

Little Friends Preschool Family Handbook



[2023-2024]

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Introduction

Mount Bethel Church

1270 Belvidere Corner Road
Mt. Bethel, PA 18343
570-897-7142 [church office]
[Church website](#)



Staff

Lead Pastor	Pastor Chris Priestaf
Associate Pastor	Pastor Dan Christenson
Director of Youth Ministries	Andrew Little
Director of Music Ministry	Rachel Roy
Director of Children's Ministry	Dr. Kathy Hontz

Programs

Sunday Worship Services at 8:30 am and 11:00 am
Sunday School 10:00 am – 10:45 am [Sept – May]
Children's Church [PreK – 2nd grade] during 11:00 am service
Club 119:11, Journey 45 and Base Camp – Wednesdays after school [Sept – May]
Junior Choir – Wednesdays 4:30 pm – 5:00 pm [Sept – May]

Little Friends Preschool

570-897-7797 [school office]
littlefriends@mountbethelchurch.org



History

LFP is a ministry of the Mount Bethel Church and was established as a service to the families and children of this community. The school grew from a sincere love for children and has been serving the community since 1990. Our goal is to provide an environment where preschool children can feel safe, loved and accepted. We want them to experience school as a great place to be and realize learning is fun! LFP provides a developmentally appropriate environment where children can thrive as they learn to work, play and grow together.

Objective

We feel a child's first school experience ought to be filled with positive memories and lasting value. We provide a Christian atmosphere of respect and loving appreciation for each person and the wonders of God's world. Each child is encouraged to progress at his/her own pace while enjoying enriching experiences, gaining self-discipline and learning to make worthwhile choices.

Admission

We believe that every child is a precious gift from God. Admission to our school is not based on faith, gender, race or color. Children with special needs may be enrolled based on our ability to meet their physical, social and emotional needs. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis with a review during the probationary period and several periodic reviews during the academic year to ensure we are able to continue to meet their needs.



Enrollment Process

- **APPLICATION:** Apply to program on [Mt Bethel Church Little Friends Preschool](#)
- **INVITATION:** Receive invitation to register sent via email [fillable PDF] or USPS [form]
- **REGISTRATION:** Register for program following the required process

✓ Application

Applications for LFP program are found on [Mt Bethel Church Little Friends Preschool](#). After the application has been reviewed by the LFP staff, an invitation for registration or notification of wait list position will be sent to the family. Space is limited and all registrations are taken on a first come, first served basis. It is highly recommended that families complete the registration process to secure a spot as soon as possible. **The space is not secure until the registration fee and forms are received by the LFP staff.**

✓ Registration

- (1) Return the registration form provided via the invitation
- (2) Send copy of the child's birth certificate
- (3) Submit the \$50 non-refundable registration fee

Registration Requirements

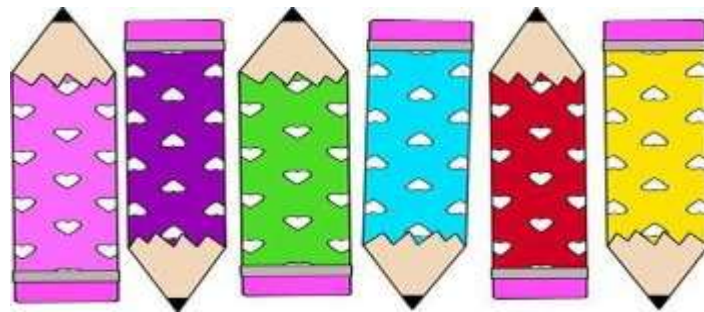
Age: We follow the Bangor Area School District's schedule and criteria for establishing our enrollment ages. The BASD's current eligibility for kindergarten includes children who have turned 5 on or before 28 August 2023. Eligibility for the LFP's program based on these criteria would be turns 3 on or before 28 August 2023 [eligible for the 3-year-old program]; turns 4 on or before 28 August 2023 [eligible for the 4-year-old program].

We recognize that surrounding school districts, cyber and homeschool programs may have different eligibility requirements. We are willing to consider the eligibility requirements of the school your child will attend for kindergarten. These will be handled on a case-by-case basis at the application stage of registration.

Toilet Trained: The child must be completely toilet trained and able to use the facilities on his/her own. Children will always be accompanied by the teacher or assistant teacher to the door of the restroom. However, a teacher will not enter the room until the child is fully dressed and ready to wash hands at the sink. An extra set of clothing will be required at the beginning of the year and used in case of an accident; however, a child must be able to change independently. The parent will be called for toileting accidents that need assistance.

