



Parent Handbook

A Ministry of
CrossLife Church

Accredited by Association of Christian Schools International

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PART 1 INTRODUCTION

Thank you for considering First Years Preschool to be a part of your child's early years. We hope this handbook will provide you with a thorough understanding of the program provided at First Years.

We believe every child is a special creation from the hand of God. The development of each child is a unique and complex, God-ordained process; therefore, it is incumbent upon us as an early education program to provide optimum learning experiences for the whole child—experiences that include opportunities for spiritual, social/emotional, physical and cognitive growth.

A child's development is not to be hurried; neither should it be left to chance. Educational experiences are intentionally planned to meet the developmental needs of individual children and are presented in an appropriate, hands-on and dynamic manner which honors God's design of children as active, curious learners.

We look forward to an exciting year!

Sincerely,
Melanie Bishop
Program Administrator

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to provide a quality early education experience that will create a thirst for learning in the child and the skills necessary for future school success. We wish to encourage a personal relationship with the Lord, shape moral integrity and support parents in their role as the child's primary teacher.

CORE VALUES

In pursuit of our mission, First Years Preschool is committed to the following core values:

1. We believe God has a unique plan for every child's life. We are humbled He has called us to be a part of His plan and earnestly strive to honor Him in all that we say and do. *Jeremiah 29:11 "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."*
2. We believe in the uniqueness of each child's God given ability and assert that all children can thrive in an appropriate environment. *Proverbs 22:6 Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.*
3. We seek to create a love of learning through a child-centered, play based environment that values and encourages curiosity, exploration and discovery. *1 Corinthians 13:11 When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me.*
4. We desire to develop a Christian culture in our school where we understand, implement and hold one another accountable to Biblical principles of conduct and attitude. *Philippians 2:5 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.*

5. We believe we have a responsibility to provide an environment that protects a child's physical and emotional well-being and encourages the growth and development of his/her social competence. *Psalm 139:14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.*

6. We believe in fostering authentic partnerships with families that will support their role as their child's primary teacher. *Deuteronomy 6:6-7 These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.*

7. We believe in establishing and maintaining relationships with families that result in open communication, collaboration and a sense of belonging. *1 Thessalonians 5:11 Therefore encourage one another and build each other up.*

STATEMENT OF FAMILY VALUES

First Years Preschool recognizes there are a variety of structures in today's families. As our curriculum addresses the subject of marriage and families, we will teach God's plan for families as described in the Bible. We believe God defines marriage as a covenant between one man and one woman, to whom God often entrusts the care and raising of children. Children are taught to honor and obey the parents.

PHILOSOPHY

We believe a child's education is the foundation for developing their full God-given potential and the best educational approach is one focusing on the education of the whole child. Teachers will address physical, academic, social, emotional and spiritual needs. We see each of these areas as "spokes in the wheel" that make up the individual child. All must be present and in balance for the wheel to work properly...so it is with your child. We desire to see that each child possess the ability to write his/her name, begin to identify letters of the alphabet, handle disappointments, zip a coat, and walk on a balance beam. All are necessary for future success. Our Christian teachers will strive to be positive role models in the students' lives and will implement a Christian viewpoint into every area of learning.

STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

We will provide qualified teachers, a Christian environment and curriculum, as well as developmentally appropriate activities to strengthen the whole child physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually and socially. We not only seek to develop the mind, but also the child's character while striving for high academic standards and good citizenship in the pursuit of educational excellence.

EXPECTED STUDENT OUTCOMES

Upon completion of the preschool program at First Years, our goals are:

Spiritual Formation

Students will possess a firm spiritual foundation which will support them as they continue to:

- Understand who they are in Christ.
- Comprehend the sacrificial love He displayed.
- Learn how to share His love with others.

School Readiness

Students will possess the skills necessary for success in Kindergarten, including:

- Social skills, such as getting along with others and listening and following directions.
- Emotional skills, such as handling disappointment and a sense of right and wrong.
- Physical skills, such as attending to personal care, and large and fine motor development.
- Cognitive skills such as language and literacy, number sense and scientific reasoning.

LOCATION and HOURS of OPERATION

First Years Preschool is located in the Friendship Island area of CrossLife Church.

Classes are held 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Doors open at 8:55 a.m. for arrival and 12:55 p.m. for dismissal. Morning carline is offered for three year olds and VPK classes and begins at 8:55 a.m. All parents are required to use the carline in the afternoons.

