

First English Lutheran Preschool

January 2026 newsletter



Upcoming events:

Jan. 5/6: return to school routine with Pajama Days

Jan. 10: Tuition due with check/cash; available on the website with additional service fee added

Jan. 19: NO SCHOOL- Martin Luther King Jr. Observance day

Jan. 21/22 Lion's club Operation Eyesight screening

Jan. 26/29: Chapel time with Pastor Patrick @ 9:15

Jan. 30: Family Game Night at FELP 5:30-6:30pm

January food donation to Albright Food pantry: canned ravioli, beef stew or toilet paper



FROM THE DIRECTOR:

Another calendar year has come and gone but we are looking forward to what the New Year will bring! We hope families have enjoyed their time together over the holidays! We will begin the 2026 year in a comfortable way with classes returning to preschool in pajamas for their Monday and Tuesday attendance! We do prefer shoes to be worn instead of slippers.

We hope you all enjoyed reading the comprehensive report about your child's development from some of the observations and photos that were taken from the start of the school year to December. The teachers will begin documenting all categories again upon our return to prepare for the second report in May; we are going to ask families to help us a few times this period to document various activities you can do at home. Something we have found to be helpful for families is to use the Kaymbu for Families app on their devices. If you have any questions or program suggestions, please let me know! Office: 574-255-4234

Wishing you well, Mrs. Tracy Gleissner

★HAPPY★ BIRTHDAY!



January birthdays

2/3 class: Jan. 27 **Charlie** (3rd)
Jan. 30 **Mrs. Gearhart**



July (1/2) birthdays

2/3 class: Jan. 25 **Lincoln** (3 1/2)

3/ 4 class: Jan. 18 **Cade** (4 1/2)
Jan. 25 **Logan** (3 1/2)

Pre-K class: Jan. 18 **Everly D.** (4 1/2)
Jan. 24 **Madelyn** (4 1/2)
Jan. 28 **Waverly** (4 1/2)



NAEYC/Paths to Quality Survey: We are coming to the middle of the year and that means it is survey time. We will be asking families to evaluate our program soon by responding by the end of the month. The results will be shared with families. Several questions will refer to our program policy information found in the Policy/Procedure Booklet or the Family Handbook that was emailed to each family at the start of the school year. If you need another copy, then please let us know and we will send one digitally (or printed) to you.



Valentine's Day cards: The children can send in valentines next month which they will deliver to their classmates. Please allow sometime this month for your child to 'write' their name on their own card. A single mark or first initial letter is acceptable for younger children. Pre-K children should be encouraged to form their own letters using top to bottom strokes going left to the right. Working on one or two each night will ensure that they are completed by the first part of February!



Eye Screen: As January is National Eye Care Month we thought it a great time to offer our Operation Eyesight screening Wednesday, Jan. 21 and Thursday, Jan. 22. A permission form came home before our Christmas break week and should be returned asap if you want your child to be screened. From just a few seconds of an 'eye' photo, the specialists will review them and can detect several various eye conditions. Typically, if there is a concern you are notified to seek additional evaluations with a professional in our area. We hope you will take advantage of this FREE screening opportunity.



Outdoor play: We try to take the children outside for walks or playground time as much as possible. Please make sure your child's coats, hats, and mittens are labeled for easier dressing. Teachers will inform each class session with their weekly email or lesson plan if they are planning to use the outdoor environment during the winter months (snow gear would all need to be sent in); the Kaymbu "urgent" messages can also be used to remind/inform. **It is great to make sure you are checking and reading our communication system frequently!** If you would like to add another family member to the notifications, then let us know. Our typical policy is indoor large motor activities if temperatures are below 30 degrees (including wind-chill); classes can make a decision to go out provided all winter gear is supplied and the time frame will not put children at risk. Keeping your child's mittens inside the hat and hat inside the coat sleeve makes for a quicker way to have all their gear ready when dressing at school. Additionally, if your child is wearing boots into the building, then please bring a pair of shoes to change into so that our classroom carpets stay dry!



Keeping everyone healthy: Did you know that proper and frequent handwashing is the number one way to fight off germs? We would love to request our family's health professionals come and share the importance of handwashing as well as eating the rainbow of foods and getting enough sleep and exercise with class room talks in the upcoming month. If you are available, please let us know!



School closings: Remember to watch the TV news channels of ABC57, WSBT and WNDU for our preschool closing on mornings with inclement weather. Sometimes the news media lists our preschool with other area child-care facilities and other times we are listed alphabetically with school corporations. We follow the PHM system with CLOSING for the day! We have begun to offer a ONE hour delay when area schools are delaying as we have teaching staff who need to get their children to school. We could err on a school closure if conditions were warranted due to our younger clientele. We also post closures on our Facebook page as well as send emails/Kaymbu urgent messages out to families prior to the school start time. If you have any questions, you may contact Mrs. Gleissner (or your child's teacher) directly.



