



PARENT HANDBOOK

We are glad that you have chosen to be a part of our preschool family. Our Ebenezer Preschool is a full ministry of our church. We are licensed by the State of Delaware - Division of Child Care and Family Services, an accredited member of the Nursery and Kindergarten Association of Delaware (NKAD), and a member school of the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI). We are a charter member of the Delaware Stars Program, a select group of exemplary schools in the State of Delaware. Our Preschool is governed by a Board of Directors consisting of representatives from the church congregation, officers of the church and preschool families.

The Parent Handbook is divided into several important sections as follows:

- A. INTRODUCTION
- B. HEALTH REGULATIONS
- C. GENERAL PROCEDURAL INFORMATION
- D. PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES
- E. CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS
- F. HANDBOOK REVISIONS

A. INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Parent Handbook - Clear communication is one of the keys to any successful preschool program. This handbook contains pertinent procedural and policy information including requirements established by the Ebenezer Preschool Board, the State of Delaware, Delaware Stars and member school guidelines from NKAD and ACSI.

Adjustment Period - Starting preschool for the first time often causes anxiety for children and parents. We will work with you and your child to make this adjustment period a positive experience. We recommend that you give your child at least one month to adjust to the preschool routine. However, if the child does not make an adjustment, or their behavior contradicts the goals of our program, we may ask that you withdraw your child. Behavior which endangers the health and safety of classmates and/or staff will not be tolerated. Every attempt will be made to work with each child and their family to assist in developing appropriate social and emotional skills.

EPS Discipline Policy - Every effort is made to ensure that every child has a safe and successful preschool experience. Since this may be the first time away from home, our preschool staff strives to help guide your child as he or she learns to play and interact with others. This includes learning to listen to adults, other than parents and following directions. The latter is particularly important for success in the primary and elementary grades. From time to time children will want to follow their own agenda. We respect your child's right to make choices. Our policy is to redirect inappropriate behavior and encourage positive choices. As a policy at Ebenezer Preschool we do not use corporal punishment. We strive to make rules and expectations clear, understandable and developmentally appropriate.

Children learn intellectually and acquire positive emotional and social skills when they are surrounded by a positive environment guided by the following principles:

The Seven Principles of Discipline* (modified text)

1. Tell children what they can do instead of what they cannot do.
2. Protect and preserve a child's feelings so they feel loved and accepted.
3. Offer children choices only when you are willing to abide by their decisions.
4. Whenever possible change the environment rather than the child's behavior.
5. Work with children instead of against them.
6. Give children safe limits they can understand. Recognize their feelings without accepting their action. Maintain your authority calmly and consistently. When children break rules, allow them to experience the consequences of their behavior.
7. Set a good example. Speak and act only in the ways you want children to speak and act.

*Jennifer Brickmayer – *Discipline Is Not A Dirty Word*, 1987 Cornell University

Tuition is due on or before the tenth of each month. A tuition box is labeled and located outside of the Director's office. Checks are the preferred method of payment. However, if cash is used, please give your payment directly to Mrs. Bieri, so a receipt may be issued.

Tuition Late Charge - A \$10.00 late charge will be added to the next tuition payment due after the tenth of the month.

Re-enrollment - During the months of January and February you will have an opportunity to enroll your child in Ebenezer Preschool for the following school year. Open enrollment for others in the community begins in mid-February. Re-enrollment is only available to currently enrolled families who are not delinquent in tuition payments. Re-enrollment is not guaranteed after February 27, 2009, when enrollment is offered on a first come first serve basis.

B. HEALTH REGULATIONS

In compliance with the State of Delaware Department of Human Services, Ebenezer Preschool is required to have the following information in your child's file. The information must be updated on an annual basis or as often as necessary to ensure the health and safety of each child in our care.

Immunization Form - Information is required regarding all previous immunizations your child has received, including the month and year each immunization was administered. Immunizations must be recorded on the *Certificate of Immunization* form supplied by the Delaware Department of Health. The immunization form will be obtained at the time of admission or within thirty (30) days after admission. If the completed immunization form is not provided to the Ebenezer Preschool office within 30 days after admission or the appropriate immunizations are not completed as required by law, you will be required to withdraw your child from our school.