Before School Starts

- First month's tuition payment
- Authorization for Emergency Medical Care
- Physical Examination – Medical History [completed by child's doctor, first year students only]
- Photo release form
- Acknowledgement of receiving/reading LFP Family Handbook



Tuition

Fees:

- 3-year-old program \$160 per month [Sept – May]
- 4-year-old program \$235 per month [Sept – May]

Discounts:

- MBC members 10% discount each month
- Multiple child discount 25% discount each month
[discount applied to youngest child]

Payment:

- Due 1st of the month
- Payment after 5th of month is considered late
- Late fee of \$20.00

Payment Options:

- Online [["Give online" tab](#)]
- Cash or check given to the church office
- Returned check fee \$40.00

Parents

Contact School

Open communication with our parents is very important to us. If you have a question, concern or item that you feel is important to share with us, you may reach out in any of the following ways.

Speak with us: Feel free to share a short word of communication during the drop off process. However, please keep in mind that we are focused on a smooth transition for all of the children so we cannot dedicate a substantial amount of time for discussions at that time.

Call: You may call the LFP office at [570-897-7797]. Remember that from 8:45am – 12:15 pm we are busy with school activities and will be unable to take your call. Feel free to leave a message and we will get back to you as soon as possible. If you need to communicate an urgent message that needs to be brought to our attention, call the church office [570-897-7142] and they will get in touch with us.

Note: Feel free to leave us a note when you drop-off your child. If required, a response to the communication will be via email or phone call after school.

Email: One of the best ways to communicate with us regarding detailed content or something that you would like us to know about for the future is via email. Every attempt will be made to respond to your email within a 24-hour period during the academic school week. You may email us at littlefriends@mountbethelchurch.org.

Parent Communication

We highly value a strong home-school connection. We believe we are partnering with your call to parent your children, who are gifted from the Lord to be under your care. We want to provide support for families of young children and will periodically provide resources to support Christian families. In addition, we will communicate via:

- Monthly newsletters and calendars
- FaceBook updates [be sure to follow us – rest assured at no time will the faces of the children be included on our FB page]
- Parent bulletin board notices
- Email communication

We also have several other ways for parents to participate in our school community:

- Various programs offered throughout the year to which parents and families are invited [Art Festival, Graduation]
- Parent-Teacher Conferences [fall and spring]
- Parent Orientation Night [beginning of school year]
- Parent readers

Parent Readers

Throughout the year parents will have an opportunity to sign up to read to the class. The special reading will occur at the end of class, within the final 10-15 minutes of the day. That will provide an opportunity for a parent to volunteer and then be available for child pick up. If you are interested, please be sure to sign up when the volunteer sheet is made available.

Room Parents

Extra hands in the classroom during several key events throughout the year is an asset to our program. The opportunity to sign up for a room parent position will be provided during the fall orientation. We would like to have two (2) room parents available for each class and will divide the year into two volunteer sessions [Sept – Dec] and [Jan – May]. We will extend the offer to sign up for one session to all families and ask that you only sign up for one slot in one session. Should there be a need within the following session, we will ask you to consider providing support during that session as well.

Room parents will help with snack preparation, distribution, clean-up, general set up and clean up after each class party. There may also be other opportunities to lend support and those will be communicated directly to the room parents as the need arises.

Room parents must:

- Have a background clearance check [which can be completed through MBC]
- Be available for the entire designated time [which could be an entire class period]
- Please leave other children with a babysitter in order to be fully available in the classroom

Medical

Health Information

A Universal Child Health Form (completed and signed by your physician) and a current immunization schedule must be submitted to LFP prior to the start of the school year.

Medicine Policy

We cannot dispense medication at school. However, if your child has severe allergies or medical condition that requires special attention, you must inform us. We will need to be aware of any need for special items such as an Epi Pen or inhaler. We have staff trained in EpiPen administration, First Aid and CPR for children.



Sick Policy

In order to maintain a healthy environment and prevent the spread of illness among children and staff, we ask that you do not bring your child to school if he/she is showing signs of an illness: colored discharge from nose or ears, coughing, diarrhea, fever, lethargy, rapid breathing, red eyes with discharge, shingles, stiff neck, sore throat [not due to allergies or post-nasal drip], swollen joints, unidentified skin rash, visibly enlarged lymph glands or weeping-bleeding skin lesions.