ACCREDITATION

First Years Preschool has been accredited by the Association of Christian Schools International since 1998. Accreditation with ACSI involves schools in a rigorous, holistic process of organizational appraisal and improvement that engages every school member.

PART 2 PROGRAM POLICIES

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

First Years enrolls children who have reached the age of 18 months, 2, 3 or 4 years old by September first into the Older Ones, 2, 3 & 4 year old class, respectively. Beginning with the 3 year old classes, all children must be potty-trained and working towards self-sufficiency in their toileting skills. Children will be enrolled without regard to race, color, sex, religion or national origin. Registration priority is given to children of members of CrossLife and returning students. CrossLife membership is attained through four steps: a public profession of faith, baptism by immersion, completion of the *Discover* class and affirmation by the church. Open registration is held for the community when member registration is complete. Once open registration begins, all children are registered and/or placed on the waiting list on a first come-first served basis.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

First Years will make every reasonable effort to meet the individual physical and educational needs of each child. The staff will collaborate with parents, doctors and other professionals to make appropriate accommodations; however, there are limitations to services we can provide. If the Program Administrator determines the child's needs cannot be met within the structure of the program, the family will be eligible for a refund of registration and supply fees.

If it is indicated on the registration form that the child has a developmental delay or IEP:

- The Program Administrator will contact the parent privately to discuss the needs and goals of the child. The Program Administrator will decide whether First Years Preschool can accommodate the child's needs with resources the school has available.
- If it is determined that First Years can accommodate the child's needs, the Program Administrator will meet with the child's teacher, parent and current therapist (Cheer Team) to discuss the goals and needs of the child BEFORE school begins.

- Six weeks from the first meeting, the Cheer Team will reconvene to review accommodations in place and evaluate their effectiveness.
- If the child's needs are accommodated and goals met, the Cheer Team meets as needed.
- If the goals and accommodations are proving to be ineffective, modifications to the original plan will be made and a further meeting will take place in four weeks. At this time, it will be determined if First Years is the best fit for the child.
- If the program is unable to accommodate the child's needs, the Administrator will work with the parent/guardian to refer them to agencies able to find a suitable environment.

PROCEDURE FOR IDENTIFYING CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

In our experience, we know that sometimes, parents themselves may not realize their child may be facing difficulties. Researchers have developed norms for specific developmental milestones for each age group. These norms can assist parents and teachers in recognizing stages and milestones in a child's developmental progress.

The First Years staff receives ongoing training regarding the varying needs of the preschool child. When it becomes apparent a child in the program requires assistance beyond that which we are equipped, the following procedures may be implemented:

- Pray for the child and note their strengths and abilities.
- Director and/or Assistant Director will observe the child in the classroom and document observations.
- Developmental Checklist on preceding age level will be filled out by teacher.
- Parent(s), Teacher and Administration will meet to share concerns, set goals and make accommodations for child's success.
- Two weeks from the first meeting date, the Parent(s), Teacher and Administration will reconvene to review goals and accommodations in place and evaluate their effectiveness. If the child's needs are being met and accommodations showing progress, future meetings will be set as needed. If the child's needs are not being met and accommodations are not showing progress, an attempt to alter or add new accommodations will be made and another meeting will take place in two-four weeks.
- If, after several attempts to meet the child's needs, all documentation, accommodations and goals indicate a lack of significant progress, the parents of the child are guided toward other alternatives that may better meet the needs of the child.
 - Recommendation for the child to attend a Developmental Screening through the Early Learning Coalition of Seminole County (ELC) and the Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS).
 - Referral to Inclusion Support Specialist of Seminole County.
- A list of additional resources can be provided to the parents (available in the FYP office).

First Years Preschool has the right to dismiss a student if a child's parents are unable to adjust or comply with these routines and procedures.

VPK

First Years is participating in Florida's Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program. VPK provides 540 hours of free, high-quality preschool to all 4 year olds. Parents enrolling their child in VPK are responsible for complying with the attendance policy, verifying student attendance each month and presenting their child for the state Kindergarten screening, regardless of whether the child attends Kindergarten in a public or non-public school. Students are expected to attend at least 85% of the program as the state will not pay for absences that exceed 15%. VPK providers have the option of dismissing children for excessive absences. Absences must be documented with a written note.

