

PRESCHOOL HANDBOOK



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Thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through
our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 15:57

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DEAR PARENTS,

Welcome to Victory Preschool!

We are excited to be a part of your child's education. Thank you for sharing your child with us during this important time of development. We take our responsibility very seriously and we ask that you pray for us during the school year.

Our staff is comprised of Christian men and women who are committed to your child. They are gifted and trained in the principles of early childhood growth and development. At Victory, your child will experience individual attention in a nurturing, Christ-centered environment.

Our staff works with parents as a team to coach your child for success in school. May God bless our teamwork!

Lord's Blessings,

Anne Grotefend

Anne Grotefend
Preschool Director
B.S. & M.Ed. in Early Childhood Education

Train a child in the way he should go,
and when he is old he will not turn from it.
Proverbs 22:6

WELCOME!

What We Believe

Our preschool believes that the guidance and teaching a child receives in early childhood greatly impacts the success he or she experiences in school. We are confident that we can help provide a foundation for your child's success!

We will coach your child through play and multi-sensory experiences in a flexible curriculum within a comfortable academic atmosphere. Every day your child will have opportunities to experience challenges and success in the following developmental areas:

1. **Spiritual Growth.** Your child will learn about mankind's sin and God's grace in our Savior, Jesus Christ, through Bible stories and open discussion.
2. **Academics.** Your child will discover his/her academic potential and will gain foundational knowledge through new learning experiences and hands-on activities that will help to promote success in school.
3. **Emotions.** Your child will grow in confidence, responsibility and self-discipline through encouragement and open communication.
4. **Social Skills.** Your child will have opportunities to share, respect and care for others, cooperate and interact with adults and peers through group and individual activities.
5. **Physical Development.** Your child will exercise his/her gross (large muscle) and fine motor skills in indoor and outdoor experiences to develop dexterity, strength and coordination.

We also believe that it is important for our staff to work closely with parents to provide a comfortable learning environment for your child. Regular, on-going communication between parents and the preschool staff is important to your child's success. Please reach out to your child's teacher with any concerns at any point in the school year.



HEALTH & SAFETY

Toilet Training

As your child enters the early years of education, it is important that s/he is fully toilet trained before starting school. This is necessary for both the teacher and the child to focus their energies on other areas of development while at school. At the same time, we recognize that each child varies in their individual development and that they may still have occasional accidents. **All students should be able to identify and communicate when they need to use the restroom and go with minimal help from adults.** If a student has 3 or more accidents a week, the parents will be consulted and may be asked to remove the child from the program until toilet training progress can be made.

Medication

It is always best if medication can be administered at home in the morning or evening, but in the event it is necessary, medications may be administered by a designated staff member. A Medication Form needs to be completed and signed by a parent before we can administer the medication. All medication will be given to the Preschool Director for proper storage.

Never send medication to school in your child's backpack or pocket and **never** store medication in his/her cubby. For prescribed medications, give the Preschool Director the medicine in its original child-resistant container, labeled by a pharmacist with your child's name, the prescription date, the name of the medication, its expiration date, administration, storage and disposal instructions. For over-the-counter medication, provide the Preschool Director with a note from your child's health care provider recommending the medication, indicating the dosage, frequency, method of use and duration of administration. The medication should be in a child resistant container with the child's full name and should include instructions for administration and storage recommended by the manufacturer and its expiration date.

Allergies

Please make sure both the teacher and Preschool Director are aware of any and all allergies your child may have so that we may take the proper precautions.

Illness

If your child is ill, please do not send him/her to preschool. If your child becomes ill at preschool, s/he will be isolated from the other children and you will be contacted and asked to pick up your child for the day. If a fever of 100.4 or higher is present, please ensure that the fever has subsided without medication for 24 hours before returning to school.

HEALTH, CONT.

Infectious diseases may require a doctor's release before the child returns to school and in many cases require 24 hours of antibiotics before returning to school. Please report such occurrences to the Preschool Director.

Injuries & Accidents

A first aid kit containing all the materials required by the Department of Children & Families is readily available in the classroom. It will be used at the teacher's discretion. If a minor injury occurs, an accident report form will be completed by the teacher. The accident report will need to be signed by the parent at pick-up as an acknowledgement of the injury and its treatment.

Parental Liability

In the event that your child experiences a health emergency and the supervising adult considers it necessary to contact the paramedics, parents will be financially liable for all emergency service costs.

Fire Drills

Victory Preschool performs a fire drill each month for the safety of your child. Evacuation routes are posted in the classroom for parents to see.