If your student exhibits Covid-like symptoms:

1. We encourage the family to consider using a COVID-19 test.
 - a. If the COVID test is negative the child may return to school as soon as they feel up to it, assuming they are fever-free for 24 hours.
 - b. If the COVID test is positive the child must quarantine until symptoms begin to improve and the individual is fever-free for 24 hours.
2. If the family does not test a symptomatic child for COVID-19, we need to operate under the assumption that the child is COVID positive by following the protocol in [1b].
3. This plan is subject to change in the event the county health department deems it necessary to change protocol.

Return to School After Illness:

Children who have pin worm or head lice will be required to bring a doctor's note before returning to school.

In the event of other illnesses, your child may return to school if he/she has been fever free and/or free of illness for the last 24 hours.

If your child develops an illness at school, we will separate him/her from the group [with a teacher staying with the child] and call the parent to come and pick up the child immediately. It is important that you keep your emergency contact numbers up to date.

Safety

Fire Drills

Once a month we will conduct a fire drill with each class. All children will be taught how and where to exit the building and are always accompanied by staff members.



In the event of a real emergency, we will evacuate the building to the lower parking lot and move as far away from the building as possible.

Each parent is asked to complete an Emergency Contact sheet for their child and keep LFP advised of any changes during the school year. These sheets will be used as part of our Emergency Evacuation Procedures.

Safety & Security

Before/After School:

We consider the children and their safety to be our responsibility as soon as they enter the preschool room and the parents' responsibility before and after school. Please keep your children with you at all times and please do not allow them to enter or exit the building ahead of you.

Please support our work to encourage your children to WALK and NOT RUN on the sidewalk, parking lot and on the stairs.

Locked Door:

The church door will be opened by a LFP teacher at 8:45 am and locked at 9:15 am. If you wish to gain entrance to the building after 9:15 am you will need to go to the top level of the church and buzz in for the church secretary to open entry. You will need to sign-in on a LFP clipboard, in the church office, once you enter the building before heading downstairs. This is a safety and security issue to account for each person entering through the upstairs of the building.

Security Cameras:

Security cameras are located outside the church building, inside the church foyer, hallways and in the classroom. These provide an extra measure of safety assurance for all those that enter the building.

Transportation:

Pennsylvania law requires all children to be in proper car seats or booster seats. If you need to leave a car seat or booster seat for transport of your child due to a different pick up or carpool situation, please label that seat and leave it in the outer church hallway when entering the building.

Policies

Arrival & Departure

Arrival:

- Please be prompt for arrival, building opens at 8:45 and classroom door opens at 9:00 am.
- Use the lower parking lot.
- Enter through the double doors into the church building [not directly into the LFP area].
- Encourage your child to find their own cubby to store items.
- Help your child use the bathroom facilities before the start of the day.
- Wait for the door of the classroom to open before coming into the room.
- Parents are welcome to walk children into the room and stay for 5-10 minutes.
- At 9:10 am all parents are required to leave the classroom as we begin our class.



Departure:

- Please be prompt for pick up times [3-year-olds finish at 11:30 am] and [4-year-olds finish at 12:00 pm]. Remember our teaching staff has a room to clean up at the end of each day.
- Wait for the classroom door to be opened.
- A teacher will be waiting at the classroom door and specifically call your child for dismissal.

Pick up:

- Children will only be released to parents or designated persons listed on your data sheet
- If someone other than a designated person is picking up your child, please notify us when you bring your child to school. We **MUST** have a Child Pick Up form to release your child. Child Pick Up forms will be available at school near the parent bulletin board.
- Child Pick Up forms can be completed for a one-time pickup; or if you have someone who will regularly pick up your child a form can remain on file for the year.
- If you are carpooling, please have each parent sign a note granting permission for their child to go with the other parent(s) and/or other acceptable drivers. Carpool forms will be available at school and online.

Custody

Custody Arrangements

When parents have special custody arrangements regarding their children, it is essential that our school be made aware of these arrangements, in writing, as soon as possible. Copies of all legal documents should be provided to LFP. Parents should note that without documentation from the court, children must be released to either their mother or father upon parent request.

Photographs



We will provide a QR code on the monthly newsletter which connects to a private website for parents to view the excitement of the activities and learning that takes place at school. You will need to set up a FREE account with PhotoCircle to access the pictures and ask that you create a username that is linked to your child's name. If there is a username that is not recognized, that user will be blocked from the account. To protect your children, we ask that you do not copy and post those onto any social media accounts.

