



PARENT HANDBOOK

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Table of Contents

Welcome & Mission.....	page 3
Programs Offered.....	pages 3-4
Enrollment Procedures.....	page 4
Registration Requirements.....	page 4
Teacher-Child Ratios.....	page 5
Curriculum.....	pages 5-6
Daily Schedule.....	pages 6-7
Preschool Guidelines.....	page 8
Parent Relations.....	pages 8-9
Health & Wellness Policies.....	pages 9-12
Behavior Policy.....	page 13
Biting Policy.....	page 14
Billing & Payment Policies.....	page 15
Tuition & Registration Fees.....	page 16
Emergency Procedures.....	pages 16-17
Required Items by Age Group.....	pages 17-18

WELCOME & MISSION

Welcome to Journey Church Preschool & Daycare. We are honored that you have entrusted us with the care and education of your child. Our mission is to provide high-quality childcare and early childhood education in a loving, safe, nurturing, and Christ-centered environment. We strive to partner with families in fostering each child's physical, emotional, social, intellectual, and spiritual development. Our dedicated staff is committed to creating meaningful learning experiences while helping children develop confidence, independence, character, and a lifelong love of learning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Children are provided with age-appropriate activities designed to promote coordination, balance, strength, and fine motor development in a safe and engaging environment.

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Teachers foster trust, security, self-confidence, and emotional growth by providing consistent care, encouragement, and positive guidance.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Children learn cooperation, respect, sharing, communication, and relationship-building skills through daily interactions with peers and adults.

INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

Children learn through hands-on exploration, guided discovery, play-based experiences, and developmentally appropriate curriculum designed to encourage curiosity and problem-solving.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

As a ministry of Journey Church, Christian values are incorporated throughout our program. Children are exposed to age-appropriate Bible stories, songs, prayer, and lessons emphasizing love, kindness, forgiveness, and respect for others.

PROGRAMS OFFERED

Full-Time Preschool Program:

Journey Church Preschool & Daycare serves children ages 6 weeks through K4. Our operating hours are Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. To support classroom routines, curriculum instruction, lunch preparation, and staffing, children should arrive by the following times:

Infants through K2: 9:00 a.m.

K3 and K4: 8:30 a.m.

****If your child will be absent or arriving late due to a doctor's appointment or another unavoidable circumstance, please notify the preschool through Brightwheel by 9:00 a.m.**

Children arriving after the designated cutoff time may return after 2:00 p.m., except in cases of documented appointments or emergencies. This policy helps minimize classroom disruptions and supports a productive learning environment.

Parents of children in the crawlers class and older will receive a classroom schedule and are encouraged to avoid drop-off and pick-up during scheduled nap times whenever possible.

Adventure Club Program:

Our Adventure Club program serves Kindergarten through 6th-grade students. Services include:

- After-school pickup from local Prattville area schools
- Morning drop-off options
- Homework assistance
- Afternoon snacks
- Summer care
- Thanksgiving, Christmas, Fall Break, and Spring Break care

Adventure Club operates from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. during summer and holiday programs. Due to staffing limitations, Adventure Club may not be available for unexpected school closures resulting from severe weather or emergencies.

ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

Enrollment is accepted year-round and is offered on a first-come, first-served basis. As a statement of our Christian mission, Journey Church Preschool & Daycare welcomes children without discrimination based on race, color, national origin, or ethnicity. Children with identified or suspected special needs will be considered individually based upon our ability to meet the needs of the child while maintaining a safe and successful learning environment for all students.

Class placement is determined by:

- Age as of September 1 of the current school year
- Developmental readiness
- Classroom availability
- Potty Training Requirement
- Children enrolled in K3 and K4 must be fully potty trained.

Children should be able to:

- Use the restroom independently
- Manage clothing with minimal assistance
- Communicate restroom needs appropriately

****Pull-ups are not considered a substitute for independent toileting except in documented medical situations approved by administration.**

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

To complete enrollment, families must:

- Complete all registration forms
- Submit emergency contact information
- Provide an up-to-date Alabama Certificate of Immunization ("Blue Slip")
- Sign all required parent agreements
- Pay the annual registration/materials fee

**Registration fees are non-refundable and cover classroom supplies, curriculum materials, and administrative costs. All forms must be completed and submitted before your child's first day of attendance.

TEACHER-CHILD RATIOS

Journey Church Preschool & Daycare follows or exceeds all Alabama DHR ratio requirements. Our staff members are selected based on their experience, Christian character, love for children, and commitment to professional development.

