



*A Ministry of*

First Methodist Church of Tulsa

**Parent Handbook**

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# **THE EARLY LEARNING ACADEMY**

## **Who We Are**

### **OUR MISSION**

The purpose of Early Learning Academy is to provide an environment in a child-centered Christian preschool which strives to meet the spiritual, physical, mental, emotional, and social needs of the child so that the child will develop wholeness as desired by our Lord Jesus Christ. With this purpose in mind, the following objectives will serve to accomplish this purpose:

1. To implement a curriculum that is based on the Word of God and not only presents units of study which interest the child and include creative activities, but also integrate these units with corresponding Biblical units and scriptural principles.
2. To identify and meet the developmental needs of the child such as gross motor skills, fine motor skills, visual-perceptual and auditory discrimination skills, etc.
3. To identify entry behaviors for each child and to accomplish measurable academic objectives and readiness skills within the context of the child's own specific developmental time clock and needs.
4. To reinforce Biblical truths and scriptural principles relevant to the child's life throughout the course of the day, seeking to help the child develop behaviors and attitudes consistent with God's Word.
5. To identify the social and emotional needs of the child and apply Biblical truths as the answer to the identified needs. To help the child become aware of himself and his feelings and the feelings of others and learn how to respect, manage, express, and deal with these feelings.
6. To help the child recognize that God is our Creator and His love is manifested through His Son, Jesus Christ, the child's best friend and Lord. Having the love of God through Jesus makes us truly joyful.

The overall goal of the staff and teachers will be to help the child develop fine and gross motor capabilities within his developmental age framework, to develop his mind through activities in which he can explore and discover in a loving, supportive atmosphere, and to develop spiritually by relating to others in an environment where God's love and scriptural principles for relationships are in evidence.

# Health Policies for Early Learning Academy

A preschool can be a prime environment for the spread of germs that cause infections. Because of this, we are committed to preventing the spread of illness among our children. While we make every effort to maintain a clean and sanitary environment, infection prevention begins with keeping contagious children at home. Below are a few important guidelines to help determine when your child should stay home.

**Emergencies:** If your child becomes ill or an emergency arises during preschool hours, we will contact you using the phone numbers provided on your registration forms.

**Medications:** The director will administer any medication your child needs during school hours, provided written authorization has been given by a parent or guardian.

Please follow these steps:

1. Bring the medication in its original container, whether it is prescription or over-the-counter. This ensures the director knows exactly what is being administered. If it is not in a prescription-labeled container, clearly label it with your child's name.
2. Contact the Preschool office, give the medication directly to the director, and complete and sign an authorization form that includes dosage and timing.
3. **Do not** leave medication in your child's lunchbox or diaper bag.

## Health Guidelines

**Illnesses that require a child to stay home include the following:**

**Fever:** A temperature over 100°F. Your child must be fever-free (99°F or below) **WITHOUT MEDICATION** for at least **24 hours** before returning to school.

**Vomiting and/or Diarrhea:** These symptoms can be caused by contagious viruses or bacteria. Your child may return when vomiting has stopped and stools have been normal for at least 24 hours. If your child vomits or has two loose stools while at school, you will be contacted and asked to pick them up.

**Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye):** This contagious bacterial infection affects one or both eyes and is characterized by bloodshot eyes and pus-like discharge. Your child may return after **24 hours** of using antibiotic eye drops or ointment and once the discharge has stopped.

Please consider keeping your child home if they display any of the following:

- **Listlessness:** Unusual quietness, lack of participation in activities, poor appetite, or low energy may be early signs of illness.

- **Earache and/or Ear Drainage:** Yellow or green drainage from the ear may indicate a bacterial infection. Please consult your child's doctor as soon as possible.
- **Runny Nose and/or Cough:** These may indicate a cold or allergies. If nasal discharge is thick and yellow or green, it may be contagious. Clear drainage is typically allergy-related. If symptoms are allergy-related, a **doctor's note is required** for our files.
- **Allergies:** If your child has a chronic rash, runny nose, cough, or loose stools due to allergies, please provide a **doctor's note** confirming the condition is allergy-related and not contagious.
- **Sore Throat and Swollen Neck Glands:** These may be signs of a viral or bacterial illness. A child diagnosed with strep throat may return after 24 hours on antibiotics and once fever-free.