Emergency Telephone Numbers and Information - Telephone numbers where you or a designated person can be quickly located in case of illness or accident must be provided. This information is recorded on the *Contact Information* sheet when registration is completed.

In Case of Illness - Your child will be isolated from the rest of the children and placed in a quiet, safe environment (usually the office). A mat and blanket are provided for their comfort, until you or your designated emergency person can arrive to pick up your child.

Observation - Ebenezer Preschool staff, as required by state law, will carefully observe each child on arrival for signs of communicable disease, physical injury or other evidence of ill health. Our staff is trained in proper procedures for handling ill health situations.

Health Exclusion - Ebenezer Preschool will not permit a child who has symptoms of illness specified below to be admitted to the preschool or remain at the preschool unless written documentation or verbal communication with a written follow-up from a licensed physician is provided. The physician's documentation must state that the child has been evaluated and that his/her attendance at the preschool poses no serious health risk to the child or to other children or staff. The symptoms of illness for possible exclusion include, but are not limited to the following:

- Severe pain or discomfort particularly in the joints, abdomen, or ears;
- Diarrhea,
- Vomiting within a period of twelve (12) hours;
- Severe coughing or sore throat;
- Oral or axillary (under arm) temperature of 99.5 degrees F. or above;
- Yellow (jaundiced) skin, sclera (the white of the eyes) or mucous membranes;
- Red eyes with discharge;
- Infected, untreated skin patches or lesions;
- Difficult or rapid breathing;
- Severe itching of the body or scalp;
- Skin rashes lasting more than one (1) day;
- Swollen joints;
- Visibly enlarged lymph nodes;
- Stiff neck;
- Blood or pus from the ear, skin, urine, or stool;
- Unusual behavior for the child characterized by lack of interest in normal activities, confusion, persistent, or inconsolable crying;
- Loss of appetite characterized by refusing all solids; or
- Symptoms which indicate any of the following diseases: chicken pox, impetigo, lice, scabies, strep throat.

Your child may return to Ebenezer Preschool when the symptoms are no longer present or a licensed physician indicates the child poses no serious health risk to themselves or other children. Ebenezer Preschool must inform the County Health Officer of the Division of Public Health of any reportable communicable disease in accordance with the Division of Public Health Law. Reportable communicable diseases include:

Respiratory: diphtheria, German measles, hemophilus disease, measles (rubella), bacterial (spinal) meningitis, mumps, pertussis (whooping cough), tuberculosis.
Gastro-Intestinal: giardiasis, hepatitis A, salmonellosis, shigellosis.

Absences - We plan our programs with the assumption that every child will attend every scheduled class. If your child is unable to attend preschool please notify the preschool office at 302-731-3030. If your child is absent due to illness with a communicable disease, please let us know as soon as possible. We are required, by state law, to notify our preschool parents when any of our preschool children are diagnosed with a communicable disease.

Allergies - Any allergies to medication, food or other substances must be declared on an allergy report form provided by our preschool staff. A copy of this form will be posted on the cabinet containing snacks and will be kept on file in your child's personal folder. It is strongly recommended that we also have a signed note from your child's physician stating the nature of and appropriate treatment for any potential allergic reaction, including the need for EpiPen (epinephrine) treatment. Parents of children with severe food allergies should provide the classroom teacher with appropriate snacks, so their child may join in at snack time with their classmates.

C. GENERAL PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

Inclement or Excessively Hot Weather - On days of inclement or excessively hot weather, children will be kept inside. Playtime will be held in our Christian Life Center (CLC), which is available to us on most days.

Snow Days - When severe weather conditions exist, please listen to the radio for our school closing announcement. FM radio stations WJBR (99.5) and WSTW (93.7) will announce our preschool by name (Ebenezer Preschool.) NBC Channel 10 in Philadelphia will place our closing notice on their scroll screen and their Internet website. A message will also be placed on our school voice message service if possible. Your classroom teacher may also use a phone tree system for notification. We monitor Christina and Red Clay School District closing announcements to help determine our preschool closing decision.

