



Parent Handbook

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Welcome
2. Mission Statement
3. Philosophy of Early Education
4. Hours of Operation
5. Calendar
 - a. Holidays
 - b. Training Days
 - c. Vacations
6. Parent Participation
 - a. Birthdays
 - b. Social Networking
7. Personal Belongings
 - a. Attire
 - b. Show & Tell
8. Campus Security
 - a. Severe Weather Procedures
 - b. Severe Weather Closings & Delays
 - c. Drop Off/Pick Up Procedures
 - d. Visitors
 - e. Security Doors
9. Student Health
 - a. Illness Policy
 - b. Medical Emergency Plan
 - c. Medication Administration
 - d. Emergency Medications
10. Discipline
 - a. Biting Policy
11. Nutrition
12. Rest Time
13. Outside Time
14. Tuition/Fees
15. Student Files
16. Withdrawals
17. Procurement Fee
18. Civil Rights Statement

1. WELCOME

We are pleased you and your family have chosen Premier Preschools for your child's educational needs. At Premier Preschools, we are committed to providing children with a strong educational foundation through our developmentally appropriate programs in a warm, nurturing and secure environment.

We have prepared this handbook to answer the most common questions parents have concerning our policies and procedures. These policies are in place to provide your child with a safe and organized environment in which to learn and grow. We have tried to anticipate all questions you may have. However, if you need any further information, please feel free to contact the school.

2. MISSION STATEMENT

Premier Preschools are committed to providing a safe, nurturing environment where together educators, families and community members employ a variety of instructional approaches to help each child achieve their highest potential.

3. PHILOSOPHY OF EARLY EDUCATION

Premier Preschools are founded on the principle that within every child, there is a potential for learning that is virtually unlimited. The teaching/learning process is directed toward helping our children become aware of their potential and developing a love of learning that will carry them through their lifetime.

Children are taught to think creatively, to solve problems, and to experience the joy of learning. The children are encouraged to find a variety of alternatives to solve problems, to view mistakes as opportunities for learning, and to regard learning as a joyful and lifelong experience.

Teachers hold high expectations in academic and intellectual achievement. Since learning is enhanced by optimum mental, physical, and emotional health, children are taught from the beginning the importance of a healthy balance of nutrition, exercise, rest, work and play. In addition to academic areas of learning, Premier Preschools will also emphasize the arts, physical education, a peaceful means of relating to others, and culturally accepted values.

Premier Preschools are committed to the development of self-responsibility. This includes responsibility not only for one's actions or behavior, but also for the feelings and emotions of others. Teachers will encourage children to respect themselves and others.

In today's technological society, in which information and communication are available at the touch of our fingertips, education must move forward in new directions and creative ways of thinking. We must acknowledge that we are part of a global society. If children are to be prepared to live and function in the twenty-first century, we must be willing to incorporate nontraditional and expanded ways of educating.

A highly qualified and creative staff, along with educational consultants, selects the curriculum, methods, techniques, and tools used in our program. They include the following:

Individualized, small group and whole class instruction: A multi-level, multi-sensory approach will be used in both individual and shared experiences.

Encouragement of play: Children will be encouraged to develop their own ideas, to play... to be children.

Holistic Education: All parts are interconnected and the whole person needs to be developed—mentally, physically, socially, and emotionally.

Joyful Learning: Children are happiest when they are in the process of active, creative learning.

Constant evaluation: The curriculum, teaching methods, materials, and teacher/student relationships will be under constant examination for improvement.

Creative Leadership: The staff is fully qualified to meet the standards set forth in the philosophy of the Premier Preschools.

4. HOURS OF OPERATION

Premier Preschools are open Monday through Friday from 6:45 am until 5:30 pm. Full-time children may attend at any interval within this period. Part-time children are required to follow the specific guidelines for the program in which they are enrolled, and will be billed for any additional hours. Specifics should be discussed with the Director.

5. CALENDAR

HOLIDAYS

Premier Schools will be closed in observance of the following holidays. No adjustment in tuition is made for closings.

Labor Day

Thanksgiving Day

The day after Thanksgiving

Christmas Eve

Christmas Day

New Year's Day

Memorial Day

Independence Day

In the event that one of these holidays falls on a weekend, the school will observe the holiday on a Friday or Monday. Prior notice for scheduled closings will be given.

a. TRAINING - In addition to scheduled holidays, Premier will be closed additional days throughout the year for teacher training. Premier preschool will close on two calendar days at the beginning of each school year.

b. VACATIONS - Parents who have children enrolled with a Premier Preschools for twelve consecutive months may request a tuition credit for one week when the child is not in attendance. Vacation credits renew every school year. For the purposes of vacation weeks, a year is based on the child's start date. This "vacation time" is given in appreciation of continued support of our school and an attempt to help our families have some quality time together. We request that at least two weeks written notice be given before use of the vacation credit.

