



**The Woodlands Community
Presbyterian Church**

*4881 W. Panther Creek
Behind the Panther Creek Shopping Center*

(281) 298-2464

PARENT HANDBOOK

The Early Learning Program of The Woodlands Community Presbyterian Church

The School and Our Philosophy

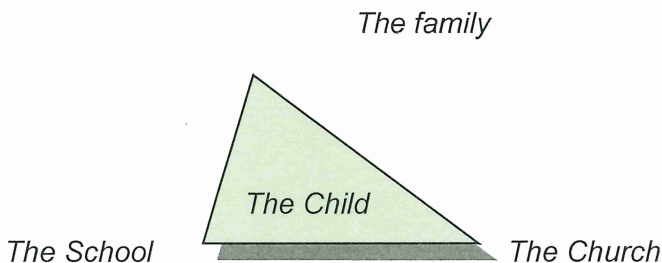
Fully realizing that the early years of life are the most important for helping children know that they matter, The Early Learning Program of The Woodlands Community Presbyterian Church exists as an extension of the Ministry of The Woodlands Community Presbyterian Church.

The ELP is a developmentally appropriate plan and Christian learning environment, which nurtures young children's social, emotional, physical and spiritual cognitive development. You will find our facility to be open and bright, while at the same time, safe, clean, warm and comforting.

We believe the most important benefits a child can gain from our ELP are as follows:

- A positive self image
- Confidence by experiencing success
- Experience in social interactions
- Love and appreciation of family and the Lord.

Our primary focus is the child, and our goal is to enrich, integrate, and nurture three important focal environments.



We believe these three environments need to be part of a communication network in order to provide support and encouragement for each.

Through appropriate practices of play, exploration and experiences involving the senses, the curriculum will encourage the children to be actively involved in the learning process. They will have opportunity to experience a variety of developmental activities using designated materials, and to pursue their own interests in the context of life in the community.

The ELP will strive to integrate Christian principals throughout the curriculum. The goal is to enhance the child's ability to deal, from a Christian perspective, with the moral and spiritual aspects of his/her environment by learning about:

- Believing that each person is special
- Loving each other and our country
- Placing importance on and emphasizing family
- Thanking God for our blessings
- Thanking God for our seasons and our world
- Unchanging love of God

Our program has been tailored to meet the needs of the children rather than expecting children to adjust to the demands of a specific program.

The concept of developmentally appropriate curriculum has two dimensions: 1) age appropriateness, and 2) individual appropriateness.

- 1) Age Appropriateness—human development research indicates that there are universal predictable sequences of growth and change that occur in children during the first nine years of life. The predictable changes occur in all domains of development: physical, emotional, social and cognitive. Knowledge of typical development in children within the age span served by the program provides a framework from which teachers prepare the learning environment and plan experiences.
- 2) Individual Appropriateness—each child is a unique person with an individual pattern and timing of growth, as well as an individual personality, learning style, and family background. Both the curriculum and the adult interaction with children should be responsive to individual difference. Learning in young children is the result of interaction between the child's thoughts and experiences with materials, ideas, and people. The experiences should match the child's developing abilities while also challenging the child's interests and understanding.

In order to accomplish the stated goals of ELP, the teachers have been carefully chosen, not only on the basis of their educational background and experience, but also for the personalities and the warmth and concern they exhibit towards the children.

Everyone of the staff has a good understanding and appreciation of children, relates well to them, treats them with respect and speaks with them in a positive manner.

The ELP has developed a team of teachers who love and are committed to children. Our teachers are educated in the needs and stages of the growing child. The teachers can use their knowledge to identify the range of appropriate behaviors, activities and materials for each age group.

Parents are always welcome to visit the school and participate in school activities. We encourage your comments and suggestions for ways of improving our program. We believe in parents and teachers working together as a team.