### **Contagious Illnesses that you will be notified if your child is exposed to:**

If your child is exposed to any of the following illnesses at school, we will notify the class so you can monitor your child for symptoms:

- **Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease (HFMD):**

A common, highly contagious virus that causes mouth sores and a rash on the hands, feet, and sometimes the diaper area. Symptoms also include fever, sore throat, irritability, and decreased appetite. It spreads through direct contact with saliva or mucus. HFMD is highly contagious and spreads easily to other children and adults. A child may return to school **once all blisters have dried and they have been fever-free for 24 hours**.

- **Head Lice (Pediculosis):** If lice are found, the child will be sent home. All children in the class will be checked that day and again in 1–2 weeks. After a **full treatment and removal of lice**, the child may return **after 24 hours** and must be free of all live lice and nits.

### **Other common illnesses:**

Children may be exposed to viruses such as the flu or RSV during school. The director will use their discretion to notify families if multiple cases of the same illness occur in a class. If your child is diagnosed with the flu or RSV, please bring a **doctor's note** releasing them to return to school.

*These health policies have been put in place to ensure the safety and well-being of all children and staff. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak with the director.*

## Financial Guidelines

Tuition is the same each month regardless of days missed due to illness, holidays, or inclement weather. Your child's monthly tuition is based on the actual number of days he or she is expected to attend school during the nine-month school year.

Tuition is to be paid in monthly installments. Tuition may be paid in one of the following ways: Check, cash, through ProCare by bank draft or credit/debit card. Checks should be made payable to "FMC". **Please write your child's name on the check's memo to ensure proper credit.** If payment is sent by your bank, please make sure it is noted on the check that the payment is for ELA tuition and with the child's name to ensure proper credit. You will receive an invoice each month through ProCare.

Tuition is due by the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month. If your family has an unusual or emergency-type financial problem affecting tuition payment, please talk with the director so that a solution can be worked out. Failure to pay tuition in a timely manner may result in a late fee of \$5/day. **Once tuition is paid each month, no refunds will be issued.** If a family plans to be absent from school for a vacation or an extended amount of time, tuition still must be paid to secure their classroom spot. There is no reduction in tuition if classes are canceled because of inclement weather. In the case of a returned check, the ELA requires a cash payment to cover the check, plus a returned check fee of \$30.

**Withdrawal:** If for some reason you need to withdraw your child from our program we request a 30-day notification. Any tuition paid will not be refunded.

### **Tuition Rates for the 2025-2026 School Year (September – May):**

2 Days a week.....**\$240**

3 Days a week.....**\$360**

**Families that enroll multiple children receive a 10% discount off their entire monthly tuition.**

## **Policy on Biting**

Biting is a common and natural phase many children go through as part of their development. The preschool staff must immediately respond to all biting incidents to maintain a safe and nurturing environment for all children in our care. For each instance of biting, teachers will calmly remove the child who bit from the situation, verbally reinforce that biting is not okay, and redirect the child to another activity. The teachers will focus on comforting the child who was bitten. Once all children are calm and cared for, teachers will call the parents of both the bitten child(ren) and the biting child, without identifying the other child(ren) involved. Teachers will also strive to shadow any child prone to biting to try to identify possible triggers and to help the child deal with such triggers before they prompt biting behavior.

While the preschool staff will do what they can to minimize biting, additional action will sometimes be necessary for persistent biters or serious bites. If a child bites another child three times without breaking the skin on the bitten child(ren) in any one day, then the child will be sent home for the remainder of the day. If a bitten child's skin is broken due to a bite, the biting child will be sent home immediately, even if it is the first offense of the day. The teacher(s) and the Preschool Director will schedule a meeting with the parents of any child sent home for biting to discuss further techniques for addressing the behavior. If a child's biting persists after he or she returns to school and after consultations between teachers, Director and parents, and the biting behavior is adding significant and undue stress to the other children in the classroom and the overall classroom environment, then it may prove necessary to temporarily suspend the student's enrollment, until there is improvement.