- Infants 1:5
- Toddlers 1:7
- Potty Trainers 1:8
- Twos 1:8
- Threes 1:11
- Fours 1:18
- Adventure Club 1:21

CURRICULUM

Journey Church Preschool utilizes the Abeka curriculum in K2 through K4 classrooms, with age-appropriate adaptations provided for younger children. Children learn through a balance of teacher-directed instruction, hands-on exploration, and play-based learning experiences.

The curriculum is designed to support:

- Language development
- Early literacy
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social studies
- Fine and gross motor development
- Social-emotional learning
- Biblical instruction

K3 & K4 Learning Objectives

Children will learn to:

- Recognize and name uppercase and lowercase letters
- Identify letter sounds
- Recognize sight words
- Write their first name
- Numbers & Counting

Children will learn:

- Recognize numbers 1-50
- Count objects accurately
- Begin simple addition and subtraction concepts
- Identify colors and shapes

- Sort objects by size, color, and shape
- Recognize body parts and everyday objects
- Use scissors appropriately
- Hold writing tools correctly
- Write simple words
- Develop hand dominance
- Follow directions
- Participate in group activities
- Practice sharing and cooperation
- Demonstrate classroom responsibility
- Days of the week
- Seasons of the year
- Concepts such as yesterday, today, and tomorrow

Journey Church Preschool recognizes that all children develop at different rates. Learning goals serve as guidelines and are adjusted according to each child's individual developmental needs.

DAILY SCHEDULE

Chapel

Children participate in Chapel once each week. Chapel provides age-appropriate opportunities for worship, Bible stories, prayer, and learning foundational Christian principles.

Daily classroom activities may include:

- Bible stories and memory verses
- Circle time
- Arts and crafts
- Music and movement
- Fine motor activities
- Gross motor activities
- Language development
- Literacy and math instruction
- Outdoor play
- Meals and Snacks

Journey Church Preschool provides lunch and snacks for children enrolled in the Full-Time Program. Parents may provide an alternative lunch if dietary restrictions or allergies require it. Morning snack is served between 8:00 a.m. and 8:30 a.m.

****Please do not bring breakfast items after 8:30 a.m., as classrooms begin instructional activities immediately afterward. Children are served water throughout the day and milk or water with lunch. All food containers and personal items should be clearly labeled with the child's name.**

Outdoor Play

Weather permitting, children participate in daily outdoor activities that promote physical development and healthy exercise.

Rest Time

Children enrolled in programs lasting longer than five hours are provided a daily rest period. Children 12 months and older must bring a labeled nap mat.

Nap mats:

- Must be taken home weekly for cleaning
- Should be returned on the child's next scheduled day

**Children are not required to sleep; however, they must rest quietly and respect the rest period of other children.

Communication Folders

Parents should check folders and Brightwheel daily for:

- Classroom work
- Notices
- Event information
- Parent communication

Clothing Requirements

Children participate in active and messy learning experiences daily.

Children should wear:

- Comfortable play clothes
- Closed-toe shoes
- Clothing they can independently manage when using the restroom

Please avoid:

- Flip-flops
- One-piece outfits
- Expensive or irreplaceable clothing

Toys From Home

Journey Church Preschool provides all necessary classroom toys and learning materials. The preschool is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged items brought from home. Please do not send:

- Toys
- Electronics
- Trading cards
- Personal valuables

JOURNEY CHURCH PRESCHOOL GUIDELINES

Handbook Disclaimer

The preschool reserves the right to modify policies, procedures, tuition, fees, and program requirements at any time. Families will be notified of significant policy changes.

Birthday Celebrations

We enjoy celebrating birthdays at school. Parents wishing to provide birthday treats should coordinate with their child's teacher in advance. When distributing invitations for off-campus birthday parties, we request that invitations be provided for all classmates to avoid hurt feelings.

Photography

Photographs may be taken during school activities for educational, promotional, and communication purposes. Parents who do not wish for their child's image to be used in:

- Social media
- Website content
- Marketing materials
- Preschool publications

**Please indicate this preference during enrollment.

Dismissal and Withdrawal from Enrollment

Administrative decisions regarding enrollment are made at the discretion of the Director and church leadership. Journey Church Preschool reserves the right to discontinue enrollment for:

- Non-payment of tuition or fees
- Repeated policy violations
- Behavior that creates a safety concern
- Situations where the preschool cannot adequately meet the child's needs

PARENT RELATIONS

We recognize parents as their child's first and most important teacher. We value strong partnerships between families and staff and encourage open communication.

Open Door Policy

Parents are welcome to communicate with teachers and administration regarding questions, concerns, or classroom progress. Classroom visits may be coordinated through the Director to minimize disruption to instructional time.