6. PARENT PARTICIPATION

Premier Preschools have an open-door policy. We encourage and expect parent participation and communication. Parents are welcome to visit and observe. We ask that you give your child a few weeks to adjust to his/her new environment before visiting for long periods. Please feel free to call and check on your child at any time.

a. BIRTHDAYS

You are welcome to celebrate your child's birthday with his/her classmates. We ask that you notify the classroom teacher in advance so that she may plan accordingly. Birthday celebrations will be held during our regular afternoon snack time. Any birthday snacks have to have a nut free facility label on it. Because of severe and sometimes fatal reaction of children who are allergic to peanuts it is our policy that ***no peanut butter or nut products be used or brought to the school for any reason.***

If you are planning a birthday party away from school, we ask that invitations be distributed at school only if every child in the classroom is invited. We will be glad to assist you with a classroom directory for mailing purposes.

b. SOCIAL NETWORKING

Premier Preschools invites those people who are members of Facebook to view and like our school Facebook page. This is an additional avenue of communication between our families and school, as well as a way for prospective families to "visit" our campus. Although many of our teachers and families are members of Facebook and other popular social networking sites, we would discourage the "friend-ing" of members of our faculty and staff with families of children enrolled in Premier Preschools. The relationship between teachers, administration and families should be a professional relationship founded on the mutual concern for the child's developmental advancement. Informal communications can jeopardize that professional relationship.

All communications regarding your child must come through the front office. Each office has both a phone number and an email address for parents to communicate any necessary information.

7. PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Premier Preschools is not responsible for any lost, stolen or damaged personal items brought onto campus.

a. ATTIRE

Please send your child to school in clothing appropriate for play. They will be going outside daily, weather permitting, and should be dressed accordingly. Clothes should be comfortable and easy for small people to manipulate. Please label all outerwear with your child's name. Personal belongings may be kept in individual cubbies and outerwear hung on coat hooks. Children need an extra set of weather-appropriate clothing, clearly labeled, kept in their cubbies for emergencies.

b. SHOW & TELL

Children should **not bring personal toys or stuffed animals to school**. Any personal toys will be returned to parents at drop off. Show & Tell items should be educational in nature and preferably relate to the current thematic unit.

8. CAMPUS SECURITY

Safety is a primary interest at Premier Preschools. Many precautions are taken daily to ensure the safety of your child. Emergency phone numbers, including police, ambulance, and poison control, are posted near the telephones in the facility. Security cameras are installed throughout campus. In case of an emergency, parent consent forms and emergency transportation forms are kept in a designated location for easy access.

a. SEVERE WEATHER PROCEDURES

Fire and severe weather drills are conducted regularly. The plans for emergency conditions are posted in all classrooms. In the event of a real fire, an electrical alarm will sound and the children will be led to their assigned locations outside the building. In case of severe weather, children will be taken to interior halls and bathrooms, away from windows. In the event of a gas leak or other emergency requiring evacuation, children will be transported to our pre-assigned emergency evacuation site via our school vans. Please ask the front desk for this site.

b. SEVERE WEATHER CLOSINGS AND DELAYS

Premier Preschools' closing policy for severe weather generally follows the lead of the city and county school systems. Premier Preschools uses email and Facebook to notify families of school closings and delays. **No adjustment to tuition is made for weather closings.**

c. DROP OFF/PICK UP PROCEDURES

When you enroll your child with premier preschool, you will have a Procare account set up with the help of admin staff. Admin Staff will help you create an account, so you may clock in and out your child. It gives us a complete history of attendance and serves to identify you as the legal custodian of your child. Premier Preschool will not release any child to someone who is not on the pick up list. Premier Preschools will verify with a picture ID before releasing the child to someone new.

Premier Preschools also require that parents sign the attendance forms, located in the child's classroom, upon drop-off and pick-up, as required by the Department of Human Resources.

Parents must escort children back to their designated classrooms at drop off and pick up their children from the classroom at pick up times. Only designated persons over the age of 16 years old are permitted to pick children up from the classroom. Due to liability issues, employees of Premier are not permitted to be responsible for the pickup and/or drop off children enrolled at Premier.

d. VISITORS

All persons visiting our facility are required to sign the *visitor sign-in log*, located at the front desk. The parent or guardian must accompany all persons visiting children, or parent/guardian must provide written authorization for visitors.

e. SECURITY DOORS

Each family is given access for 2 adults to the fingerprint security doors upon enrollment. We ask that parents DO NOT hold open doors for unfamiliar people.