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is strongly encouraged for the overall development of your child. Children should be on time in order to fully benefit from planned activities and curriculum and to prevent disruption to other students. If you know your child is going to be absent, please notify their teachers or call the First Years Office. **Regular attendance in VPK is expected and required.**

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Preschool Fees

Registration - \$100 per child (*Due at registration-Non-refundable & Non-transferable*)
VPK Plus registration fee is \$50.

Supply Fee - (*Due at registration-Non-refundable*)

2 days/week	\$130/year
3 days/week	\$160/year
VPK Plus	\$60/year

Tuition - (*Tuition is divided into 9 equal payments. There is no reduction in the amount of tuition for those months in which your child is absent.*)

2 days/week	\$2,070/year	or \$230/month	Sept.-May
3 day 2's	\$2,655/year	or \$295/month	Sept-May
3 day 3's	\$2,385/year	or \$265/month	Sept.-May
VPK Plus	\$1,035/year	or \$115/month	Sept.-May

Tuition Payments

Tuition is collected on the 1st of each month. When tuition is not received by the tenth, a \$10 late fee will be assessed, and the child will be unable to return until the account is current. In cases where more than one child from a family is enrolled, a single discount of 15% will be applied to the monthly bill of the child whose tuition is the least. Tuition can be paid with cash, check, money order or credit card (online only). ****Note:** There is a 3% fee charged on credit card payments to cover the cost assessed to First Years by the online vendor.

INFORMATION TO BE ON FILE

In order to ensure the health and safety of your child, the following information is required on file:

1. Current Medical examination certificate
2. Current Immunizations Record-Form DH680 OR Immunization Exemption
3. School Registration Form
4. Signed Parent Handbook Acknowledgement/Emergency Medical Release
5. Copy of child's birth certificate
6. Food Allergy Profile (if applicable)

All forms must be submitted BEFORE your child's first day of school. Parents are responsible for keeping them updated. **Failure to submit health records by the expiration date may result in your child's dismissal until the medical requirements are met.** Your child's file is kept in a secure filing cabinet in the First Years Office. These files are considered confidential and only a limited number of individuals have access to view them. Parents may request to view their child's file at any time.

WITHDRAWING YOUR CHILD

Parents are asked to give First Years a minimum of two-week's written notice prior to withdrawing a child. If they start a month, you will be charged for the full month.

PART 3 OPERATIONAL INFORMATION

CALENDAR

A current First Years Calendar can be found online at <https://crosslifechurch.com/fyp> or at the First Years Office front desk.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Arrival and departure is a busy time at First Years. Please read below to help navigate this:

Arrival Carline

Each morning a carline drop-off will be available for all children enrolled in the three year old and VPK program beginning at 8:55 a.m. Parents will drive through the designated carline where a First Years staff member will meet your child and escort them into the building.

When using the morning carline, it is important that parents remember a few important rules:

- Cell phone use during carline is not permitted.
- All children must remain seated and buckled and are **NOT** permitted to hang out of windows or sit in a parent's lap while driving.
- Follow ALL traffic signs on campus and drive at a safe speed.

All children will be signed in as they are dropped off. Teachers will keep written attendance records in the classroom and will verify that all children have been picked up. Parents with children in the VPK program will be required to verify attendance on a monthly basis.

Arrival Walk-in

All parents with children enrolled in the one year old and two year old classes will need to park and walk their children to their classroom daily.

Parents of older preschoolers may choose to walk their child to class. You will be required to sign your child in at arrival at the podium located just outside the classroom door.

Arrival Tips

During arrival it is very important to set up a routine that your family can follow every day. This provides your child with a sense of security. Please keep teachers informed about your child's health, mood, eating habits, family situation, or anything you think might affect your child's behavior at school. We recommend you tell your child goodbye at the door. The teacher or assistant will help teach your child to put away their backpack items in their cubby and direct them in selecting a toy or joining an activity. If your child is upset when you leave, feel free to call us later and we will be more than happy let you know how he or she is doing.

Dismissal

All parents of preschoolers will participate in afternoon carline. Carline dismissal will begin at 12:55 p.m.

PARKING

It is important to note that any spot designated as handicap parking, must be observed as such, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Please do not park in one of these spaces without the necessary documentation.

Do not leave children unattended in cars while dropping off or picking up children. Walk with your child on the walkway at all times as walking in the driveway behind cars is dangerous. Help your child learn “parking lot safety” and avoid accidents. If you are transporting several children and need help, call the office and ask for assistance.