Attendance Communication

Parents must notify the preschool through Brightwheel if their child:

- Will be absent
- Will arrive late
- Has a medical appointment
- Has been exposed to a contagious illness

Arrival and Departure Procedures

For safety reasons:

- Children must be signed in and out daily.
- Children must be escorted to a staff member.
- Children may only be released to approved individuals listed in Brightwheel.
- Authorized individuals must present a valid photo ID when requested.

Separation Anxiety

Many children experience separation anxiety when beginning preschool. Parents are encouraged to maintain a positive and consistent goodbye routine. Staff members are trained to assist children in transitioning comfortably into the classroom environment.

Parent Responsibilities

Parents are expected to:

- Follow preschool policies
- Maintain updated contact information
- Submit required documentation
- Cooperate with health and safety procedures
- Communicate concerns respectfully

Parent Concerns and Grievances

Families with concerns should first communicate with their child's teacher. If additional assistance is needed, a conference may be scheduled with the Director. We are committed to resolving concerns professionally and respectfully.

Staff Communication

Brightwheel is the primary communication platform for parent-teacher communication. Staff members are not permitted to provide personal phone numbers or personal social media accounts to families.

HEALTH POLICIES

The health and safety of all children and staff is a top priority. Journey Church Preschool reserves the right to make final decisions regarding illness-related exclusions and return-to-school eligibility.

Mandatory Reporting

All staff members are mandated reporters and are required by Alabama law to report suspected abuse, neglect, exploitation, or deprivation.

Accidents and Injuries

Minor injuries will be documented and communicated to parents. Emergency medical treatment will be sought when necessary. Incident reports will be maintained in the child's file.

Safe Sleep Policy

In accordance with Alabama DHR recommendations:

- Non-mobile infants will always be placed on their backs to sleep.
- Alternative sleep positions require written physician instructions.

Surgical Procedures

Children may not return to school on the same day as a surgical procedure.

A physician's release may be required before returning.

Immunizations

All children must maintain a current Alabama Certificate of Immunization (Blue Slip).

Updated immunization records must be provided as required.

Illness Policy

Children must remain home if they have:

- Fever of 100.4°F or higher
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Contagious illness
- Undiagnosed rash
- Severe cough
- Symptoms preventing participation in normal activities

**If a child becomes ill while at school, parents will be contacted and must arrange pickup within one hour. Parents must notify the preschool of communicable diseases or confirmed diagnoses. Children may return only after meeting the preschool's return-to-school requirements. The preschool reserves the right to request a physician's release at any time. Notice of exposure to contagious illnesses may be posted in classrooms when appropriate.

ILLNESS EXCLUSION & RETURN-TO-SCHOOL GUIDELINES

To help protect the health of all children and staff, children must remain home when experiencing symptoms of illness or when diagnosed with a contagious condition. The preschool reserves the right to require a physician's note before a child returns to school. **Parents must notify the preschool of any confirmed contagious illness diagnosis.

Chicken Pox

Children who have chicken pox may return to school 6 days after the onset of a rash or when the lesions have dried/crusted. A doctor's note will be required before returning.

Fever

Children with a temperature of 100.4°F or higher must be picked up from school.

Children may return after:

- Being fever-free for 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing medication

Vomiting

Children who vomit while at school will be sent home.

Children may return after:

- No vomiting for 24 hours
- Normal participation in daily activities

Diarrhea

Children may return after symptoms have resolved for 24 hours.

Diarrhea is defined as:

- Three or more loose stools in one day, or
- Two loose stools within one hour

Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease

Children may return when:

- Fever-free for 24 hours
- Sores are healing and no longer actively draining
- Able to participate comfortably in classroom activities

**A physician's release will be required.

Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis)

Children may return:

- After antibiotics has begun for 48 hours, if prescribed
- When discharge has resolved with a physician's release if requested

Strep Throat

Children may return:

- After 24 hours of antibiotic treatment
- Fever-free for 24 hours

Ringworm

Children may return:

- After treatment has begun
- With affected areas covered when appropriate

Head Lice

Children may return after treatment and removal of live lice.

RSV, Flu, COVID-19, Pneumonia, Mono, and Other Communicable Illnesses

Children may return when:

- Exclusion periods recommended by their physician have passed
- Symptoms have significantly improved
- They have been symptom-free for at least 24 hours without medication
- A physician's release is provided if requested

Household Exposure

Parents are required to notify the preschool when a household member has been diagnosed with a contagious illness. The preschool reserves the right to require temporary exclusion if exposure creates a significant risk to other children or staff.

