

# St. John's Preschool

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## Parent Handbook

**St. John's Episcopal Church  
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## **Welcome**

Welcome to St. John's Preschool. This handbook serves as a guide to the families enrolled in our preschool. Statements of philosophy and goals are included as well as information about our daily schedule and activities. We value our relationship with parents and strive to develop open lines of communication between home and school. If you have any questions or concerns that were not answered in this handbook, we invite you to call or set up an appointment with the Preschool Director. We will do our best to work together to make your child's experience a positive one. Our Mission is to provide a model of excellence in faith-based early childhood education for the region, so you can be confident that your child will benefit from a creative and nurturing learning experience while growing in the knowledge of God's Love.

Thank you for participating in our preschool program. All of us here at St. John's are looking forward to a year of learning and growing together.

## **Program Philosophy**

Along with providing an integrated curriculum dedicated to the individual child's social, emotional, physical, and spiritual development, core principles revolve around teaching the value of respect, kindness, peace, patience, appreciation, safety and love for others, community, and the environment.

Our program goals are based on Developmentally Appropriate Practice as articulated by NAEYC\*. Developmentally appropriate programs are both age appropriate and individually appropriate. Developmentally appropriate instruction is provided in an environment that values cultural diversity and nurtures a life long love of learning.

*\* NAEYC-National Association for the Education of Young Children*

## **Our Curriculum**

St. John's Preschool curriculum is designed to encourage growth in multiple areas with particular emphasis given to the achievement of the Pennsylvania Pre-K Learning Standards.

Spiritual development is fostered through Godly Play. Godly Play is based upon the recognition that children have an innate sense of the presence of God. All they lack is the appropriate language to help them identify and express it so it can be explored and strengthened. The Godly Play approach teaches classical Christian language in a way that enhances the child's authentic experience of God so it can contribute to the creative life of the child and the world.

Play is a child's work and the vehicle of learning for the young child. Play allows children to experiment, explore, and manipulate his or her environment.

Engaging in symbolic play allows children to express thoughts and ideas, practice and rehearse new roles, and test newly acquired knowledge and skill.

Learning activities are designed to promote problem solving, creativity, self expression, and social skills. A typical day will include a mix of direct classroom instruction and opportunities for children to choose their own activities. Children will work individually, in small groups, and in large group settings.

## **Our Teachers**

Our Preschool staff members are trained and experienced early educators. All staff will be encouraged to continue their education and participate in early childhood conferences, workshops, and training sessions sponsored by St. John's.

## **Family Involvement**

We believe that parents are the first and most important teachers of their child. It is our goal to work together with parents to provide the best learning environment for each child. We encourage parents to take advantage of the opportunities to be involved in the classroom throughout the year. Opportunities may include guest readers, classroom celebrations, and field trips.

## **Preschool Parent Meeting and Preschool Open House**

A Preschool Parent Meeting and Preschool Open House will be held prior to the start of the school year. Parents will receive all necessary paperwork at the Parent Meeting and will be able to ask questions concerning the upcoming academic year. The Open House will take place the first day of school and is designed for students and their parents to get acquainted with the teachers and classroom.

## **Policies and Procedures**

### **Registration/Tuition**

A non-refundable fee of **\$30.00** is collected at the time of Registration.

Tuition is as follows:

**MWF Sessions ~ \$130.00 per month; regardless of the number of days Preschool is in session that month.**

**TTH Sessions ~ \$90.00 per month; regardless of the number of days Preschool is in session that month.**

Tuition will be **due on the first school day of each month**. Tuition not received by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month will result in a \$25.00 late fee on the account. There will be no refund of tuition given for early withdrawal. A two week notice is required to withdraw from the program. Please note: late fees are not in effect until Oct. since school begins after the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month.

### **Arrival and Departure**

A parent or adult guardian must accompany each child to school and remain with the child until the teacher is present. Parents/Guardians will be required to sign children in and out of the classroom everyday. We ask that parents be prompt when picking up children from school, as it can be upsetting for the child to wait for you. Parking is available along the street. Meters allow 15 minutes of free parking.

**We ask that families not park in the designated clergy parking area.**

The doors to the classroom will be opened 5 minutes prior to the start of school in order for all the staff to prepare for the day. If you arrive earlier, you may read stories outside the classroom until it is time.

### **Other Persons authorized to Pick-up Child**

St. John's Preschool will maintain a list of persons authorized to pick-up individual children from Preschool. This list will be filled out and signed by the custodial parent(s) at the start of the school year. In an emergency, a verbal request for release of a child to a person not on the list can be made by calling the preschool phone at 717-609-3836.