STUDENT RELEASE POLICY

A student may be released only to persons listed on their registration form/emergency contact form. Please send a note to the teacher when anyone other than the child's usual ride will pick them up. For a last minute change in plans, a call to First Years should be made to notify us of your child's alternate ride. To ensure your child's safety, identification will be requested from any unknown individual.

LATE ARRIVAL/EARLY CHECKOUT PROCEDURES

Carline ends at 9:10 a.m. If you are running late and miss carline, you will need to park and walk your child to the First Years Office desk. In the event you need to pick up your child early, please come to the First Years Office to sign them out and a staff member will escort them to you. Children should remain in class until school dismissal to avoid classroom disruptions. Please do not sign your child out early simply to avoid the afternoon dismissal procedures. Preschool classes are held 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. If you choose to pick your child up prior to lunch, please arrive no later than 12:00 p.m.

LATE PICK-UP POLICY

First Years Preschool classes end at 1:00 p.m. First Years staff members work very hard every day and most have their own children to pick up from school or other obligations. A late fee of \$1 for each minute late, per child is assessed if children are picked-up after 1:10 p.m. Examples of the late pick-up charge policy is as follows: if a parent arrives at 1:15 p.m. 5 minutes late = \$5.00 late fee will be applied (per child enrolled). Additionally, the pick-up time for Stay and Play is 2:00 p.m. Children picked-up after 2:10 p.m. will be assessed at the same rate.

PART 4 PROGRAM

FIRST YEARS STAFF

Program Administrator: Mrs. Melanie Bishop

Office Administrator: Mrs. Jami Ginn

Administrative Assistant/Health Professional: Mrs. Laura Johnson

Older Ones:

Mrs. Danielle Roush, Teacher; Miss Abigail Bowers, Assistant

Twos:

Monday-Tuesday: Miss Carissa Borgeson, Teacher; Mrs. Sheila Morens, Assistant

Monday-Wednesday: Mrs. Holly Herman, Teacher; Mrs. Cindy Dreyer, Assistant

Wednesday- Friday: Miss Carissa Borgeson, Teacher; Mrs. Sheila Morens, Assistant

Thursday-Friday: Mrs. Holly Herman, Teacher; Mrs. Cindy Dreyer, Assistant

Threes:

Monday-Wednesday: Mrs. Stacey Felix, Teacher; Mrs. Megan Kuhlman, Assistant

Mrs. Shelley Pike, Teacher; Mrs. Jackie Mashburn, Assistant

Wednesday-Friday: Mrs. Heather Graves, Teacher; Miss Rebecca Johnson, Assistant

Mrs. Penny Schexnayder, Teacher; Mrs. Diana Kyle, Assistant

VPK:

Mrs. Celine Hsu, Teacher; Ms. Lu Stasak, Assistant

Mrs. Melissa Mercado, Teacher; Mrs. Barbara Saulibio, Assistant

Mrs. Melissa Turner, Teacher; Mrs. Kathy Van Natta, Assistant

Mrs. April Upjohn Assistant; Miss Alexis Groenink, Assistant

Music: Mrs. Courtney Magyar

Our Backyard: Ms. Lois Dearolf

All faculty members associated with the First Years Preschool have background clearances through FDLE. In addition, our teachers hold degrees in education or other developmental-related fields or have met our high standards through years of experience in preschool teaching.

RATIOS

Older Ones	Child/Adult Ratio: 6 to 2	Twos	Child/Adult Ratio: 8 to 2
Threes	Child/Adult Ratio: 12 to 2	VPK	Child/Adult Ratio: 16 to 2

CURRICULUM

Our chosen curriculum for our Older Ones, Twos and Threes students is Frog Street. This curriculum is designed around the latest scientific early brain development research, focusing on *“enhancing the simple joy of childhood while equipping teachers to nurture curiosity through exploration”*.

Our chosen curriculum for our VPK students is the Core Knowledge Preschool Sequence. This curriculum is a *“set of model guidelines describing fundamental competencies and specific knowledge that, for children from 3 to 5 years of age, can provide a solid, coherent foundation for later learning in Kindergarten and beyond”*

DAILY SCHEDULE

Each classroom has a daily schedule posted in the room. The following are some components incorporated into each day:

Circle Time – Large group activity which begins the day with introductory songs, events of the day, news, sharing and discussion of the day/theme/Bible story of the week.

Center Time – Children select from activity areas including: Art, Home Living/Dramatic Play, Reading, Science, Math, Writing, Sensory Table, Games and Puzzles or Theme work.

