



## **Preschool Parent Handbook**

Welcome to the Preschool Ministry at First Baptist Church, Crestview, FL. We are so excited to have your family as part of our ministry. We believe that children are gift from God and we want to lovingly provide the best care possible. The purpose of this policy is to promote unity and understanding between the children, parents and caregivers.

### **Check-in and Drop-off Procedures**

1. The Preschool Department will be open 15 minutes prior to church activities and remain open until approximately 15 minutes after the church activity ends. It is our policy to always have two caregivers present in each classroom. We want our parents to be comfortable leaving your child in our care; therefore, you are welcome to walk your child to and from their classroom and stay for a few minutes if you would like. Or, if you prefer, we can walk your child to class and bring them to you.
2. When you first arrive in the Preschool Department, you should take a few seconds to check your child into class. This is done at the computer at the front of the Preschool Department. After checking your child in, you will receive two tags, one for the child's nametag and one as a pick-up tag. These tags have a matching code on them so that we can double check that a child is going home with the right adult.
3. All children cry sometimes when being left by a parent, even ones who attend childcare on a regular basis. We understand and expect it. In most cases, crying stops a few moments after you leave. If your child continues to cry after fifteen minutes (or a time period specified by the parents), we will notify you. This will become less common with regular attendance.
4. Parents are welcome to take a pager or we can contact you via text message if there is an issue with your child.
5. Children will only be released to a parent, unless you have informed us that another authorized person will pick up your child. This person must be an adult have the corresponding tag to pick up your child. Children will not be released to siblings or teenagers.

### **Clothing and Equipment**

1. Diaper bags, clothing, and other personal items **MUST BE LABELED** with the child's full name. Please include a change of clothing, extra diapers and a plastic bag for soiled items.
2. Changing table and toys are wiped down with a sterilized solution after each use.
3. We ask that your child leave personal toys or other possessions at home unless it is a "security" item (pacifier, blanket, etc.).

## **Health Guidelines for all Family Members and Caregivers**

1. We want to provide a healthy environment, so we ask you to keep your child home if you have observed any of the following within the past 24 hours:

fever	vomiting
diarrhea	questionable rash
excessive coughing	discharge in or around the eyes
green or yellow runny nose	any communicable disease

2. If your child is being treated with an antibiotic, he or she should have received treatment for at least 24 hours before coming to church.

3. If your child becomes ill while in our care, you will be notified immediately.

4. No medication will be given to any child. Please administer before leaving or return to administer.

5. Parents should report any allergies to the caregivers.

## **Food**

1. If your child has a food allergy or special need related to food, please let us know

2. We provide goldfish, animal crackers, raisins and lemonade for snack time. You are welcome to provide a snack for you child if you want them to have something different, but please make sure it is labeled with their name.

3. For nursing mothers, you are welcome to nurse your child in one of the preschool rooms. If you desire a more private setting, there is a nursing room located in the back of the worship center. The nursing room is equipped with rocking chairs, a changing table, extra diapers, wipes and bottles of water.

## **Diapering and Toileting**

1. Parents have the option to have a volunteer caregiver change the child's diaper or have them page you to change your child's diaper.

2. In our changing stations we provide a changing pad and latex gloves. Diapers, wipes and extra clothes should be provided by you in your child's diaper bag. However, we do have a few extra diapers and wipes just in case you forget.

3. As a preschool department, we are always happy to assist you with your child's development through their early years, including working with you on potty training while your child is in our care. While in the training phase, please take the time to communicate with us your preferences on how you train them (ex. how often you take them, stand/sit for boys, etc.) so that we can effectively assist you during this time.

4. As a preschool department, we must set some milestones that your child should reach before they come to church in underwear so that we can provide quality care for all the children in our care.

### Milestones:

- Be able to verbalize the need to go potty BEFORE they must go. They must be able to say the words, "I have to go potty" or similar.
- Be able to postpone going if they must wait for someone who is in the bathroom or if we are outside and away from a restroom.
- Be able to wipe themselves after using the toilet.

5. When a child has an accident, it requires our volunteers spend extended time changing and cleaning your child as well as cleaning the contaminated area and keeping the other children in the room away from the contaminated area. Therefore, if your child does not yet meet these milestones, you will need to send them to church in a pull-up until it is determined that the child is fully potty trained. The Preschool Coordinator will make the final determination on when your child is permitted to wear underwear to church. This decision will be made after the child demonstrates these milestones on a consistent basis and with input from the parents and volunteers. It is important to remember that even though a child may be "fully" trained at home, it often takes longer at school or church where there are more distractions and where your child is not as familiar with the volunteers as they are with their family members.

### **Discipline and Guidance**

Every child is unique and made in the image of God. All children will be provided a safe, nurturing environment that models Biblical truths. Expectations will be clear and consistent with the child's development. Affirmation and encouragement are always preferred. It is important to understand that discipline is not "punishment of bad behavior". The word discipline means "teaching," and this is the goal in dealing with negative behavior in children- to teach them Biblical truths!

Physical discipline, such as spanking, is never permitted. Using physical restraint to prevent a child from doing something disruptive or dangerous is permitted and may, in some instances, be necessary. The Preschool Coordinator will be notified immediately if this technique is used and the Preschool Coordinator will notify the parents of the situation. For example, if a child is hitting or biting another child, that child should be physically be removed to prevent the action from happening again.

We will set clear limits for the children and use redirection as much as possible to correct behavior. For example, "The truck is for rolling. We don't hit Jeremiah with it. It will hurt him. The truck rolls on the floor. See!" Or we may offer another activity. "Here is a ball. We can roll the ball." We may also talk through the problems, describing what we see and how children are reacting, to help solve a problem situation. For example, "Jeremiah wants the car. Janna wants the car. What can we do? Here is another car. Here is a truck. Which one would you like Jeremiah?"

Of course, the most important way we can teach children is by modeling Christian behavior in our own actions and in the way we behave. As we model caring, respectful behavior and follow the above guidelines, we are helping children make sense of their world and learn to solve their own problems. This also shows children that their caregivers love them and want to help them. This is our goal- showing God's love to your children!

## **Safety Procedures**

Detailed fire, tornado and active shooter procedures are posted in each classroom in the preschool department.

- In the event of a fire the children will be evacuated out the Emergency Exit at the end of the preschool hallway and will be taken across the street to the parking lot of the Wild Olive. Parents should evacuate the building and make your way around the outside of the building to meet us in the parking lot.
- In the event of a tornado, the children will be sheltered in the inner bathrooms of the preschool department and kept in the preschool department until picked up by their parent/guardian.
- In the event of an active shooter, the entire preschool department will be kept on lock down and sheltered in the bathrooms until we are given the all clear by the church staff.