### **Bathroom Use**

Children need to be toilet-trained before the first day of Preschool. We have two bathrooms in our classroom so the children will be free to use the bathroom as needed. Our 2 ½ year old children should be independent enough to wear pull-ups and use the potty. We are not able to change diapers.

### **Suggested Clothing**

Preschool is an active, hands-on kind of place. A child's work can be messy. We will do many art projects involving the use of paint, glue, colored markers and clay. Smocks will be provided, but we encourage parents to dress children accordingly. Indoor and outdoor play (weather permitting) may also be part of the preschool day. It is suggested that children wear shoes that are comfortable and close toed for safety. It is important that the children plan to wear shoes that are comfortable enough to wear during the entire preschool day in the event we have to evacuate the facility. If a child wears snow or rain boots to school and does not want to wear them at school, he/she will need to bring additional shoes to change into.

### **Discipline Policy**

Positive statements and redirection of behavior are used to help children learn self-control, problem solving and negotiation, and to assume responsibility for their actions. Teachers will guide the children to develop self-control and orderly conduct in relationship to peers and adults. A teacher may use any of the following methods to correct inappropriate behavior:

- Good behavior will be encouraged and praised.
- Teachers will model positive alternatives.
- The child's misbehavior will be clearly explained to him/her and the desired behavior will also be explained.
- When a child's negative behavior is not responsive to correction by the teachers, "Time Out" will be used to give the child the opportunity to pull away from the situation and calm down.
- After a short period away from the group, the child may rejoin the classroom activities.

Parents will always be informed of problems with their child's behavior.

Aggressive physical behavior toward staff or other children is unacceptable. Teachers will intervene immediately when a child becomes physically aggressive to protect all children and encourage more acceptable behavior.

Every effort will be made to make each child's experience at St. John's Preschool a positive one.

## **Donations**

The Preschool will have a collection box for donations that will enhance the learning environment. If you have something you would like to donate to the classroom, please contact the Preschool Director to discuss the donation. Items from the “real world” are always of strong interest to children and much appreciated. There may be opportunities throughout the school year when we request certain materials for a lesson or unit of study. Please watch the newsletter and notes for these items.

## **Snacks**

Snack time is part of the Preschool day. Parents will be asked to sign-up to bring snack for one week at a time at the beginning of the year. We ask that you try to bring in healthy snacks. Examples of healthy alternatives to sweets might be: cheese and crackers, fresh fruit, raw vegetables with dip, mini bagels, applesauce, pudding, or yogurt.

***\*\* Because of food sensitivities in some children, St. John’s promotes a NUT FREE environment. We ask that nuts or anything that contains nuts not be brought into the classroom.\*\****

## **Health Information**

### **Health History**

All children are expected to be up to date on all immunizations before starting Preschool. A physical exam is not required, but a Health History/Background Information form will be filled out by parents and remain on file with the Preschool Director for the school year.

### **Sickness**

A parent is an expert when it comes to knowing their child, and at preschool we rely on your judgment in keeping us all healthy.

For the protection of all children, your child should be kept at home if they show any of the following symptoms:

- Fever of 100 degrees or higher
- Diarrhea or vomiting
- Unexplained rash
- Discharge from the nose, ears, or eyes

If your child shows any sign or symptom of a contagious disease or illness, you (the parent) will be notified immediately to come and pick up your child.

Some basic guidelines for returning to Preschool after an illness are: Children must be fever-free and on an antibiotic for at least 24 hours before returning to school.

## **Emergencies & Severe Weather**

### **Emergencies**

Personal and Emergency Contact information will be filled out for each child and kept on file in the classroom. In case of serious illness, accident, or injury of a child while attending the Preschool program, parents will be notified immediately according to

information provided on the child's emergency form. If all means of locating the parent are unsuccessful, staff will contact local emergency services.

**A copy of the child's insurance card** will also be kept on file in the event of just such an emergency. In the event of a family emergency, please contact the church office directly at: 717-243-4220. A message will be relayed to the teacher.

We have established an emergency evacuation plan in the event we would need to evacuate the church building. In the event of an emergency evacuation, we will be sheltered at Old Cumberland County Prison Facility, 37 E. High Street, Carlisle, PA

### **Severe Weather**

St. John's will cancel Preschool under severe weather conditions. Cancellation of school in Carlisle School District will result in the same for Preschool. Any type of delay for Carlisle School District will result in a **Modified Schedule**.

MWF AM Session will meet – 11:00am - 12:30pm

MWF PM Session will meet – 1:30 - 3:00pm

TTH AM Session will meet – 11:00am – 12:15pm

After two missed snow days we will use holidays & creative methods to make up snow days. All missed days may not be made up. No tuition refunds will be given.

Revised 08/29/11