Small Groups – Teachers conduct small group lessons based on learning goals, to reinforce and/or reteach skills and concepts.

Snack – Parents assigned to provide nutritious snacks for their child’s class a few times a year.

Playground – Outdoor play with a variety of age-appropriate equipment, games and materials.

Music – Students will visit our music class once a week to sing, dance and play instruments.

Our Backyard- Students will visit Our Backyard at least once weekly to engage in outdoor learning.

Lunch – Children will eat their lunch at a table with friends.

SEPARATION

Children sometimes have difficulty separating upon arrival, especially at the beginning of the year. This is typical behavior which, over time, should decrease as children become more secure in their new environment. Here are a few suggestions to help ease separation:

- Allow adequate time in the morning for arrival.
- While traveling, talk to your child about going to school, who will be there, etc. This prepares your child for what will occur. When you are rushed, children feel hurried and anxious.
- When you arrive at the classroom door, give hugs and kisses and reassure your child you will be back. It is helpful to give them an idea of your return by identifying a time of day you will be back (e.g. “I’ll see you after lunch”).
- If there is still protest and difficulty, teachers are close by to help your child when you leave. Usually, children calm down and begin to play soon after you leave.

POTTY/TOILET TRAINING

Beginning with the three year old classes, all children must be potty-trained and working towards self-sufficiency in their toileting skills.

PART 5 SAFETY AND HEALTH

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

To ensure the most optimal learning environment for children First Years Preschool receives annual inspections by the State Fire Marshall’s Office, Seminole County Health Department and the Early Learning Coalition of Seminole County. These inspections ensure that all fire, health and safety regulations are met and that First Years adheres to high quality standards regarding teacher requirements, adult/child ratios, curriculum and other administrative practices.

Procedure Details

- Emergency phone numbers are posted in the First Years Office.
- The parent/guardian provides, in writing, the names and phone numbers of persons to contact if the parent/guardian cannot be reached.
- In case of an emergency, a faculty/staff member will go with the child to the emergency room and remain until a parent/guardian arrives.

- Teachers report in writing any injuries that may occur while the child attends First Years.
- Teachers/Office will notify the parent/guardian of any injury requiring first aid treatment.
- Teachers report serious injuries to the Program Administrator immediately.
- At least one emergency drill, such as Fire drill, Shelter-in-place (lockdown), and tornado drill is practiced each month to prepare children in the case of an emergency.
- Emergency evacuation plans are posted in each room.

GENERAL SAFETY PRACTICES

- Background screenings are conducted on all teachers and substitutes.
- All staff members are mandated to report any suspicion of child abuse/neglect.
- Children are supervised at all times and appropriate child: staff ratios are maintained.
- Authorized pick-up information is on file and in an emergency notebook.
- If we are not familiar with the authorized pick-up person, we will ask to see identification and will match the person's ID with the emergency card information provided by the parent(s).
- Teachers take attendance and monitor the number of children in their care.
- Teachers move throughout the playground to ensure adequate and appropriate supervision.
- Staff is trained in CPR, First Aid and Choke Saving/Rescue Breathing.
- Life-saving medicines are the only medications stored and administered. These require written permission of parent/guardian.
- Individuals who serve food wear gloves when handling ready-to-eat foods.
- Cleaning supplies are stored out of children's reach.
- Teachers fill out documentation for accidents, incidents and health-related situations. The First Years office retains copies of accident/incident forms.
- Teachers follow universal precautions for blood-related accidents and incidents.
- Latex "free" gloves are available in each room for emergencies.
- Toys are frequently checked and broken toys are discarded.
- Parking lot safety tips are shared with parents.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

First Years guideline for inclement weather will be to follow Seminole County Schools. If Seminole County Schools are closed, First Years will be closed. Decisions regarding hours of operation will be made in the early morning hours and relayed via Email, Remind and Facebook.

HEALTH POLICY

Each child must have a current health form with immunization history signed by a physician on file in the First Years Office. Classroom teachers will notify parents when certain communicable diseases were present in their child's class and we ask that you notify the center when your child is out with a communicable disease.

These are the steps First Years will take when notified of a positive report of a communicable disease:

1. Notify Seminole County Health Department.
2. Notify Parents/Staff.
3. Close FYP for cleaning.
4. Resume school once cleared by Seminole County Health Department, no more than 2 weeks.