9. Student Health

The health of our students is important for their educational success. Children cannot learn best when they do not feel good. It is for this reason we encourage all our families to have their child seen by a primary care physician. If your family does not currently have a family doctor or a primary pediatrician, please see a member of administration for a list of local doctors recommended by our families. You can also visit our website and visit the Local Resources tab for links to more information.

Premier Preschools occasionally provides basic vision, hearing and dental screenings for our students. Parents will be notified in advance of screening dates. There is never a charge to families for these screenings.

a. ILLNESS POLICY

No child will be admitted or kept at school who appears to be ill, who has a temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or more, or who experiences one vomiting or two diarrheas. Discharge of fluid or mucus from the nose, eyes or ears that is green or yellow in appearance is also cause for removing the child from the classroom environment. Parents will be called in such cases to pick up the child. If the school is unable to locate the parents, the emergency contact will be called to pick up the child. Notices will be posted on classroom doors to inform parents of any contagious diseases. **Any child sent home with the above symptoms, should be free of these symptoms for a twenty-four-hour period before returning to school.** Premier Schools reserve the right to request a doctor's note for an ill child to return to school. No child may be excused from regular classroom activities due to illness. Children must come to school able to participate in all parts of the classroom daily routine.

b. MEDICAL EMERGENCY PLAN

Should your child become extremely ill, or be involved in an accident while at school, Premier Preschools will act as we deem necessary. The school will attempt to notify the parent. If unable to do so, Premier Preschools staff will seek appropriate medical attention. Parents will assume full responsibility of payment for such services.

All teachers and staff are certified in C.P.R. and First Aid. In the event of a medical emergency, they will adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Quickly assess the child's health.
2. Call 911 or other appropriate emergency help as needed.
3. Give CPR or First Aid if needed.
4. Contact the parent, or the emergency contact if the parent is not available.

b. MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION

By DHR definition, medication is anything administered other than soap or water. This includes common items such as diaper cream, sunscreen, and chap-stick. DHR requires a doctor's note for all medications before they can be applied. Medication will be dispensed at school only after the proper completion of the required DHR medical authorization form and acquisition of a doctor's note. The standing exception to this policy

will be children enrolled in our infant and toddler rooms. All medication will be stored in locked cabinets and given by a designated individual. Medication for fever reduction will **NOT** be administered. Over the counter medications for children under 2 years old will not be administered without written doctor's instructions of administration. All medication must be in its original container and only approved dosage amounts will be given.

c. EMERGENCY MEDICATIONS

If your child requires emergency medications such as inhalers, EpiPen's, Dystatin, etc. to be kept on campus, Premier Preschools must have a written emergency medication plan from your child's doctor.

10. DISCIPLINE

Premier Preschools establish and maintain a supportive and positive environment to keep conflicts to a minimum. Methods utilized include mediation, guidance, redirection and positive reinforcement. We set limits and expectations for behavior that are developmentally appropriate and encourage children to resolve their differences verbally. Unacceptable behavior will be discussed with the child at their level and the child will be encouraged to verbalize his/her feelings. If consistent problems occur, the Director will be involved and a conference will be scheduled with the parent. If, after all measures have been exhausted, the Director believes it to be in the best interest of the child involved or the others in the school, he/she reserves the right to remove the child from our program.

a. BITING POLICY

Biting is a behavior associated with development during the infant and toddler years. Biting happens for many reasons with different children and under different circumstances. Premier Preschools has established this policy for the protection of all our children. Biting can be hurtful and harmful to children and adults.

All biting incidents will be handled with appropriate discipline methods (see section 10). If a child bites aggressively, Premier Preschools' educators will closely observe and monitor the biter to ensure the safety of the children in the classroom, and to watch for any situation that triggers biting behavior. If a child bites more than once in a day, or if biting is reoccurring, a conference will be scheduled with the Director. Depending on the nature of the behavior, the child may be temporarily suspended from the program, or Premier Preschools may require the use of a shadow teacher to monitor the child individually. A fee may be assessed for this service.

11. NUTRITION

Eating nutritious foods and learning good meal behaviors are important for children experiencing rapid growth and major developmental changes. Meal time can be a time for learning and developing social and small motor skills. Skills such as hand washing, table manners, and carrying on a conversation at the dinner table can be developed and reinforced. Age-appropriate motor skills can be fostered by encouraging children to use child-sized utensils and to clear their dishes from the table. Child-sized furniture and hand washing sinks help children feel comfortable and help them learn to be responsible.