God is love



Programs/Classes

Class/Age by Sept. 1	Days	Time	Ratio Student/ Teachers
Toddlers 18-13 Months	Tue or Wed or Thur	9:00-Noon or 9:00-1 PM	4/1 or 2
Young 2's		9:00-Noon or	
2 Year's	Wed.	9:00- 1 PM	12/ 2 or 3
Mixed 2's		9:00-Noon or	
2 Year's	Mon & Tue	9:00-1 PM	12/ 2 or 3
Older 2's			
3 by following Mar 1	Thur & Fri	9:00-1 PM	12/ 2 or 3
2 Day 3's			
4 after following Mar 1	Thur & Fri	9:00- 1 PM	14/ 2 or 3
Older 3's			
4 before following Mar 1	Mon, Tue, Wed	9:00- 1 PM	14/ 2 or 3
PreK	Mon-Wed or	9:00- 1 PM	
	Tues- Thurs or	9:00- 1 PM	16/ 2 or 3
4 Year's	Thurs-Friday	9:00- 1 PM	
Transition	Tue-Fri	9:00- 1 PM	16/ 2 or 3
5 Year's			
S.T.E.A.M.	Mon or Fri	9:00- 1 PM	
PreK or Tran			16/ 2 or 3

Admission

Age—Children must be 18 months on or before September 1 to be eligible to enter our preschool program. A Toddler class is offered for children 18-23 months of age. It is our intention to group the children by their age as of September 1 of the current school year. However, there will be a certain amount of flexibility to allow changes in placement based upon the development of each child.

Registration—Pre-registration for ELP will begin in the Spring semester. Current enrollees, siblings, members of WCPC, and alumni will be given the opportunity to enroll their children before registration is opened to the general public.

Admission Forms with the medical record page filled out with up to date immunizations and signed by a physician. These items must be on file and fees paid before classes begin.

Waiting List—A waiting list for each class will be maintained for those interested in enrolling, should space become available. No fee will be charged for this option. The waiting list is for one school year only, and will not apply for future school years.



Fees and Tuition

A registration fee and monthly tuition amounts are set each year by the ELP Board of Directors.

Registration Fee: The registration fee must accompany each registration form if there is a place for your child. The registration fee is refundable only in the case of space not being available for a sibling. The family will be notified and the sibling will be placed on the waiting list. Registration fees are non-refundable

Prepaid Tuition: A payment of one month's tuition is due by May 1st, this will apply to the following year's May tuition, or your child's last month of school. Pre paid tuition is nonrefundable.

Supply Fee: A once a year supply fee will be charged on August 1. The amount charged will be based on the number of days each child attends ELP.

Tuition: Tuition is due by the end of the first preschool week of the month. Full tuition is collected for every month during the school year.

Special Services

Screenings: Vision and Hearing screenings are required by Texas State Law for all four and five year old children enrolled in preschool. As a service to our families we have a specialist come to our facility to perform Vision, Hearing and Speech screenings. A fee is charged for this service. If you elect to have these screenings done outside our facility we must have documentation of the screenings for your child's file.

Scholarships: Funds are available for families needing financial assistance. The Director has further information on this.

Eligibility

All children are welcome to enroll at ELP. There is not discrimination due to race, creed or national origin.

Special Needs Served

The Early Learning Program accepts children with special needs. Prior to enrollment, a child's needs and requested accommodations will be evaluated to determine proper placement. The director will work closely with all families to determine if The Early Learning Program can appropriately meet the needs of each child in the classroom.

Payment

Please make checks payable to The Early Learning Program or ELP. Payments may be placed in the ELP mailbox located in the hall, just outside the preschool offices, or they may be pinned to the outside of your child's backpack if you prefer to use the car line. Payments may also be mailed to: ELP, 4881 W Panther Creek, The Woodlands, TX 77381. Credit card payments is offered as an alternative method of payment. Credit card payments do incur the 3% processing fee that is charged from Square.

Penalties

Any tuition outstanding after the first week of preschool each month will assess a \$10.00 late fee. Returned Checks will incur a \$15.00 charge. If you require different financial arrangements, please contact the ELP office at 281/ 298-2464 and we will try to accommodate your needs.

School Procedures

In the event of policy or procedure changes, the parents will be notified by email and/or a note in child's backpack, amendments will be made to the Staff and Parent Handbooks.

Discipline

We attempt to avoid behavior problems by having clear, consistent, age-appropriate rules. The positive is stressed: sharing, loving, being kind to our friends. We plan activities which are age appropriate, interesting and challenging. On the rare occasion when disciplinary action is required, re-directing and time away are the methods used. This is done in the spirit of love and concern for the child. If there is a continuing problem, the teacher will speak to the parent to determine if there is an underlying cause for the behavior.

Health and Emergency Information

Current medical information and up to date immunizations that are required by the Texas Health Department and Department of Family and Protective Services must be completed on your child's admission form, which must be signed by a physician. It is Texas State Law that this information be on file before your child may attend school. Emergency information must also be completed and kept current through the school year.