In case of a Pandemic situation, the Director will have no option but to close the preschool. Preschool classes will then take place at home. Teachers will email lesson ideas to parents and may offer online interactions through Zoom, Google Classrooms, Facebook, etc.

ALLERGY POLICY

Children with severe food or insect allergies that require the administration of medication for lifesaving purposes will be allowed. Parents will be required to complete a **Food Allergy Emergency Plan** for their child providing written documentation of the symptoms and treatment plan. If an Epi-pen is required, it must be in the original box with an appropriate prescription label. In the event Bendryl is to be administered, we request parents provide *Benadryl Perfect Measure* to ensure quick and accurate dosing.

In some circumstances, a class letter may be sent home notifying parents in the classroom that a child in the class has an especially severe allergy. The letter will list the type of allergy the child has and the measures that will be taken to ensure the child's safety. We appreciate parents helping us do their part in keeping the classroom safe for these children.

ILLNESS POLICY AT SCHOOL

To prevent the spread of illness, do not send your child to school if they have had vomiting, fever, diarrhea, green nasal discharge or an unexplained rash within the last 48 hours. Below are some other examples:

Children with the following may NOT be brought to First Years:

- Chicken Pox
- Conjunctivitis
- Whooping Cough
- Lice
- Measles
- Scabies
- Mumps
- Rubella
- Scarlet Fever
- Flu

Children with (1) ONE OR MORE of the following symptoms may NOT be brought to First Years or will be sent home if these symptoms occur –

- Diarrhea: More than one (1) abnormally loose stool
- Headache or stiff neck
- Severe coughing
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Severe itching of the body/scalp or scratching of the scalp as this may be lice or scabies.
- Fever over 100°F by mouth or 99°F under the arm.
- Pinkeye - tears, redness of eyelid lining, irritation, followed by swelling or discharge of pus.
- An infected skin patch(es) - crusty, bright yellow, dry or gummy areas of the skin
- Unusual spots or rashes
- Vomiting
- Sore throat or trouble swallowing
- Yellowish skin or eyes

Also, the child may not be brought to First Years if he or she is taking an antibiotic prescribed within the last 24 hours – children must be on antibiotics for 24 hours before returning to school.

Unusual behaviors will be closely monitored and parent(s) will be contacted if other symptoms develop. These behaviors include, but shall not be limited to:

- Cranky or less active behavior than usual
- Crying more than usual

- Feeling general discomfort or seeming unwell
- Loss of appetite

Children developing any symptoms that require dismissal must be picked up by the parent/guardian **as soon as possible**. Children will be kept in the First Years Office until the parent/guardian arrives. The child will be supervised at all times while in the Office by office staff.

If your child contracts a contagious condition such as chicken pox or head lice, please notify the Program Administrator at once so other parents can be alerted. In order to prevent the spread of lice, all nits must be gone before the child can return. Children must be screened at the First Years Office before they can be readmitted to school.

If the child is well enough to come to school, he/she is well enough to participate in the regular program, including indoor and outdoor activities.

Children Sent Home for Illness

Children sent home from First Years Preschool due to illness shall not return to school the following day. Children returning with any of the previous symptoms or illness will be sent home immediately which is at the discretion of the staff.

ACCIDENT AND ILLNESS PROCEDURE

Please be advised that if your child sustains any significant injury or becomes ill with any of the above symptoms while at school, you will be contacted immediately. Minor scratches and bumps will be brought to your attention when you arrive to pick up your child. If we cannot reach either of the child's parents, we will attempt to contact one of the individuals listed on your registration form/emergency card. Please be sure that the individuals you listed for this purpose are willing to pick up your child when they are ill.

CHILD ABUSE POLICY

As professionals in contact with young children and their families, we at First Years Preschool are required by law to help DCF become aware of children who may be abused or neglected. According to the law, public or private school teachers, educational administrators, guidance or family counselors; as well as daycare/childcare workers, are mandated reporters. Thus, it is policy of First Years Preschool to report any and all suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect to DCF immediately by telephone and to follow up in writing within 24 hours the same information as reported by telephone. Our school will offer full cooperation of its staff during the investigation of the reported incident.

GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE

It is with great pleasure that you have entrusted First Years Preschool to partner together with you to foster the social and emotional development of your child.