Fire Drills - Fire drills are held on a monthly basis in order to familiarize our children with proper and safe procedures for emergency exiting of our building. In the event of a fire or other emergency, students will be evacuated according to an established plan. The preschool is inspected on a regular basis by the State of Delaware Fire Marshal. Emergency exit routes are posted just inside the door of each classroom.

Food Service - A midmorning snack is available to the children. It is accompanied by juice, milk or water. Other snacks are occasionally provided by parents to celebrate birthdays, holidays, to coordinate with lesson plans, and other occasions, designated by the preschool staff. Suggested drinks include: apple juice, orange juice or other mixed fruit drinks. Please do not bring sugar sweetened red punch, grape juice or food items that contain peanuts or peanut butter. Other snacks can include crackers, breads, pretzels, fruits, cheese, and vegetables. Please cut vegetables into bite-sized pieces.

Parents are responsible for providing lunch for their child on "Stay Days." Ebenezer preschool does not provide lunch.

D. PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Student Release Policy - Children assigned to our care may be released only to the parents, legal guardians or those persons designated on our Contact Sheet of Emergency Numbers. Parents are responsible for notifying the classroom teacher/assistant if someone else will be picking up your child. A signed written note from the parent/legal guardian must be on file. In emergencies, notice from a parent or legal guardian may be given and accepted over the phone. The Director or teacher/assistant should be familiar enough with the parent that they can verify your identity over the phone. The identities of persons on the Contact Sheet, who are unknown to our staff, will be double checked by asking to see and comparing the picture and name on a current Drivers License. If there is a child custody issue, an official copy of the Court Order must be in our classroom file in the Director's office and in the child's records in each classroom. Without a copy of the court order, our staff will be unable to prevent either parent from taking a child from our school. All legal documents given to us are treated with appropriate confidentiality. These files are available only to those "on a need to know basis."

Drop- Off and Pick- Up Times - Please escort your child to their classroom. Sign the child in on sheets provided. Doors open at 9:00 AM. Children arriving after 9:15 AM. are a disruption to our normal classroom routine. Please make every effort to assure your child arrives at his/her class on time. Children may be picked up starting at 11:50 AM. You must sign your child out of his/her classroom. Delaware regulations require that an adult (18 or older) sign a child into and out of their classroom each day.

Consistently Late Pick-Ups - We realize that there will be times when parents are unavoidably delayed in traffic, Doctor's appointments, or for other specific reasons. Please call the school as soon as you know you will be late. If you know at drop-off time, please advise your child's teacher or assistant. If a family is late for pick-up more than two (2) times, a late fee of one dollar (\$1.00) per minute (beginning at 12:10 PM) will be charged.

Stay Day - Hours are 12:00 PM until 2:00 PM. If you want your child to participate in our Stay Day program, please sign up by Tuesday each week on the Stay Day program sign up sheets. You can sign up on the day you wish to have your child stay, provided there are at least six others already registered. Stay Day may be canceled because of bad weather, staff meetings, scheduling conflicts, unavailable personnel, or insufficient participation. Payment for Stay Day is due on the day your child attends. Coupon Books (ten visits) are available in the office.

Lunch on Stay Day - Parents should provide a nutritious lunch for their children and include food from the following food groups: dairy products, protein, fruits, vegetables and grains.

Parent/Teacher Communication - We communicate with our parents in a number of ways. Some of them are as follows:

- **Parent Bulletin Board**
This is located outside your child's classroom. Class schedules will be posted here as well as other notices from your child's teacher.
- **Bulletin Board Across From The Director's Office**
Informative notices and updates of a more general nature will be posted here.
- **Child's Book Bag Notices**
Occasionally your child's teacher will send home a note this way. Please check your child's book bag each day.
- **Monthly Newsletters**
The Director publishes a newsletter each month and sends it home in your child's book bag.
- **Special Notices Posted on Entry Doors or Main Hallways**
Notices needing immediate attention are posted on entry doors and main hallways.
- **Parent Phone Tree**
Your child's teacher may set up a "parent phone tree" to notify you of school closings or other important classroom news. Ask if one has been set up for your child's class.
- **Classroom Phone Directory**
The classroom directory is made available for parents who wish to contact other parents regarding class parties or other school business. Please do not use this list for the purpose of commercial/business solicitation.