Your child's well-being is a concern to us all. Help your child by seeing that he/she gets the proper amount of rest, especially the night before school. A good breakfast helps one have a better day at school.

Please keep your child at home if there is any evidence of an illness, such as fever, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, etc. Children should not return to school for at least 24 hours after temperature has returned to normal or 24 hours free from diarrhea.

Please report any communicable diseases to the school so that we may inform the other parents.

If a child becomes ill during the day, a parent or other authorized adult will be called to pick up the child immediately. For this reason it is imperative that emergency numbers are current. Please add the school's number, 281-298-2464 into your contacts. The school may not administer any medications.

Arrival and Pick-Up

9:00 AM Arrival: arrival is 9:00-9:15 AM. Prior to 9:00 AM, each teacher is busy preparing her room and participating in a staff devotion. We feel it is important for each of our teachers to start their day with prayer. After the morning devotion our staff will be free to cheerfully greet each child as he/she arrives.

Please do not drop your child at the door until you see one of our staff ready to greet your child. Please feel free to walk your child into his/her classroom at any time after 9:00 AM. Car line will begin after the staff morning devotion at 9:00 AM. Children who are dropped off at car line are walked to their classroom by an ELP staff person.

12:00 Pick-up: Car line will begin at Noon for toddler and twos that are going home at this time.

1:00 Pick-up: Car line is also available at 1:00 for all classes.

Only parents or authorized persons may pick up the child. In accordance with state law, if someone other than a parent is picking up a child, that person may be asked to show proper identification. Also, when another person is to pick up a child, the teacher and/or administrator must be notified in advance in writing.

Late Pick-Up

It is important that you pick up your child promptly at the end of the school day. Any child who is not picked up by 12:15 PM or 1:15 PM will be taken to the ELP office. There will be a \$5.00 late fee, and an additional charge of \$5.00 for each additional 15 minutes.

Visitors

Visitors (anyone arriving outside of regular pick up/drop off times), need to sign in/out in the front office, and wear the visitor sticker at all times. Those coming to participate in specified monthly special events with their child do not need to sign in.

Toilet Training

The goal of the ELP is to meet the needs of each child. Teachers will work with each child on an individual basis to assist efforts at home toward toilet training success.

Inclement Weather

The ELP will be cancelled if the Conroe Independent School District (C.I.S.D.) cancels school due to weather. Parents will be contacted immediately if an unsafe condition arises when children are at school. Inclement weather days will not be made up, or refunded.

Extended School Closures

ELP will follow CISD and WCPC campus closures related to health and/or safety. Closures lasting more than one week will require the ELP Board to assess the calendar duration of closure to determine tuition expectations. Refunds and credits for the current month, as well as May prepayments will be considered, and will be at the discretion of the board in a case by case scenario. ELP is a nonprofit program, with annually salaried staff.

Staff

All ELP staff all has experience in early childhood education. Each year staff members complete many hours of continuing education through professional conferences. They are all certified in CPR and 1st Aid. All staff members must be current with any vaccines that are required by the Texas Department of Health and show documentation of them in their personnel file. We encourage our staff to consider communicable disease immunizations, but are not required unless mandated by the Texas Health Department.

School Clothing and Equipment

Toddlers and Two's: Children should bring a backpack/bag with disposable diapers. Diaper ointment may be applied by a staff person if it is provided by the parent. Ointments need to be labeled with the child's name and given to the teacher to be kept in a locked closet, out of reach of children. Always have a complete change of clothes in their bag. Toddlers should bring their own "sippy" cup with a lid, labeled with their name. You may send any special items, such as special blanket, pacifier, soft toy, "lovey". If your child is staying for extended day (Friends & Fun), send a lunch and a nap mat.

All Classes: Children should come to school dressed in washable play clothes. He/she must not feel inhibited in his activities because of fear that he might get something on his/her clothes. The school will not be responsible for damage done to clothing during school activities. Party clothes are not appropriate. Rubber sole closed toe shoes are recommended for running and climbing on the playground. If weather permits we will have outside time each day. Please label your child's outer clothing with his/her name.

All children should have an extra change of clothes in their backpack, including socks and underwear. Children who are still wearing diapers should bring four to five disposable diapers each day.

All children should bring a backpack to school each day. It should be roomy enough to hold their change of clothes, show and tell items, and work done at school.