First Years Preschool Discipline Policy is designed to encourage the development of self-control in the child. A child who is in control of their behavior is happier and better able to learn from the classroom experience. It is our desire to teach self-control by establishing a system of consistent choices, consequences and boundaries. We will create an environment for them to own their behavior and to look down the road at the consequences of the behavior. When a child learns self-control, they will make choices based on what is right rather than on the likelihood of being caught.

At times, an intervention in the form of a consequence may need to be implemented to teach pro-social behavior through appropriate limits. Inappropriate behaviors may be addressed as follows:

- Modeling of appropriate behaviors
- Redirecting inappropriate behaviors

- Giving children choices between two appropriate alternatives
- Encouraging children to work together to solve a problem
- Providing logical and natural consequences to actions
- Verbal warnings
- Positive reinforcement
- Reteaching expectations based on knowledge of child development
- Time-out

When there is an ongoing behavior concern, teachers will contact the child's parents by way of parent-teacher conferences or written behavioral incident reports. If a conference is scheduled, the parent and teacher will discuss strategies to promote appropriate behavior and develop a plan for change. If the behavior of concern continues, a child may be asked to leave the program. It is our intent to work together with families to promote a positive experience for their child. However, we do realize circumstances may keep a child from being capable of fully participating in a group program and recognize the program may not be equipped to deal with all circumstances underlying certain behavioral issues.

Administrative Intervention

The discipline policy will be waived when the following infractions take place:

- Foul language
- Harmful physical aggression towards students or staff (hitting, biting, kicking or spitting).
- Major classroom disruptions that impede the educational process for his/her classmates.

If a child is removed from the classroom, the administrator will work with the child to help them calm down and work through strategies that promote better choices. The Program Administrator will contact the child's family to discuss recurring behavior. If the administrator warrants it necessary, the parent will be notified and asked to pick up their child for the day. A mandatory parent, teacher and administration conference will take place to develop a plan for responding to the child's challenging behavior.

First Years Preschool has the right to dismiss any student for the following reasons:

- If, after a reasonable period of time, a child or the child's parents are unable to adjust or accept preschool routines and procedures.
- If a child is persistent in hurting or injuring other children or staff.
- If there are special needs First Years is unable to meet (see Children with Special Needs).

The use of corporal punishment, including verbal abuse, is strictly prohibited by teachers, volunteers or staff.

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

As a Christian program, we believe the Bible provides clear instruction on how we are to treat and live at peace with others as demonstrated by the following verses:

- Mark 12:31b *'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'* *There is no other commandment greater than these.* (NKJV)
- Romans 12:18 *Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.*

Bullying is defined as the willful, conscious and persistent desire to cause emotional, verbal and/or physical hurt to another. This hurt may be caused by actual or anticipated actions which put the victim under stress. These actions are accompanied by an awareness of the impact of the behavior on the child who is the victim.

The characteristics of bullying suggest that the child who is bullying has reached a state of cognitive development where they are able to plan to cause distress in another. We believe it is rare for young children to reach such a state of cognitive development, but we acknowledge it is sometimes hard to distinguish bullying from hurtful and/or inconsiderate behavior.

Children do not come to school knowing how to behave within a group of classmates and it is our job to teach them. All hurtful and/or inconsiderate behavior will be addressed from a Biblical basis. Children will be taught to be kind, to understand how their actions impact others and to forgive. Parents will be kept informed of ongoing hurtful or harmful behavior and the efforts being made to teach kindness and personal responsibility. In rare occasions a child may be dismissed if all efforts to teach appropriate behavior fail.

PART 6 FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

PARENT PARTICIPATION

There are several opportunities for parents to be involved at First Years. Parents are invited to attend their child's classroom birthday celebration. We ask parents to work with teachers to notify them of their desire to celebrate their child's birthday at school and coordinate date and time. In addition, parents are invited to attend the annual Christmas program, end of the year celebration and for our moms, the Mother's Day Tea. Parents of three year old and VPK students will have the opportunity to volunteer to help with a curriculum related event. In addition, parents will also have an opportunity to sign up to come into the classroom to be a guest reader. Information about this program will be sent out during the first few weeks of school.

COMMUNICATION

First Years will use a variety of methods to communicate with families, including newsletters, emails, social media and conferences. One important means of communication we use is Remind, a text messaging app that allows us to send text messages directly to your phone. This will be a vital link between school and home and will allow us to quickly communicate with all our families in the event of an emergency. At the beginning of the school year, we will provide parents with the access code to opt-in to this service.