School Calendar - A calendar for the school year will be distributed by your classroom teacher at the beginning of the school year.

Field Trips - Parents must accompany their child on field trips to destinations outside of school. Permission slips with information regarding dates, times and necessary fees will be sent home before scheduled trips. While some activities may permit siblings to participate, other field trips are exclusively for preschoolers and their parents.

Special Programs Scheduled – Special educational programs provided by outside educators are occasionally scheduled during the school year. These programs may require an additional fee for their services. You will be notified if a program is scheduled and if a fee is required.

Individual Parent/Teacher Conferences are held twice a year. The initial conference may be in the form of a progress report. Sign up sheets will be available to schedule appointments to speak with the teacher. You may also schedule a conference with your child's teacher before or after school hours as needed. Please remember that mornings are busy times for the teachers as they prepare for the day ahead, they may not be able to confer with you at that time.

Director - Please feel free to speak to our director regarding any comments or questions you have about your child's progress or our program at any time. If necessary we can schedule an appointment. An appointment will limit interruptions during our conversation. Your comments will be held in strict confidence and shared only on an "as needed" basis with teachers or staff at your request.

E. CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

Core Curriculum Goals and Instructional Methods Overview

Our goal is to provide our preschool children with a wide variety of learning experiences focusing on the following concepts:

- Learning through play.
- Presenting challenging opportunities to succeed.
- Developing self help skills and independence... "I think I can, I think I can."
- Learning to express needs and feelings in words.
- Develop manners and respect for self and others.
- Learning to share and take turns.
- Introductions to letters, sounds, shapes, and color identification.
- Developing a positive attitude toward education, home, school, and church.

Interest Centers:

Children learn best through personal involvement and play. Our centers provide an abundant opportunity for a wide range of sensory experience: touching, hearing, smelling, and tasting. Interest centers allow children to create, explore, observe, invent, and learn.

Examples of centers are:

- Listening/Reading Center (to develop a lifelong love for books.)
- Home Living/Dramatic Play Center (to dramatize home and family situations.)
- Block/Toy Center (to build, create, and play.)
- Manipulative Play Center (for development in eye/hand coordination and body dexterity.)
- Music Center (to experiment with sound and rhythm.)
- Art Center (for free expression to create, experiment, and practice skills that are child-directed.)
- God's World Science Center (for discovering and stimulating the imagination of the children as they learn about the wonders of God's world.)
- Math Center (to provide opportunities experimenting with measuring, counting, weighing, calculating, and evaluations.)

Our Musikgarten Music Program

Ebenezer Pre-School's Musikgarten Music Program, *God's Children Sing*, is an experience-based curriculum for children up to 5 years of age. It includes methods and materials which promote the child's musical development within the context of nurturing the family's life of faith. Classes meet for 30 minutes every week, while pre-school is in session.

The curriculum for our 2 and 3 year old classes are divided into two semesters: *God, My Family, and Me*, and *God's Wonderful World*. Each unit of lessons follows the development of the main topic mentioned in the title. *God, My Family and Me* moves from the child's self-awareness as a child of God outward to family, pets, grandparents, friends and the church family. In January, we'll begin our 2nd semester, *God's Wonderful World*, which focuses on God's creation: birds, oceans, night/day, animals, and weather, along with the concepts of working together and growing up.

The curriculum for our 4 year old classes is also divided into two semesters: *Friends in God's World* and *Friends of Jesus*. First semester lessons are centered around a scripture reading and a related story. *Friends in God's World* includes stories from the Hebrew Scriptures, such as The Creation and Noah's Ark. Our 2nd semester with *Friends of Jesus*, focuses on stories about Jesus from the Gospels and one story about St. Francis of Assisi.

F. HANDBOOK REVISIONS

Ebenezer Preschool reserves the right to amend the Parent Handbook at any time as the EPS Board and administration deem necessary. Amendments to the Parent Handbook made during the school year will be available to each family within a week of official publication of the revision.