The point of this policy is to help the child realize the severity of biting friends, not to shame the child or the parent, with the goal of resolving the problem for all those involved.

## Potty Training Policy and Guidelines

We all can agree that having our little ones potty trained is a wonderful accomplishment for the child and the parents. We, as your child's teachers and caregivers, are just as motivated to help your family achieve that goal. Sometimes, as you may already know, getting to that point can be a struggle and we don't always know the right path to take. Keep in mind every child develops at their own rate and try not to push your readiness on your child; it could possibly do more harm than good.

We will work as a team to ensure your child's success. Communication between us on your child's readiness is key to a happy, successful training. All participants must be 100 percent committed. The signs of readiness to toilet train at home are often different than in a group setting. Please keep in mind that the activity level here at the preschool can distract your child from responding to an urge to use the potty, more so than at your home. In a group, the child faces challenges that can delay their readiness, such as a fear of missing out on something. This can cause a child to wait until the last second and accidents can occur. Our teachers can and will look for signs the child needs to go but remember that in a busy setting like a preschool, it is not always possible.

Following are a few of the signs we see indicating your child may be ready to begin potty training at preschool:

- Shows an interest in the toilet.
- Can recognize when their diaper is wet or soiled.
- Stays dry for a long period of time.
- Can undress and pull up his/her own pants.
- Wants to be independent.
- Can use consistent words or gestures to communicate.
- Can try to wipe themselves.

If you are seeing the same thing at home, then it could be time to begin!

Following is our policy—of what we can do and what we cannot do—when it comes to potty training at the preschool:

1. We have found potty training at preschool should begin no earlier than age 2. This does not mean that at 2 two every child is ready.
2. The child must be able to verbalize that they need to go.
3. Must show a willingness to want to sit on the preschool potty and understand its function.
4. We do not potty train in regular underwear. This is for sanitary reasons. Regular underwear cannot contain urine and feces to prevent the spread of germs in our classrooms and playrooms. Your child may wear regular underwear once they



are able to leave school in the same dry pull up/training pants they arrived at school in.

5. If you plan on using pull-ups, they must be the kind with Velcro on the sides.
6. If your child comes to school wearing regular underwear and they have an accident or accidents, we reserve the right to put the child back in a pull-up.
7. Do not dress your child in clothing that slows down the process of sitting on the potty. Examples: overalls, shirts that snap at the crotch, tights, belts, dresses/skirts (they fall in the toilets), tight fitting jeans. Do wear elastic waist pants or shorts.
8. Provide your teacher with extra pull-ups, pants/shorts, socks, and shoes. When the time comes, make sure you send several pairs of clean underwear to keep at school.
9. By the age of 4 we encourage all students to be able to clean themselves after going potty. In the Red and Orange Team classrooms, children who are fully potty trained will be coached on how to do this if they are not confident to help build this skill.

Each class that has potty-trained and potty-training students has a schedule of regular bathroom breaks, giving each student plenty of opportunities to take care of their needs.

We should, working together, be able to help your child reach that goal of potty independence.

## **Car Line Procedures:**

1. Pull up to first available cone.
2. Wait until you see a teacher approaching your car.
3. Get out and help your child in/out of their seat.
4. Buckle them as quickly as possible. If you need additional time, please pull forward and use the area just past the cones or parking lot to the left of the carline.

**Drop off is from 8:45-9:00**

**Pick up is from 1:45-2:00**

There is a \$1.00 charge per minute that you are late to pick up your child from school after 2:05pm. The first time you are late, you will be reminded of our policy with a friendly warning, but the next time, you will be charged the late fee.

We will utilize the covered parking area in the case of inclement weather during pick up and drop off. I will communicate through Procure if we will be making this change a minimum of 15 minutes prior to the drop off/pick up window. If you haven't received a notification by then, we will be proceeding in our normal spot.

## **Inclement Weather Policy**

We will use TPS as a **GUIDELINE** for determining school closures. Please watch for communication from the Director about the final decisions. These will be made by 6am the morning of closures. If you have not heard we are closed by that point, you can assume we will remain open. We will use the ProCare app to communicate this information to families.