NEWSLETTERS & CALENDARS

Each teacher will communicate through weekly newsletters informing parents about activities at school along with a monthly calendar outlining the curriculum planned for each class. Newsletters will be sent home periodically from the administrative staff informing parents about school-wide events.

CONFERENCES

A parent-teacher conference for all preschool students will be held in February. A teacher or parent can ask for a conference at any time it is deemed necessary. If there is a concern about your child's progress, please inform the teacher or Program Administrator at any time. Our door is always open!

PART 7 GENERAL INFORMATION

CLOTHING

In order to foster independence and self-help skills, we ask that children wear clothes that he/she can manage independently. Buttons, zippers and snaps should facilitate self-toileting and not hinder the development of this skill. Active indoor and outdoor play is a regular part of our school day. Please dress children in clothing suitable for running, climbing and other vigorous activity, and is appropriate for the weather. It is suggested that if girls wear dresses, shorts be worn underneath which will allow freedom to participate in all activities. Because the children work with paint and other messy materials, they should wear clothes that can be laundered easily.

- Tennis shoes or other shoes with rubber soles are required. For child's safety, we recommend they not wear flip flop shoes.
- A complete change of clothes is essential for preschool messes, so please have one extra set of clothing which will be stored in a Ziploc bag at school. Be sure to mark your child's name on the outside of the bag as well as on the extra clothing.

TOYS FROM HOME

It is very disappointing when a special toy is broken or lost; therefore, children are to wait for his/her Show & Tell Day to bring in items from home. In order to prevent problems on Show & Tell Days, your child's item must be able to fit inside their backpack. Please do not allow your child to bring any type of weapon to school.

BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays are special occasions for young children. We encourage and welcome parental involvement for these events. Please notify the teacher in advance if you would like to bring a birthday snack for your child's class. Parents are invited to attend their child's classroom birthday celebration. Invitations to parties outside the school may be handed out at school if every child in the class is invited. Otherwise, invitations should be handled by mail to prevent any hurt feelings.

SNACKS

Children will bring their own snacks from home. A list of **suggested** snack items include: carrot sticks, apple slices, orange slices, bananas, applesauce (individual serving), cheese cubes, crackers, goldfish crackers, pretzels, animal crackers, graham crackers, and vanilla wafers. For those who have a child in an older ones and/or twos class, please keep in mind that First Years will not offer food that presents a risk of choking to children. All food will need to be cut into small pieces no larger than a one-half-inch square for toddlers.

SMOKING

Smoking is not permitted at events, functions, drop off/pick up, both in and outside of the building.

HANDLING A PROBLEM OR COMPLAINT

We hope First Years is a positive experience for our staff and families. Sometimes a conflict will arise between the staff and a parent, or a parent and a parent. We encourage open dialogue and respectful sharing of concerns. Avoiding or running away from a conflict can often have negative consequences as well. Information regarding a conflict should not be shared with uninvolved persons. Doing so tends to create an atmosphere of distrust and is not conducive to solving the

problem. Conflicts should first be addressed with the person directly involved. Only if there is an impasse should the administration become involved.

If a conflict should arise, students, teachers, and parents, are encouraged to follow the guidelines of Matthew 18:15-18 in order to resolve the conflict in a Christian manner:

"If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.'"

Because of the grace shown to us in Christ Jesus, we emphasize the need to accept responsibility for our actions and forgive one another.

CLOSING

A strong home and school environment are important when building a good environment for young children. All our staff will do our very best to keep you informed and involved in our preschool program. Ongoing communication and support from both families and staff make the connection between home and school a two-way street. Please share with us information about your child and report any changes especially during a major crisis. We want to help in any way we can! We hope to nurture mutual trust and respect at every opportunity.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM

Please sign this page and return to the First Years Office or your child's teacher:

I have read, understand and agree to abide by the conditions outlined in the 2021-2022 First Years Preschool Handbook.

I have read, understand and agree to abide by the guidance and discipline policies outlined in the 2021-2022 First Years Preschool Handbook.

I hereby authorize First Years Preschool, a ministry of CrossLife Church, or any of its employees or agents, to obtain emergency medical attention for my child, _____ from a hospital, physician or other emergency health care professional in the event of illness or injury.

I understand these policies and procedures are subject to change, especially as new information and guidance from local, state and national health officials become available. First Years Preschool reserves the right to change, modify or adjust any of these procedures and policies at any time.

Please list any medicines that your child is currently taking:

Please list any medical allergies:

Child's Name

Parent's Signature

Date