

Why the name “Nokomis?”

Until its closure in 2017, Nokomis Childcare Centers filled an important role in the Fargo-Moorhead community for over 45 years.

Nokomis was founded in 1971 by the Fargo-Moorhead Indian Association to respond to a lack of affordable, quality, and educational childcare. Its population grew to include families, with a special focus on those with financial difficulties or behavioral, developmental, or physical issues. In 2006, Nokomis became a part of The Village Family Service Center. The Village proudly carried on the mission of Nokomis, operating two childcare centers for 11 years.

Given the strong name recognition, community legacy, and a call to continue the work of Nokomis, First Lutheran is proud to adopt and uphold the standard of excellence the name “Nokomis” carries.



The **VISION** of First Lutheran’s Nokomis is for children to **KNOW** God in a personal way, **GROW** in social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development, and **SHOW** this knowledge and growth in their daily lives.

To learn more about First Lutheran’s Nokomis contact:
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NOKOMIS

A MINISTRY OF FIRST LUTHERAN

Our goal is to help struggling families by providing quality and affordable childcare.

One of the realities that stand in the way of people securing a living-wage job is affordable childcare.

We believe this represents a crisis, but it is a crisis of opportunity, for God has called upon his faithful to help those in need. We, the church, have the responsibility and the duty to provide the means to break the cycle of poverty. One way to do that is to ensure that families have access to quality, affordable childcare in the Fargo-Moorhead community.



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
INSPIRE. EQUIP. REACH.



First Lutheran's Nokomis believes we can help families solve the affordable childcare crisis.

In 2017, the congregation of First Lutheran Church voted to expand the footprint of the building by 30,000 square feet. With that expansion came the opportunity to dedicate 15,000 square feet to accommodate a childcare facility. First Lutheran's Nokomis ministry mission would be to provide a space for infants through school-age kids to come, be nurtured, and experience the love of God. Our efforts would be guided by the tenet that each child is a unique creation of God and each family deserves the opportunity to flourish.

The lack of affordable, quality childcare keeps families struggling and in poverty

- » According to a recent study conducted by the Fargo-Moorhead YMCA, over **4,200 working families have difficulty affording quality childcare** for their infants and toddlers.
- » The high difficulty of finding affordable, **flexible childcare is a major barrier** to people finding employment (*Regional Workforce Development Study*).
- » In North Dakota, **single parents pay 39% of their income** for infant center care.
- » Married parents of two children living at the poverty line pay 80% of their income for center care. The cost of care for two children in North Dakota is **near twice the annual cost of college tuition at a four-year college** (*Child Care Aware of America I State Fact Sheets 2018*).
- » North Dakota and Minnesota are two of 33 states where **infant care is more expensive than a year of college**.
- » In the United States, the safety net for poor families is largely conditioned on work. This makes childcare critical. Research shows that more **child care assistance would benefit poor families** by increasing maternal employment and reducing economic hardship.

Affordable childcare is a community issue

- » Because of childcare challenges, **U.S. businesses lose approximately \$4.4 billion annually** due to employee absenteeism (*Child Care Aware: Parents & the High Cost of Child Care 2017 Report*).
- » Due to childcare challenges, **almost one-half of parents are absent from work at least one time**, missing an average of four days over a six-month period.
- » Two-thirds of **parents' work schedules were affected by childcare challenges** over seven times during a six-month period.
- » By the year 2020, **our community will need an additional 30,000 workers** (*Regional Workforce Development Study*). A barrier to people joining the workforce is the inability to find affordable childcare.



Our Commitments

- » **COMMITMENT TO FAITH** – to provide Christian-centered curriculum and to welcome families, regardless of their religious practices or backgrounds.
- » **COMMITMENT TO CHILDREN** – to provide the highest possible standards of physical, social, educational, emotional and spiritual care in a safe and stimulating environment.
- » **COMMITMENT TO FAMILIES** – to offer friendship, stability, support, and resources to parents help their children grow and flourish.
- » **COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY** – to care for one another and the most vulnerable in our society.
- » **COMMITMENT TO STAFF** – to ensure staff is valued, given opportunities to develop their skills, expertise, and opportunity for growth through continued training and support.
- » **COMMITMENT TO AFFORDABILITY** – to help families attain financial stability by providing options for low-income families.

Action Plan

- » Secure an endowment fund that will allow First Lutheran's Nokomis to sustain a level of commitment and to subsidize costs for low-income families.
- » Recruit, train, and maintain qualified and committed teachers by paying above-average wages and attractive benefits.
- » Work with licensing agents and architects to create a state-of-the-art and kid-friendly children's education and nursery space.
- » Utilize the gifts and talents of the myriad of volunteers and staff that are available through First Lutheran Church.

Benefits for Children

- » Children will be exposed to loving, caring adults and come to know that they are a unique creation of God.
- » Research demonstrates that the quality of an early childhood program affects a child's development across a range of skills, including language, math, and social skills.
- » The quality of childcare and early education impacts school achievement and success in life.
- » Great school years start with great early years.

Benefits for Parents

- » Affordable childcare helps parents enter and remain in the workforce.
- » Parents are able to access training and education to obtain jobs with a family-sustaining wage.
- » Parents can be assured their children are being prepared to enter kindergarten and beyond.
- » Less stress on the family.
- » Families find support and are given resources to help them succeed.
- » Their children will experience the positive interactions and attention needed to learn.