Sign up Genius link for family engagement/ways to help: We are still looking for a Give Back Night organizer for a few Jan/Feb or April dates; We also need some health professionals to share hand washing tips and healthy eating during our winter months. Another way to help our preschool is to check in with area businesses about donating for our auction in March (a letter has been mailed out previously so someone can just follow up as needed.) It also might be fun to have families gather for lunch after school a few times in the upcoming months. We could use someone to decide the date and location to meet! Check out our link to see how you can help:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090C4FA9A829A3FC1-61431153-family>



Extra faces in the classroom: **Miss Londyn** has been helping this fall in our 3/ 4's class and we are going to transition her helping hands to our PreK class on Tuesday and Thursdays. She is an active Penn Senior who is taking early childhood courses at Elkhart Area Career Center.

Additionally, this is the time of year that our teachers will be 'evaluated' by Family Connections with the Program Quality Assessment (PQA) tool as well as Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observations (ELLCO). These assessments inform our teachers of how closely their teaching practices align with the High Scope curriculum philosophy as well as rating their high quality interactions.



Family Game Night: Come join us to play some board/card games on Friday, Jan. 30 from **5:30-6:30pm** We will have some games provided but your family is welcome to provide a game to play with another group as well (bring in BEFORE 1/30) We will have some simple snacks to enjoy. Let us know if your family will attend by using the sign up genius link!



Kaymbu for Families APP- this app will help you see your child's anecdotal notes and photos but it will also help us as we try to include you in the weekly documentation process. This month we would like to have ALL families submit a photo or note about a NUMBERS or COUNTING activity using the app (or you can email the information to your child's teacher as well). We want to capture activities at home when your child uses number words or counts?

Ideas:

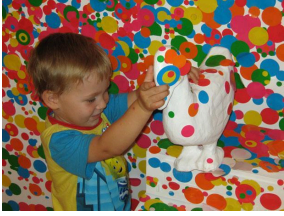
Submit a Photo/video of your child consistently counting up to 10 (or even 20 items) by using all the correct numbers and each item being counted. You can submit any counting session due to the development and ages of all children in the program.

Play a Hide and Seek game then see if your child can identify any of the numbers (in random order); you can also go on a number hunt to find a specific number around the house. Which numbers were recognized?

For older children: Can your child determine when a set of objects is more than another or even how many more? Are they able to determine that there are several ways to represent a number (ex. 10 can be 5/5, 4/6, 3/7, etc.)

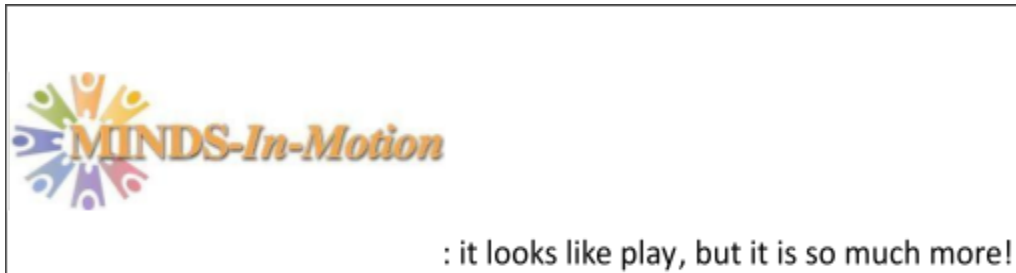


Thank you's: We are hopefully getting the light bulbs replaced in the hallway thanks to the FELC property committee. Things have been a bit dark, especially on the cloudy days before our Christmas break. **Thank you** to **Lynette Reyes** and **Katie Cochran** who addressed about 100 envelopes for area businesses for our March auction. Families will also be receiving a solicitation letter that they can share with a business about a possible gift item, service or certificate that we can use for our auction fundraiser. **Thank you** to those who purchased the various spirit wear t-shirts/sweatshirts with our FELP logo; Graphie Tees will be offering an "online store" to purchase the individualized children faces t-shirt as well this month. These shirts are great to wear on school days but during weekend activities too; They make great advertisements as others might ask about our program, especially with new family registration beginning April 1st. **Thank you** to those who donated items for the Broadway Christian Church. Pastor Patrick delivered our items before Christmas for them to share during their lunch services.



Family Field trip: We are planning to attend the Children's Museum of South Bend (2632 N. Michigan St.) on **Wednesday, Feb. 11** for our next family field trip. We will have two (one hour sessions), either 9am or 10:30am. ALL FELP families are welcome, regardless of the day your child actually attends preschool. Check out the fun play areas and look for more information to come home soon!

