playful manner.
- To introduce the names and sounds of letters in a meaningful way.
- To develop basic math concepts using manipulatives – a 'hands on' process.
- To instill an overall love for learning through enjoyable, developmentally appropriate experiences.



An Overview of the Lessons

There are a total of 38 planned weekly themes in the Joyful Heart Bible and Rhyme Curriculum. Each weekly theme is based on a Bible story. A nursery rhyme was chosen to correspond with each Biblical text. Phonemic awareness, Bible memorization, a simple science concept, cooking, songs and movement, and letter recognition and sounds are incorporated into each set of weekly lesson plans. Review weeks are to review all aspects of the curriculum and to build in opportunities to work with seasonal concepts and activities.

(Curriculum written by Michelle Hubbard, certified early education teacher.)

A Typical Day

Welcome/Arrival: Children are welcomed and then independently select activities as they arrive in the classroom.

Circle Time: Everyone comes together to hear of the day's activities and make choices for work time.

Work Time: Children choose from activities in the centers which include dramatic play, table toys, blocks, art, sensory table, and structured learning activities. Learning is child-centered through play and guided activities facilitated by the staff. Snack is part of this component of the day and provided by the parents.



Small Group Instruction: Children receive intentional instruction on targeted objectives in a small group setting. Students are taught language, literacy, and mathematic concepts and skills through a variety of instructional strategies.

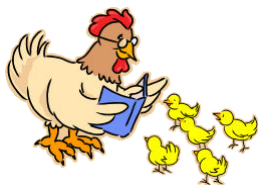
Clean Up: Children learn when it is time to stop an activity, put away toys and materials, and cooperate with others.



Snack Time: Children share a snack provided by parents. This provides an opportunity to talk with other children, enjoy a healthy snack and learn basic table manners.

Outdoor Learning/Activity Room: Energetic outdoor play provides opportunities for children to develop large muscles, to engage in social interactions, and to experience nature. Children also learn self-management by following rules and safety guidelines. An indoor gym is available for Pre-K use on days when weather prevents us from going outside.

Music/Movement: Children express themselves through singing and movement and by playing simple instruments.



Story Time: Teachers read to children in both large and small groups. Reading enhances listening comprehension, stimulates thought-provoking questions and conversation, and develops concepts of print and vocabulary.

Dismissal: Children are encouraged to review the day's events and independently collect their belongings.

Learning Centers

The Little LAMS Pre-Kindergarten uses the center approach to learning. Centers are areas with educational materials that provide opportunities for different types of learning during Work Time.

In the **CONSTRUCTION/BLOCK CENTER** children:

- develop eye-hand coordination
- explore spatial relationships
- compare sizes and shapes
- develop large and small muscle coordination
- learn how to work and plan together
- become aware of organizing and measuring
- become aware of problem-solving techniques

In the **ART CENTER** children learn:

- creativeness through planning, designing, and constructing an idea
- experimentation with color, shapes, sizes, various textures, and configurations
- eye-hand coordination and better fine-muscle control for later writing skills
- respect for the artistic expressions of others
- to develop their visual and tactile skills

At the **BOOK AND WRITING CENTER** children learn:

- to respect and care for books
- to imagine events and situations
- storytelling and dictating stories
- an interest in words and books
- sequencing of pictures
- the sequence of a story
- left-to-right progression
- the interpretation of pictures and details of pictures

In the **HOUSEKEEPING/DRAMATIC PLAY CENTER** children:

- have the opportunity to develop self-confidence through role-playing
- can act out familiar situations, assume family roles, and work out problems and concerns
- develop muscle coordination, oral language skills, and math readiness

At the **SENSORY TABLE** children learn:

- to measure
- to make comparisons
- eye-hand coordination
- oral language by interaction with peers
- role playing
- to clean up and manage materials
- to observe how various substances react to water

In the **PUZZLES** and **MANIPULATIVE CENTER** children learn:

- to develop perceptual discrimination by shape, size, color, directions, detail, and design
- to practice eye-hand coordination
- to practice problem-solving skills
- to develop story-telling skills
- to develop readiness and explore basic concepts in a variety of curriculum areas
- to experience a sense of achievement and develop self-confidence
- to develop concentration skills



Large Motor Play

When weather permits, the outside playground is our first choice for large motor play. Please make sure your child is dressed appropriately for the season. If we are not able to go outside, the Pre-K has use of the school's Gym 2.



Library

The Pre-K children will visit the library once a week to hear a story and check out a book. After returning the books on their scheduled library day, children may check out a new book.