Probationary Period

There will be a six-week probationary period wherein a child will be evaluated if there are concerns regarding emotional and/or social maturity. Communication with parents will follow LFP staff evaluations with recommendations based on the child's readiness for preschool. There are times that it is more beneficial for the child to re-apply the following year. Any fees paid for unused school months will be refunded.



School Closings

School Closings

We will follow the Bangor Area School District's decisions with regard to inclement weather.

- Bangor is closed = LFP is closed
- Bangor has a 2-hour delay = LFP is closed
- Bangor has a 1-hour delay
 - 4-year-old class = 10:00 am – 12:00 pm
 - 3-year-old class = 10:00 am – 11:30 am

Any changes in early dismissals, delays or closings will be at the discretion of the LFP staff. You will be notified with a Calling Post Message from LFP. You will be asked to complete a mobile phone data sheet the first week of school, this phone number will be used for text messaging in the event of a closure or delay.

Bangor Area School District currently has 5 Flexible Instruction Days [FID] in their school calendar. LFP will offer a similar Flexible Instruction Day policy for our preschool classes. The FID packets will be provided during orientation. Should LFP need to close, due to snow, the FID will include a variety of themed preschool activities so that make-up days will not be included within the school calendar. If closures extend beyond the designated FIDs, make up days will be announced in the spring, after inclement weather season has passed.

- 4-year-old program will be provided with 3 FID packets
- 3-year-old program will be provided with 2 FID packet



Program

Birthdays Celebrations

These are very important days for our growing preschoolers, and we want to celebrate them! For students with birthdays that occur during the academic year, we will recognize their special day as close as possible to the actual day. For students with birthdays that fall during the summer months, we will have a “half” birthday celebration as close as possible to the actual halfway point.

Parent supplied snack: If your child has a birthday within our academic year, you are welcome to supply a special treat such as ice cream cups or novelties, donut holes, mini muffins, mini cupcakes or one large cookie. No full-size cupcakes with icing, please.

Birthday party invitations: If you plan to invite classmates to a birthday party, please refrain from sending invitations to school, unless you are providing an invitation for everyone. We don't want to have any of our young people feel left out.

Calendar

Our school calendar generally follows the Bangor Area School District's schedule and will be available online, posted for parent review and provided at the beginning of the school year. LFP also incorporates five (5) professional development days to provide an opportunity for our teaching staff to continue to grow with best practices in the early childhood education field. These days are noted on the annual and monthly calendars, when possible they correspond with the BASD Act-80 days but not all of the correlate. Be sure to check the LFP calendar.

Class Parties

There will be five (5) special events celebrated throughout the academic year which will include special games, related events and fun snack options. Parents will have the opportunity to sign up to provide a special treat or item for the party. Class parties will include special in-class support by room parents.

- Thanksgiving Feast
- Christmas Celebration
- Valentine's Day
- Egg Hunt
- End of Year Picnic

Clothing

- Children should be dressed in washable, comfortable clothing suitable for inside and outside play. We make every attempt to use washable art mediums; however sometimes stains occur.
- Children should be able to easily put on and take off clothing during bathroom time. It is best to avoid jeans with snaps or other pants that require hard-to manage buckles or zippers.
- Send them dressed for the weather as we will go outside whenever it is possible.
 - Label your child's outer clothing
 - Outer clothing should have a zipper, buttons or snaps your child can manage
- We strongly encourage you send your child in sneakers or non-slippery shoes. Dress shoes, flip flops and sandals are the cause of many falls when children are running and playing.
- We also discourage wearing jewelry, watches or other removable items that can be easily lost or pose a safety hazard.
- EXTRA SET OF CLOTHING – we ask that you provide a full set of extra clothing [spills can happen on tops and other accidents could happen with pants]. Label clothing and place in a bag that can easily hold all the items to be stored in our cupboard. Mid-point in the year [after the start of the new year] we will ask you to exchange the clothing for larger sizes as they do grow quickly and we want them to be comfortable if they need to change. Should clothes be soiled we will send them home and ask that you return a new set the next class day of attendance.
- ART SMOCKS – During the first week of school we will ask you to send in a shirt that can be used as a smock for extra messy activities at school. This can be an old adult t-shirt, apron or other piece of clothing that will cover the child's clothing. Periodically through the year we will send them home for cleaning and ask that they are returned the next class day.