MEDICATION POLICY

Journey Church Preschool prioritizes the safety of all children regarding medication administration. Emergency medications may not be stored in backpacks and must remain accessible to authorized staff members.

Prescription medications may only be administered when:

- The medication is in its original labeled container
- The prescription matches the child's name
- Written authorization is provided by the parent
- Dosage instructions are clearly indicated

Over-the-counter medications require:

- Written parent authorization (form from the office)
- Original packaging with labeling intact

Children requiring emergency medications such as:

- EpiPens
- Rescue inhalers

Emergency allergy medications must have:

- A completed emergency action plan
- Physician instructions
- Required medication on-site prior to attendance

FOOD ALLERGIES & SPECIAL DIETS

Parents must notify the preschool of all food allergies, sensitivities, or dietary restrictions before enrollment. If a child requires a specialized diet, parents may be required to provide food from home. Individual allergy action plans may be required for children with severe allergies.

TOILET TRAINING

Journey Church Preschool partners with families during the toilet-training process. Children should wear clothing that promotes independence and easy restroom access. Success is best achieved through consistency between home and school.

To support consistency, parents should communicate:

- Training methods
- Preferred terminology
- Current progress

BEHAVIOR POLICY

At Journey Church Preschool, we believe children learn appropriate behavior through positive guidance, loving relationships, clear expectations, and consistent boundaries. Our goal is to help children develop self-control, responsibility, and respect for others while maintaining a safe and nurturing environment. To maintain a safe, supportive, and developmentally appropriate environment, our program uses a structured process for documenting and addressing ongoing challenging behaviors. This policy ensures consistent communication with families and provides clear steps for supporting each child's success. Corporal punishment, humiliation, ridicule, intimidation, or shaming will never be used. Teachers may utilize the following:

- Redirection/Positive reinforcement
- Problem-solving discussions
- Modeling appropriate behavior
- Natural and logical consequences
- Temporary removal from an activity when necessary
- Removing play time/outside time for a certain period of time

Unsafe Behaviors

The following behaviors are considered safety concerns:

- Hitting
- Kicking
- Biting
- Scratching
- Spitting
- Throwing objects
- Physical aggression
- Running away from staff
- Endangering self or others

****When these behaviors occur, the following discipline procedures will be implemented in exact order regardless of when behaviors occur & time between each behavior:**

First Incident

- Redirection/removal from activity
- Discussion of appropriate behavior with child and parent
- Write up to go home

Second Incident

- Parent contacted for immediate pickup
- Child remains home the next full day
- Write up

Third Incident

- Parent contacted for immediate pickup
- Child will be suspended for 3 full days (attendance over the weekend does not count)
- Write up

Fourth Incident

- 7 day suspension from attendance (weekend does not count)

- Tuition remains due during suspension

Fifth Incident

- 30 day suspension
- Parents may choose to pay half tuition to reserve their child's enrollment space during the withdrawal period.

****If behavior concerns continue after re-enrollment, the preschool may permanently discontinue enrollment. The Director reserves the right to modify disciplinary actions based upon the severity of the incident, including situations involving immediate safety concerns.**

BITING POLICY

Biting is a common developmental behavior among young children, particularly during the toddler years. While occasional biting can occur, the safety of all children remains our highest priority. Parents of both children involved will be notified of any biting incident. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times. Teachers actively work to reduce biting by:

- Maintaining close supervision
- Identifying triggers
- Teaching communication skills
- Redirecting frustration appropriately
- Supporting social-emotional development

First Incident

- Redirection/removal from activity
- Discussion of appropriate behavior with child and parent
- Write up to go home

Second Incident

- Parent contacted for immediate pickup
- Child remains home the next full day
- Write up

Third Incident

- Parent contacted for immediate pickup
- Child will be suspended for 3 full days (attendance over the weekend does not count)
- Write up

Fourth Incident

- 7 day suspension from attendance (weekend does not count)
- Tuition remains due during suspension

Fifth Incident

- 30 day suspension
- Parents may choose to pay half tuition to reserve their child's enrollment space during the withdrawal period.

****If biting continues after re-enrollment, the preschool may discontinue enrollment. The Director reserves the right to modify consequences when circumstances warrant immediate action for safety reasons.**

BILLING & PAYMENT POLICIES

Journey Church Preschool & Daycare is a ministry of Journey Church; however, the preschool operates solely on tuition and fee income. Timely payment of tuition is necessary to maintain staffing, supplies, and daily operations.