Discipline

Our ultimate goal is to support parents in teaching their children to submit to the will of God and develop Christ-like character. We strive to maintain an orderly Pre-K classroom where children exhibit respect for their teacher, friends, and themselves. Guidelines are established at the beginning of the year and enforced with positive feedback as much as possible. Preschool age children are generally very eager to please and reinforcing their appropriate behaviors is usually very effective. However, there are always times when this isn't enough. In the event that a child is not responding appropriately, he/she will face a consequence for the behavior.

Discipline Procedure:

- Step 1** - Teacher establishes classroom expectations and proper student behaviors in a clear and age-appropriate manner.
- Step 2** - The teacher will use non-verbal communication, signals, and proximity to redirect a child's behavior.
- Step 3** - Verbal communication, calling the child's name is used to redirect the behavior.
- Step 4** – The child will be spoken to individually about misbehavior and given alternate ways to solve the problem.
- Step 5** – If the behavior does not change, the child will be removed from the activity and will sit for a few minutes.
- Step 6** – If the child does not stop the negative behavior, the child will be removed from the classroom to speak to the administrator. Parents will be notified at pick-up that this step was taken and parents will be provided with suggestions in problem-solving the misbehavior.

Section 5

Parent-Teacher Communication

Conferences

All parents will meet with the teacher in mid-November on the designated days for the LAMS Parent/Teacher Conferences. There will be an option for an additional conference near the end of the school year to discuss Kindergarten readiness. The conference is an opportunity to report your child's progress and for the teacher and the parents to get acquainted. The teacher and parent discuss how they can work together to enable the child to have a successful school year.



Communication with Teacher

Your child will receive a Communication Folder at the beginning of the year. Any information from school will be sent home in this folder and any notes from home should be sent to school in the folder. They will be checked daily at school and we ask that you please check the folders every day when your child comes home. You are also welcome to contact the teacher by a phone call before or after Pre-K hours or via email.

Emergency/Change of Pick-Up

People who are permitted to pick up your child at the end of the day or in emergency situations must be listed on the Child Information Sheet at the beginning of the year. If someone who is not on your list needs to pick up your child, a note with the person's name, phone number, and your signature must be sent in your child's communication folder and will be given to the school office. In emergencies when you cannot send a note, please make a phone call to the school office.

Newsletter

A weekly Pre-K newsletter will come home in your child's Communication Folder. It will inform you of what we will be covering the following week as well as any additional information regarding special events, etc.

Section 6

Health Information

Illness/Health Policies

We strive to maintain a healthy, clean and safe environment for all children. If your child should exhibit any of the following illnesses, please do not send your child to school.

- Fever, vomiting, or diarrhea within the past 24 hours
- Persistent runny nose
- Green mucous discharge from the nose
- Persistent coughing
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Any suspicious rash which may be communicable



A child may return to Pre-K after:

- 24 hours with no fever
- 24 hours with no vomiting
- 24 hours with no diarrhea

Medication

No medication will be dispensed to Pre-K students by LAMS staff. Please ask your doctor to prescribe medication that can be administered before and after school hours. If this is not possible, only parents or legal guardians may come to the school to administer medication to the child.

The only medication kept on-site is doctor-prescribed EPI Pens. EPI Pens must be in their original container with the prescription attached and will be administered in emergencies as detailed on the allergy profile provided by the parent and kept on file.

Unintentional Injury

We will take every precaution possible to prevent injury from occurring in the classroom, on the playground, or in the gym, but cannot guarantee that no injuries will occur. When a minor injury occurs, we will administer first aid and fill out an incident report. Parents will be notified of the injury when they pick up their child.

If your child should incur a serious injury, we will administer first aid and use the emergency information form to immediately contact the person listed on the emergency contact form. If emergency services are needed, 911 will also be called. A staff member will accompany your child to the hospital until family or friends arrive.





Ways for Parents to Support Learning

- Go to the library.
- Read stories daily.
- Go to the park or explore your backyard.
- Do simple cooking projects with your child.
- Give your child opportunities to help you at home.
- Play with your child.
- Limit TV and video games.
- Teach your child to take good care of toys and put them away.
- Encourage good health habits (washing hands with soap, proper use of tissue, brushing teeth, etc.)
- Eat healthy foods.
- Schedule an appropriate bedtime.
- Invite a friend to play.
- Display your child's work.
- Listen to and talk with your child.
- Provide writing materials (crayons, markers, pencils, paper, cards.)
- Show your child how you write to create lists and notes.
- Encourage exploration of different art media (paint, Play-Doh, tissue paper, construction paper, glue, and scissors.)