Show and Tell

Classes may have a Show and Tell time during which the children are able to show something they have brought from home and explain it to the group, or just to share about something important to him/her. We ask that toy guns or weapons not be brought to school. Each teacher will let you know their Show and Tell schedule.

Snacks/Lunch

A mid-morning snack is served in the toddler and twos class daily. All students staying until 1 pm will need to bring a lunch from home. We are a Peanut Free School. If you are providing snack for your child's class please make sure it is a peanut free snack. At ELP we encourage healthy eating habits. Please consider fruit, vegetables or a low sugar snack. Cake, cupcakes and cookies are not encouraged.

Birthdays

Birthdays are always a happy occasion for the children and may be celebrated at snack time. Please make arrangements with your child's teacher if you would like to bring a special snack to school that day. Summer birthdays may be celebrated during the year as pretend or half birthdays. Again, please coordinate with your child's teacher when it would be appropriate to bring a special snack.

Calendar

The ELP follows the holidays and closings of the Conroe Independent School District (C.I.S.D.) during the school year. Please notice our start date and end date differs. We close for four days in February for parent/teacher conferences.

Teachers will arrange a time for you and your child to meet in the child's classroom for a brief time before the school year begins. This will enable both of you to visit the teachers and will give your child an opportunity to explore the classroom and visit his/her teacher on a one-to-one basis prior to school beginning.

Open Door Policy

The Early Learning Program has an Open Door Policy which encourages all parents to enter the school during the hours of the school day. Parents are invited to meet with the Director or the Administrator either by appointment or spontaneously. Parents are offered the opportunity to observe their child from outside the classroom through the one/way window or in the classroom. The Early Learning Program strives to offer a team approach between the family and the school.

Fire Drill, Weather and other Emergencies

The Early Learning Program holds regularly scheduled Fire Drills and Tornado/Safety Drills as required by the State Licensing Agency. The children will practice lining up in an orderly fashion, walking to their designated destination and wait to be returned to their classroom. Fire Drill and Weather Drill procedures will be discussed with the children frequently so that they will not be fearful of the procedure.

ELP has emergency plans for natural events such as tornados, floods, hurricanes, health events, communicable disease outbreak, as well as human caused events such as intruder with weapon, explosion or chemical spill.

In case of emergency relocation, we would evacuate under the direction and assistance of local authorities. Children will walk with their teachers to Hendricks building, located on the back lot of WCPC. If necessary and deemed appropriate we will relocate to Sally K. Ride Elementary on Panther Creek Drive. ELP does not have the ability to transport children other than on foot, so transportation by automobile or other vehicles would be coordinated by local emergency authorities.

In case of an emergency, our Toddler room which consists of four 18 month-2years old children, will have the assistants of the Office Administrator, Floater Teacher and the Classroom Teacher to help them to the designated location. If these children are unable to walk, they will be carried.

In the event of emergency evacuation, parents will be notified by e-mail, text or phone call as services are available.

Our staff is trained in CPR and first aid for minor emergencies, otherwise 911 will be called, and we will follow 911 instructions.

Gang Free Zone

The Woodlands Community Presbyterian Church (ELP) is a Gang Free Zone encompassing a 1,000 feet radius from the property.

Gun Free Zone

The Texas Penal Code prohibits the carrying of firearms on the physical premises of our school. This prohibition equally applies to individuals who possess a Texas handgun license. For the safety of all concerned, please adhere to this law.

Breastfeeding

ELP provides a comfortable place for mothers to breastfeed their children. They can either make themselves at home in the hallway rocking chairs or in the preschool library.



Parent/ELP Communication

Parent to Teacher

Your relationship with your child's teacher is very important. Your child's teacher wants to communicate with you. Please take time to write a quick note about any changes at home, (illness, new baby, death...) or anything that might have made a change in your child's emotions.

A conference will be scheduled during the month of February. We will be happy to schedule additional conferences with teacher and/or Director upon request.

Parents are always welcome to visit the school and participate in school activities. We encourage your comments and suggestions in improving our program. We believe in parents and teachers working together as a team.

Parents Post Newsletter

A monthly newsletter will be sent home to provide parents with additional information on activities at the school. A calendar is included with the newsletter. You may also receive numerous letters and notes from the teachers keeping you informed of activities that may occur in your child's particular classroom.

Parent Involvement (P.V.O.)