Tuition Payments

All tuition and fees are payable through Brightwheel unless otherwise approved by administration. Tuition is paid in advance to reserve your child's space in the program and is due regardless of attendance.

Refunds or credits are not provided for:

- Absences
- Illness
- Vacations
- Holidays
- Weather-related closures
- Temporary program closures beyond the preschool's control

Registration Fees

Annual registration and materials fees are non-refundable and due:

- At the time of enrollment
- By the announced registration deadline for returning families

Withdrawal Policy

A written two-week notice is required when withdrawing a child from the program.

Families remain financially responsible for tuition during the two-week notice period, regardless of attendance. Official withdrawal forms are available through the preschool office.

Late Tuition Policy

A \$20 late fee will be assessed to accounts not paid by the due date. Accounts that become two weeks delinquent may result in:

- Suspension of attendance
- Loss of enrollment space
- Collection of outstanding balances
- Children may not return until the account has been brought up to current.

Late Pick-Up Policy

The preschool closes promptly at 6:00 p.m. Late fees are assessed as follows:

- \$5 for the first minute after closing
- \$1 per minute thereafter
- Repeated late pick-ups may result in additional administrative action.

Military Discount

Families with a valid military ID may receive a \$15 weekly family discount.

Sibling Discount

Families with multiple enrolled children may receive up to a \$15 weekly family discount.

**Only one discount may be applied per family.

TUITION & REGISTRATION FEES

Annual Registration & Materials Fees:

Infants - K2 (\$175 yearly)

K3-K4 (\$200 yearly)

Adventure Club (\$100 yearly)

Summer Adventure Club (\$160 yearly)

Weekly Full-Time Preschool Tuition:

Infants-K2 (\$175 weekly)

K3-K4 (\$160 weekly)

Adventure Club Tuition:

Afternoons Only (\$90 weekly)

Mornings & Afternoons (\$100 weekly)

Summer Adventure Club (\$160 weekly)

**Fall Break, Christmas Break, Spring Break, Thanksgiving Break, and Summer Programs are billed at the full Adventure Club rate. Enrollment space is reserved during these periods regardless of attendance.

Custody Documentation

In situations involving divorce, separation, or custody arrangements, families must provide legal documentation regarding custody and visitation restrictions. Without legal documentation, the preschool must assume both parents have equal access to the child.

DHR EXEMPT STATUS

Journey Church Preschool & Daycare operates as a church-related program and maintains annual exemption status through the Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR). These documents must remain current throughout enrollment.

The following documents are required for enrollment:

- Current Alabama Certificate of Immunization (Blue Slip)
- Completed registration paperwork
- Signed and notarized DHR Exemption Affidavit

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

The safety of children and staff is our highest priority. Emergency procedures are reviewed regularly and practiced throughout the year.

Severe Weather

If severe weather threatens our area, parents will receive updates through Brightwheel. When necessary, children will be relocated to designated storm-safe areas within the facility. Children will not be released during active severe weather warnings unless authorized by emergency personnel or administration.

School Closures

Closures, delays, or early dismissals due to weather or emergencies will be communicated through:

- Brightwheel
- Social media announcements
- Other approved communication methods

Fire and Building Evacuations

Emergency evacuation drills are conducted regularly. In the event of a fire or evacuation:

- Staff will immediately evacuate children according to emergency procedures.
- Attendance records will accompany staff.
- Emergency contacts will be notified as needed.

Utility or Facility Emergencies

Parents may be required to pick up children early. If the facility experiences prolonged interruption of:

- Electricity
- Water service
- Heating
- Air conditioning
- Other critical systems

**Notifications will be sent through Brightwheel as quickly as possible.

REQUIRED ITEMS BY AGE GROUP

Please label all belongings with your child's first and last name. Journey Church Preschool is not responsible for lost, misplaced, or unlabeled items.

Infants (6 Weeks-12 Months)

Please provide:

- Bottles labeled daily
- Formula or breast milk
- Baby food as needed
- Diapers
- Wipes
- Diaper cream
- Pacifier (if applicable)
- Two complete changes of clothing
- Sippy cup when developmentally appropriate

**To maximize refrigerator space, families are encouraged not to pre-mix bottles whenever possible.

One-Year-Olds & Two-Year-Olds

Please provide:

- Diapers or pull-ups (if applicable)
- Two complete changes of clothing
- Nap mat

Three-Year-Olds & Four-Year-Olds

Please provide:

- Two complete changes of clothing
- Nap mat

Additional Guidelines

Please do not bring:

- Toys from home
- Electronics
- Large backpacks
- Large diaper bags

**Each child is provided with designated storage space within the classroom.