Curriculum

The curriculum at LFP is Christ centered. Children will learn they are special because a loving God created them, loves them and sent His Son, Jesus, to be their best friend and Savior. Each child is taught that he/she is uniquely designed by God and that He has a special purpose in life for each of them.

A child's play and work are synonymous. We provide opportunities for students to engage in fun, creative activities which foster social, emotional, intellectual, physical and spiritual growth. The daily schedule supports open choice activities, discovery investigations, organized morning meetings, snack, games, reading, music, crafts, large muscle movement, literacy, mathematical awareness, clean up and prayer. We integrate the Pennsylvania States Standards for Early Childhood Education which support cognitive, social-emotional, language and physical developmentally appropriate practices.

Northampton County IU Support Services

Early intervention referrals and other support services are available through the Northampton County IU. Parents are welcome to discuss concerns during conferences, or during the year at arranged meetings with the LFP teacher. If a teacher has a concern, a parent meeting will be arranged and suggested resources provided at that time.

Orientation

An orientation will be held for each classroom. Parents and children are invited to join us at LFP for a 60-minute introduction to the program and the upcoming year. Parents can escort their children into the LFP classroom and then will be invited to attend a parent-meeting in a separate area while the new preschoolers become acquainted with the teachers and classroom. Orientation will be announced on the school calendar and via summer correspondence.

Progress Reports

Skill evaluation will take place throughout the entire year, both informally and formally. Results of formal evaluations will be made available for parents during the teacher-parent conferences in both the spring and fall.

Schedule

4-year-old class: Monday - Wednesday - Friday [9:00 am - 12:00 noon]

3-year-old class: Tuesday - Thursday [9:00 am - 11:30 am]

Show & Play Days

Students will be invited to bring a special item for “show and play” three (3) times throughout the year. These dates will be noted in advance and students will be guided based on a specific theme. There will be a designated space to store the items when not used during “show and play”; however, students will be provided an opportunity to play with the item and others in the classroom for a set period in a learning center. When consulting with your child about the special items coming to school, help them remember that others may be playing with the item, and they will not be able to keep it with them for the entire morning.

Snack

Snack time is an important time during the preschooler’s day at LFP, it provides opportunity for fellowship around the table, practicing life skills and communication with others.



Provided by LFP:

- Napkins
- Cups
- Water
- On days other than parent donation days, LFP will provide a healthy snack

Donations by Parents:

- To help offset some of the costs associated with providing a healthy snack, we ask that parents sign up to contribute four (4) snacks within the year.
- One (1) of those snacks can be the birthday celebration snack, the other three (3) are up to the parents' discretion.
- A digital sign-up sheet will be provided at the onset of the academic year, with reminders about upcoming snack days sent via an electronic reminder.
- Please have the food ready to serve, except for food that may turn brown [apples, bananas, etc.].
- If you choose to donate a snack with a longer shelf life, feel free to bring in all three donations at one time for storage at school.
- [Link](#) to digital sign-up sheet for 3-year old class
- [Link](#) to digital sign-up sheet for 4-year old class

Healthy Snack Suggestions:

- Any fruit that can be easily served, fruit salad, fruit cups, applesauce
- Cut up vegetables and dip
- Cheese and crackers, all varieties
- Mini muffins
- Mini bagels and spreads
- Pretzels, all varieties
- Plain cookies: vanilla wafers, animal crackers, graham crackers, teddy grahams, etc.
- Goldfish crackers, all varieties
- Homemade breads or muffins
- Yogurt, pudding, Jell-O, juice pops

No PEANUT policy: LFP desires to support the safety of all those who enter the shared spaces and realize that peanut oils can be left behind on objects. Therefore, we have a no peanut policy and ask that parents take care to ensure that peanuts [and/or other

nuts] or ingredient labels with peanut warnings be avoided. If you elect to bake for the class, please attach a copy of the ingredient list to the snack.

Toys or Items from Home

We request that children NOT bring their own toys to school [except for Show & Play days], as they may be misplaced or broken. There is a plentiful supply of items for children to enjoy at school.

Standing on the Promises

Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from Him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are children born in one's youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them.

~ Psalm 127:3-5



LFP Handbook Verification

I/we have received a copy of the **LFP Handbook**, and I/we acknowledge that I/we have read and understood it. Any questions may be directed to Dr. Hontz [littlefriends@mountbethelchurch.org].

Student Name: _____

[Please print first & last name of student]

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date