Weather Related Closings

Victory Preschool will close for weather in accordance with the Duval County Schools and the National Weather Service advisory. If Duval County Schools are cancelled due to weather, Victory Preschool is also cancelled. Weather make-up days will be scheduled as needed. You will be notified of make-up days as soon as they are determined.



SECURITY

Checking In & Out

For your peace of mind and for your child's safety, all children must be signed in and out by a parent or by a person whom you have specifically authorized in writing ahead of time. No child will be released to anyone without parental authorization.

Identification may be requested from any person picking up your child. If someone other than a parent will be picking up a child, please notify the teacher in writing and make the individual aware that s/he will be required to show a picture I.D. upon arrival.

At the beginning of the day...

Please escort your child to his/her classroom, check in your child as instructed by the staff, and be certain that your child is received by a staff member. Classroom staff are expected to acknowledge children with a warm welcome.

Separation anxiety can sometimes be more difficult for the parent than the child. We suggest a hug, reassurance that you will be returning to pick him/her up, and then a non-lingering departure. In most cases, the child quickly settles down, regroups, gets involved and continues the day in a happy frame of mind. Please be assured that if this is not the case, you will be consulted, and we will work together to develop strategies to assist in your child's adjustment.

At the end of the day...

Please wait at the entrance to the classroom for the teacher to transfer your child into your care and check him/her out as directed. If talking to the teacher or other parents after this time, please take care to supervise your child!

Visitors & Volunteers

From time to time, Victory Preschool may recruit special visitors or volunteers to help with the education of your child. All personnel working with the children will receive the background screening required by the Department of Children & Families.

If you are interested in serving as a classroom volunteer, please speak with your child's teacher or the Preschool Director.

Security Cameras

For the safety and security of your child and our staff, there are several security cameras located throughout the church and preschool. Your child will always be in sight of at least one teacher, within sight/sound of a second staff member, as well as in view of a monitored & recorded video feed. Access to security footage is limited to office staff and is stored for several weeks.

Providing your child with a safe and secure learning environment is our top priority.

FOOD & NUTRITION

Snacks & Lunches

Parents are responsible for providing their child with a daily snack (and lunch if staying past 12:15 p.m.). Snacks should not require any preparation by the teachers and should be easily eaten within the 15-minute snack period.

We urge you to send healthy food items that are familiar favorites for your child.

Some combination of the following items is suggested:

1. Protein (meat, cheese, egg, fish)
2. Bread (or another grain product)
3. Dairy (milk or yogurt)
4. Fruit and/or vegetable
5. Water

Here are some helpful tips for packing a snack for your child:

1. Drinks and food can be kept cool or warm with an insulated container or lunch box. We recommend keeping an ice pack in the lunchbox for cold items and using a Thermos to pack hot foods.
2. Please do not send soda or candy with your child's lunch.
3. Include eating utensils when necessary.

Finally, please ensure that your child eats a nutritious breakfast before coming to school. A healthy breakfast will benefit their attention, attitude, and overall experience in preschool.

Food Allergies

Please make sure that both the Preschool Director and the teacher are aware of any food allergies your child may have. **To keep all our children safe, we will declare the campus to be [allergen-free] (if need be) and will communicate which foods cannot come to school.**

Birthday Treats

We believe birthdays are a very special day to celebrate your child! Families are welcome, but not obligated, to bring a treat to share with the class.

All birthday treats should be commercially prepared with ingredients listed. Please speak with your child's teacher about any food allergies that may exist in the class before purchasing the treat. We appreciate your involvement in making this day a very special one for your child!



ATTENDANCE

Attendance Policy

Parents of children enrolled at Victory will:

1. Bring their child to school each school day.
2. Ensure their child's arrival in the classroom by 9:00 a.m.
3. Allow their child to participate in preschool activities until 12:15 p.m.
4. Communicate any absences to their child's teacher. Communication information will be shared at the beginning of the school year. Parent or doctor's notes are required to excuse the following absences:
 - Illness or injury of the child or a family member
 - Physician or dentist appointment
 - Infectious disease or parasitic infestation
 - Funeral/memorial service or bereavement upon the death of a family member
 - Compliance with a court order
 - Family vacation (please take vacations during planned school breaks whenever possible)
5. Pick up their child on time. Fees will apply for late pick-ups (15+ minutes past ending time).
6. Sign an Attendance Verification Form every month, if their child participates in VPK (p.9).

More information about Victory's attendance guidelines can be found on the Attendance & Tardiness Policy, which parents must sign upon enrollment.

Preschool Calendar

A preschool calendar is available at www.victorypreschool.org and will also be sent directly to parents. This school-year calendar mirrors the Duval County School calendar as closely as possible. The VPK year consists of 540 hours of education. Please take note of the days the preschool will be closed during the year and make alternative care arrangements.