Premier Preschools will provide breakfast, nutritious kid-friendly lunches, and an afternoon snack. All meals meet the USDA guidelines and standards for nutrition and serving size. If your child cannot have something on our menu, we must have an Alternate Nutrition Form Doctor on file to offer any substitutions. The Alternative Nutrition Form must be signed by both a parent and the child's doctor and returned to the school prior to providing food substitutions. Please speak to the Director in this event. Because of severe and sometimes fatal reaction of children who are allergic to peanuts it is our policy that ***no peanut butter or nut products be used or brought to the school for any reason.*** Menus are included in our monthly newsletter, posted in the classrooms and copies are available upon request.

Premier Preschools will also provide rice cereal and fruit and vegetable jar foods for our students ages 12 months and younger. Parents may choose to provide some or all of these items from home. All infant families must complete an Infant Nutrition Form indicating what meal item Premier will provide your child. Please speak with the Director to complete this form.

12. REST TIME

All children are required to rest each afternoon after lunch. Each child should bring a sheet, small blanket and a pillow, a small sleeping bag or nap mat from home. Classical music or lullabies will be played while children rest. Nap bedding will be sent home on Friday each week for laundering, and is to be returned the following Monday. Nap time lasts for approximately two hours. Any required adjustment in this time should be in accordance with the Department of Human Resources Minimum Standards for Day Care Facilities, worked out with the classroom teacher, and communicated with the Director.

13. OUTSIDE TIME

All children have a daily scheduled outside play time. All children in attendance WILL go outside if it is not actively raining, the wind chill is above freezing or heat indexes are 100 degrees or below. (see section 9) Teachers will use their best judgement in adjusting the length of time spent outside. Keep this in mind when dressing your children in the morning. Please send coats, hats, mittens, or any other clothing item you feel are necessary to make your child comfortable. Please label all coats, hats, and gloves.

14. TUITION/FEES

Application and registration fees are payable upon enrollment and are non-refundable. These fees are to cover the cost of processing the application for admission, supplies, educational materials, and to secure your child's space in the school for the upcoming year. The Registration Fee is due upon enrollment and required annually upon renewal in the program for the following school year.

Tuition is paid weekly and is due on the Friday of the week preceding care. Tuition is considered late at noon on the following Tuesday and a late fee of \$50 dollars will be added to the account. Please see the Director to discuss methods of payment.

In the event a child is left at the school after hours; an additional fee will be posted to your account. Late pick up fees accumulate at a rate of \$5 per minute for every minute after 5:35 pm.

15. STUDENT FILES

Each child shall have a completed student file before their first day of attendance. This file shall include a completed Premier Preschool application, a completed DHR application and a signed tuition contract. In addition to these forms, families must provide an original state of Alabama immunization record, or Blue Card, as well as a copy of the child's original birth certificate and Copy of child's social security card.

If families have specific court documentation regarding custody, visitation, or other legal matters, please provide a copy for your child's file. Please understand that Premier Preschools cannot deny any parent access to their child without proper legal documentation. If your child has medical and/or developmental concerns, please provide copies of appropriate documentation. This information ensures that Premier Schools can provide the best possible care for your child.

Student files are private and confidential. Only Premier administrative staff has access to student files. Information will only be shared with those teachers who are responsible for the care and education of your child. Student files are the property of Premier Preschools. Guardians have access to student information including account balance and payment histories. Administrative staff will only share student information with parents/legal guardians listed on the admission forms. All other persons requesting information must have written permission from the legal guardian.

16. WITHDRAWAL

Tuition is paid to reserve your child's space in the program. No portion of the tuition will be refunded for absences. Should it become necessary to withdraw your child from the school, **a two week written notice** is required to be submitted to the office. Parents will have to pay out the two week written notice. Should it become necessary, Premier Preschools reserve the right to dismiss any child, at the sole discretion of the Director.

19. PROCUREMENT FEE

Premier Preschools invests a considerable amount of time, effort and money into recruiting and training our employees. These individuals go through an intensive interviewing process so that we may evaluate and select teachers who are well-qualified to care for and nurture your child. To assure their capabilities, our teachers receive many hours of initial and in-service training during their employment with Premier Preschool.

A Procurement fee of \$3000.00 will be charged to any family or individual who hires one of our staff members to care for a child who has been enrolled in our facility within the previous twelve months.

Premier Preschools faculty and staff may not "babysit" for families of children enrolled at any Premier campus.

20. CIVIL RIGHTS STATEMENT

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or if all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.)

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.

Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (in Spanish).

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.