

TLC Early Learning Center

TLC Early Learning Center's mission, in conjunction with Transfiguration Lutheran Church, is to provide a warm, loving, healthy, and safe Christian environment for our community. As children of God, we teach and model positive self-image, individuality, independence, and respect for other's rights and properties. Children will be offered the opportunity to grow and develop spiritually, emotionally and physically.

In 1985 Transfiguration Lutheran Church had just built a new education wing that was unused six days every week. The leadership of Transfiguration saw a way to fill a need for childcare in Bloomington while filling their education wing. The decision was made to start a small center with just \$7,000 of seed money. In October, 1985 the doors of TLC Day Care Center opened with four preschoolers and some school agers (before and after school); one full time director and one part time teacher. The \$7,000 plus 8% interest was returned to the church within the year.

Twelve months later the center was licensed for 45 children and using rooms 1-5 and 7-9 as well as Fellowship Hall; these are the same rooms the center uses today.

1989 - 1991 were busy years:

- The TLC Day Care Center made a pledge of \$3,000 to the church to help fund updates to the bathrooms and kitchen – the pledge was fulfilled.
- The first computer was purchased.
- The license for student capacity was increased to 60 children.
- Barb Wigstadt was hired as the new Director, through these 2 years there were 11 full time and 8 part time staff.
- The annual budget was about \$165,000.
- A playground was added to north side of the building; brick and chain-link fencing was installed.
- A toddler classroom was added.

1992 brought a big milestone when TLC Day Care Center became accredited through the National Association of Educators of Young Children; this has been one of the highest indicators of quality early childcare in the United States since 1986. TLC-ELC is the longest continuously accredited childcare program in the city of Bloomington.

Some other notable events are:

- 1993: the name of the center was changed to TLC Early Learning Center (TLC-ELC).
- 1994: the infant program was added and the playground was upgraded to it's current state.
- 1999 a private Kindergarten which is now a special Pre-K program became operational; the annual budget was around \$495,000 and there were 29 employees.

March 2001 brought another highlight to the center when the church membership voted that the Early Learning Center was a ministry of Transfiguration Lutheran Church.

Because of Transfiguration's commitment to quality, over the years TLC Early Learning Center has continued to have a strong positive reputation in the Bloomington Community. We offer proven standards of high-quality care for children, such as:

- Smaller group sizes
- Low child to staff ratios
- Excellent, nutritious homemade meals
- Low staff turnover
- NAEYC Accreditation Recognitions
- Minnesota 4 Star Parent Aware Program

Two TLC-ELC buses display the center's name and that it is a ministry of Transfiguration Lutheran Church. The website is linked with Transfiguration's website. Thousands of children and their families have come through the church's doors and called TLC-ELC their home away from home. These children have been involved in the yearly Vacation Bible School classes and Good Friday services as well as the bi-monthly chapel services. While there isn't a written record of how many ELC families have attended and joined Transfiguration, it is estimated that there are well over 50 families who have attended and joined the church over the past 35 years.

In the summer of 2021, there are 75 families enrolled with 112 children aged from six weeks through 12 years old in attendance. The full and part time staff number fluctuates between 30 and 35; with about 27% of them attending Transfiguration; 37% of them having attended TLC-ELC as a child and about 27% of them having more than 15 years of experience at TLC-ELC.

What sets TLC-ELC apart from other programs in Bloomington: We are the only 4 Star Parent Aware, NAEYC Nationally Accredited, Christian, non-profit center in Bloomington.