<https://www.childrensmuseumofsouthbend.org/exhibits>



Along the side of Trout Hall, we will be setting up a course designed to improve brain function by stimulating sensory-motor integration processes. Classes will use the space during their time in trout hall. Specific activities, founded by Candace Meyer encourage eye/hand coordination, eye concentration and physical effort. Our teachers will take turns setting up the maze in various patterns each week. For additional research and background information: <https://www.mindsinmotion.com/our-story>

Your child will be learning about:

Strong arm push-proprioceptive development with hands/arms to help with fine motor control for writing.

Bean bag boogie-eye hand coordination

Eye tracking- strengthens eye muscles and coordinates the movement of eyes for future reading.

Jelly roll-vestibular development-knowing where their body is in space.

Puppy dog crawl- Cross lateral hand/leg coordination (both hemispheres of brain integration help more organized thought processing)

Climb every mountain- depth perception with eye-foot coordination.

Monster mash-stimulation through the feet/legs to the brain to help coordinate control of the body when walking, standing.

Jumpin' Jack Flash-eye-foot coordination with balance to negotiate distances and reaction times.

CrossWalk-crossing the midline for spatial awareness

Balance Board-maintaining balance and stability to increase mental processing

Balance Beam team-fluid motor control to help alleviate clumsiness and disorganization.

Sidestep- laterality as they move their whole body (brain's bilateral integration)

Walking up steps backward-whole body coordination to enhance vestibular for motor planning.

Skip to my Lou-cross lateral integration to improve brain hemisphere integration and timing along with motor planning.



Things to do in Michiana during January:

George Wilson Park tubing hill open with enough snow 10am-8pm (fees)

Jan. 4 Barbie (Skate) Night at Ironworks Rink (adults \$11 youth \$8) 6:15-7:45 pm

Jan. 8-11 Valley RV and Camping show (Century Center-fees for adults)

Jan. 10/11 Winter Days at Potawatomi Zoo (11am-4pm) occurring Jan. 17/18, 24/25 (zoo fees)

Jan. 14 Maple Syrup 101 (St. Patrick's Park-Harvest Room) 5:30-7:30pm

Jan. 15, 22, 29 Preschool Snow Tubing (St. Patrick's Park-Brown Barn) 2-4pm

Jan. 18 Carnival on Ice (Ironworks Rink) Admission prices 8:30pm

Jan. 20 Winter Fling for Little Ones (5 and under) -St. Patrick's Park (FREE but register)

Jan. 23-26 Michiana Boat Show (Century Center-fees for adults)

Jan. 25 Garden Seed Swap 11am-1pm Ironworks Event Center (label seed bags clearly)

MPH Public Library

Jan. 2 Winter Reading Challenge (goes until 3/2/26)

Jan. 15 Painting pals (Downtown) 4:30pm (register)

Jan. 24 Snack, Craft and Puzzles (Downtown) 10-11:30am



SJC Public Library

Jan. 3 (Western branch) LaLoteria (Mexican Bingo) 3-3:45pm

Jan. 17 (Western Branch) The Frog Prince (puppet show) 11am

Jan. 17 (Western Branch) Family Bingo (3-3:45pm)

Jan. 20 (Francis Branch) Game Night 3-5pm

Jan. 20 (Centre Branch) Sensory Time 5-6pm

Jan. 23 (Centre branch) special reading time with cookies/hot chocolate 5-7 pm

Jan. 26 (Main branch) Bilingual songs and stories (recommended 3-5 yrs) 10:30-11am

Jan. 29 (Francis branch) Slime and other experiments 5-6pm

Jan. 30 (Main branch) Children's Concert series with SB Symphony Brass Quintet 4-4:45 pm

Elkhart Public Library

Jan. 3 (9-3pm) Winter Break Boredom busters (Cleveland Branch)

Jan. 7 (4-6pm) Cookies and Coloring (Pierre Moran branch)

Jan. 12 (4:30-5:30pm) Kids cookies and Canvas (Downtown) must rsvp soon

Jan. 12 (6-7pm) Mammals program with Elk. County Parks (Dunlap branch)

Jan. 19 (3:30-4:30 pm) Kids Art Workshop (Cleveland Branch)

Jan. 24 (11am-noon) Winter Blast (Downtown branch)

Jan. 29 (4:30-6:30pm) Fun Family Movie night (Downtown)

Feb. 4 (1-2pm) Preschool Party: Super Kitties (Downtown)

Feb. 4 (4-5pm) Family Paint by Sticker (Pierre Moran branch)