Summer care may also be available with plans announced in the spring.



TUITION & FEES

Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK/4K)

Your child's VPK education is completely free! All children who turn 4 years old by September 1st and obtain a Certificate of Eligibility from the Duval County Early Learning Coalition will not pay any tuition. Victory's free VPK program runs from Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. (Wrap-around care is available from 7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. for a separate fee paid by the family.)

The state-funded tuition that Victory receives is dependent on your child's attendance and can be cut if your child is absent more than 3 times in a month. Families that take advantage of this voucher program are expected to take the attendance of their child seriously and commit to bringing them every day.

Private pay tuition options are available in the rare case that a family does not qualify for the free VPK program.

Three-Year-Old Preschool (3K)

Tuition rates for our part-time and full-time programs are available upon request and are subject to change from year to year. Tuition is expected on a weekly basis regardless of illness, vacation, or holidays from school, with the exception of the Thanksgiving, Christmas, and spring breaks.

Extended Care

Morning, afternoon, and full-day extended care options are available on a regular or flexible basis for an extra fee. Parents using the flex option are required to let Victory staff know one week in advance that care is needed. Due to staff consideration and cost, if your child's name is on the extended care list, the appropriate fees will be invoiced, even if you do not end up using the service. This includes absence for illness.

Camp Victory (summer program)

It is the intention of Victory Preschool to run a summer program for its students of both the current and upcoming school year, subject to staff availability and student enrollment. VPK vouchers will not be accepted for the summer program. Tuition rates will be published each spring.

Victory provides quality care and education at an affordable price.

CLASSROOM GUIDELINES

Discrimination Policy

All children of the proper age can attend our program regardless of sex, color, race, ethnic origin, disability, or religion. We reserve the right to not accept, or to ask for the withdrawal of any child who is unable to participate fully in our program because of our facilities, groupings, or maturation. Appropriate efforts will be made, however, to meet each child's individual need.

Student Conduct

Early education needs to occur in an environment that is conducive to learning. Any behavior that prevents learning from taking place is unacceptable. Correct behavior will be positively reinforced with encouragement and praise. All inappropriate behavior will be corrected by the teacher immediately; if this behavior persists, parents will be consulted. In extreme cases, the child may be dismissed from the program.

Unacceptable behavior includes fighting, hitting, kicking or rough play of any kind; obscene or vulgar language; deliberate disobedience or disrespect to any adult; disruptive noises or sounds; throwing items inside; running inside; damaging property; leaving the classroom or playground without permission; and lack of cooperation.

Discipline

Discipline is derived from the word "disciple" which means "a learner." At Victory Preschool we do not think of discipline as punishment, but rather as a form of education. It is our goal to help your child learn self-control as well as Christian attitudes and behaviors. Teachers will deal with each child in accordance with Christian love, reflecting the grace and forgiveness of Christ Jesus.

We at Victory Preschool use positive discipline, redirecting behavior and providing alternatives. We guide the children toward acceptable actions and words rather than focusing on the "don'ts." We never use physical punishment. If necessary, a teacher will remove a child from a particular situation and give them a "time out" to help them consider better choices.

CLASSROOM, CONT.

Daily Schedule

The daily schedule is posted in each classroom for observation. Each day will include Bible story learning; snack; indoor & outdoor play; children's literature exploration; and introduction to early math, science, art, and language arts concepts through hands-on activities.

Clothing

Please keep the following guidelines in mind as you dress your child for class:

1. Children must always wear underwear. Pull-ups are not allowed except in cases of physical or developmental delay (doctor's note required).
2. Dress your child appropriately for the weather. If it is cold outside, make sure they have a jacket.
3. Shoes should be **closed-toe** with rubber soles. Socks are always required. Crocs, thongs, sandals, slides and platform shoes are unsafe for the playground. Shoes without socks will cause blisters and will smell. Inappropriate footwear may result in your child not being permitted to play on the playground.
4. Clothing should not depict any violent, rude or disrespectful characters or actions, nor advertise items that are inappropriate for children. If you are unsure, please ask the Preschool Director before permitting your child to wear the item.
5. Items with belts and buckles make timely and independent bathroom usage a challenge. Please ensure that your child can manage their own clothing in the bathroom.
6. Watches, rings, necklaces, bracelets, earrings and any other type of jewelry are discouraged. These items can easily be lost, broken or cause injury on the playground. Please leave these items at home.
7. Please put your child's name on jackets, sweaters and any clothing items that might be removed during the day. (Labeling your child's backpack, lunchbox, and water bottle is also requested for teacher ease in identification.)