All parents are members of the Parent Volunteer Organization. Volunteers organize parent activities and assistance for the school. Each parent will have an opportunity to meet other parents with common interest, goals, and concerns. You will also be able to enrich the education of your child's and that of other children. P.V.O. coordinates classroom parties, fund raisers, and organizes classroom activities outside of ELP. Teachers may also ask P.V.O. to help with materials for the classroom. Parent involvement is essential to insure a rich and enjoyable preschool experience for your child and yourself.

Parent/Child Separation

If your child has been in school before or he seems very comfortable with his school environment, tell him you are leaving and will pick him up in a few hours. A good time frame the child will understand is, "I will pick you up at lunch time".

If your child does not seem at ease: Let him move away from you as he is ready. If you are apprehensive about his clinging, he will be apprehensive about his leaving you. Please do not insist or rush him.

A teacher will help your child move away from you and towards an activity. Each child is different and will move away at his own speed. Teachers will deal with you and your child according to your individual needs. When we feel your child is ready, we will ask you to tell him you are leaving. This will vary depending on your child. It could mean returning in a few minutes, at snack time, outside time or at the end of the school day. Our staff is well trained and will suggest what is best for your child. Tell the teacher where you will be in case we need to reach you by phone. Our goal is to help your child make a happy, smooth transition from home to school.

Sometimes a child will cry when his mother leaves and stop the minute she is gone. He may begin crying as soon as he sees you again. This is very normal. It is his way of saying "I didn't want you to go". When you return you can say, "See, I told you I would be back at lunch time". Act very matter-of-fact about going and coming. If you are upset or disturbed by his crying, your child will detect it.

As your child adjusts to his/her school, teachers, and playmates, you can leave for longer periods of time and soon he will be spending the entire morning experiencing many varied activities and enjoying the companionship of teachers and friends.

In the event a child does not adjust to school and is not able to separate from the parent, we may suggest that you wait and bring him/her at a later time. It is important that this first school experience be a happy and secure one.

The Early Learning Program of The Woodlands Community Presbyterian Church Sub-Committee

The ELP Sub-Committee is part of the Christian Education committee of the Session of The Woodlands community Presbyterian Church (WCPC). This sub-committee is the governing body (Board of Directors) for ELP and will be responsible for overseeing the school's programming.

Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services

The Early Learning Program is licensed and audited by the Department of Family and Protective Services. For more information about local licensing offices you may look on the Texas Department of Regulatory and Family Services website at txchildcaresearch.org. It is referenced as Early Learning Presbyterian Preschool.

Licensing's local phone number is 936/ 538-1212. Child Abuse Hotline is 800/ 252-5400. The ELP staff is annually trained in preventing and responding to abuse and neglect of children by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. For more information on recognizing and preventing child abuse you may visit DFPS website:

http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/prevention_and_early_intervention/

ELP has on file for parents to review a copy of the minimum standards and the most recent licensing inspection report.



A Child's Ten Commandments to Parents

1. My hands are small; please don't expect perfection whenever I make a bed, draw a picture, or throw a ball. My legs are short; please slow down so that I can keep up with you.
2. My eyes have not seen the world as yours have; please let me explore safely; don't restrict me unnecessarily.
3. Housework will always be there, I'm only little for such a short time; please take time to explain things to me about this wonderful world and do so willingly.
4. My feelings are tender; please be sensitive to my needs; don't nag me all day long (you wouldn't want to be nagged for your inquisitiveness). Treat me as you would like to be treated.
5. I am a special gift from God. Please treasure me as God intended you to do; holding me accountable for my actions, giving me guidelines to live by and discipline me in a loving manner.
6. I need your encouragement; please go easy on the criticism, remember you can criticize the things I do without criticizing me.
7. Please give me the freedom to make decisions concerning myself. Permit me to fail, so that I can learn from my mistakes; then someday I'll be prepared to make the kind of decision life requires of me.
8. Please don't do things for me. Somehow that makes me feel that my efforts don't quite measure up to your expectations. I know it's hard, but please don't try to compare me with my brother or sister.
9. Please don't be afraid to leave for a weekend together. Kids need vacations from parents, just as parents need vacations from kids. Besides, it's a great way to show us kids that your marriage is very special.
10. Please take me to Sunday School and Church regularly; be a good example for me to follow. I enjoy learning more about God.



Every January ELP has Snow!



Sensory Walk



Petting Zoo



ELP Night Tree Gathering

Nativity Animals



Road Rally

Fall Festival



Chapel