COMMUNICATION

Websites

Victory Preschool's website will be able to answer most questions about the preschool. There you will also find copies of the school calendar, monthly newsletter, and parenting resources. www.victorypreschool.org

You're also encouraged to peruse Victory Lutheran Church's website to be familiar with the church where your child attends preschool. If you have any questions, the Pastor or Preschool Director will be happy to answer them. www.victorylutheran.org

Parent Feedback

At the end of each school year, parents will have the opportunity to fill out an exit survey regarding their family's experience at Victory Preschool.

At any time, if you have a complaint or concern related to Victory Preschool, please speak with your child's teacher or the Preschool Director about it. We are committed to working with you to resolve any issue that troubles you.

Email

Please be sure that the Preschool Director has a current email address on file for you. Email will be the main form of communication used to keep you informed about what your child is learning, provide you with reminders, and to notify you of upcoming events and calendar changes. We do not sell, share or distribute e-mail addresses.

Assessments & Conferences

The VPK student standardized assessment (STAR Early Literacy) is required to be administered three times per school year. 3K anecdotal student progress reports will be completed twice per year; VPK teachers may also conduct their own observational assessments to gauge a student's whole child development.

VPK Parent-Teacher Conferences will be scheduled in February after the mid-year assessment; otherwise, conferences for both age levels are scheduled on an as-needed basis. If you are interested in scheduling a conference to discuss your child, please speak with your child's teacher at any time during the year to arrange a day and time.

You can count on your preschool staff to speak with you about difficulties your child may experience. We will also share successes your child enjoys during the preschool day. We'll communicate our thoughts through face-to-face conversations, email, photo journaling, and telephone calls. Our goal is to have every child achieve positive growth in all areas of development. Parents and teachers will work together as a team to ensure that your child's needs are met.

Regular communication between parents and the preschool staff is important to your child's success.

GETTING STARTED

Pre-Enrollment Tour

It's a good idea for parents to visit the preschool with their child at least once prior to enrollment. The visit gives your child a chance to meet the teachers, explore the classroom, and become familiar with the new surroundings. Talk with your child about the preschool and some of the activities that take place there. This will help prepare them to return to preschool and to anticipate the fun times ahead.

Meet & Greet

Every effort will be made by the staff to set up a "Meet & Greet" visit for you, your enrolled student, & your assigned classroom teacher. It is intended that this visit will occur on the preschool campus the week before classes begin in August. We hope this visit will allow you to ask any pre-start questions of the teacher and that your child will start bonding with their teacher and feel comfortable with him/her on the first day of school. (See page 16 for more tips about helping your child settle into the school year.)

Enrollment Information

Before your child joins Victory Preschool, you will need to complete an enrollment application, medical forms, and other forms required by local and state government. This enrollment information is important for the safety of your child while he or she attends Victory. Victory considers applications for enrollment without regard to race, religion, color, sex, national origin, disability or any other basis prohibited by law. Current 3K students are given priority for the following year's VPK enrollment.

Legal Disclaimers

Victory Preschool reserves the right to revise, supplement, or rescind any policies or portion of the Handbook from time to time as it deems appropriate, in its sole and its absolute discretion. This Handbook is intended to give information about the main features of our preschool programs and certain other general information. It does not and is not intended to cover these matters in detail or serve as a contract between you and Victory Preschool. All statements in this Handbook are subject to change without notice.

SETTLING IN

The First Day of Preschool

The first day of school can be an emotional time for everyone. Kids may be nervous about the unknown while Mom and Dad are overwhelmed at how fast their child seems to be growing up. There are some positive steps you can take to help make the first day of preschool a good experience:

- Talk with your child about what to expect: new friends, a nice teacher, fun activities.
- Bring a special security item to the preschool. The item will be stored in your child's cubby during the day, but will give your child comfort to know it is there.
- Go to bed early to get plenty of sleep.
- Eat a well-balanced breakfast.
- Start early so you are not rushed. Give yourself and your child plenty of time to get ready.

Helping Your Child Adjust

New situations affect every child differently. Sometimes a child does wonderfully on the first day because everything is new and exciting, but they are anxious in the days which follow when they realize this will be a set routine. Most children need two or three weeks to fully adjust to their new environment.

The best way to support your child is to show excitement, encouragement and patience. If you need suggestions to help your child feel more at ease, speak with your child's teacher.

Beginning preschool may bring about some anxiety for parents too. Feel free to call the Church & School office (904.642.8900) anytime to see how your child is doing. Remember, Victory's goal is to provide a safe environment where your child can learn and develop...and have fun!

We welcome the opportunity to serve you and your family! We hope you choose to join our Victory Preschool family!