



Preschool Parents' Handbook

Discovery Church
5586 Covered Bridge Rd, Clayton, NC 27527
www.discovery-church.com

Jennifer Harrell, Preschool Director
(919) 919-262-0808
jennifer@discovery-church.com
or preschool@discovery-church.com

Revised August 2016

DISCOVERY CHURCH PRESCHOOL

PARENT HANDBOOK

Program Goals and Purpose

The Discovery Church Preschool is an outreach mission of the church's Children's Ministry program. We seek to offer a safe and loving Christian environment where young children can feel secure, grow in self-esteem and gain a love of learning. Here children can learn of and experience God's love for them through Bible stories, music, games, and creative activities, all while learning the academic and practical essentials that will prepare them for Kindergarten and beyond.

Our Philosophy of Early Childhood Education

We believe that every child is a unique creation of God, and that the body, mind and spirit of each child should be nurtured. As such, we seek to meet each child where he or she is emotionally, developmentally, spiritually, educationally and socially, and we apply these principles to each facet of our planning, instruction and activities. Children will experience faith, fun and friendships under the guidance of teachers and staff who embrace and model the love and grace of God in Jesus Christ.

Our Staff

Our staff members are Christ-centered individuals who are knowledgeable and experienced in early childhood education and dedicated to the loving care and teaching of young children. They are required to submit to background checks before beginning work at our preschool.

Our Curriculum

Academic instruction is designed to prepare the children for Kindergarten through fun and memorable learning experiences designed to foster a lifelong love of learning.

Teachers will guide the children through a regular daily routine that includes self-directed and teacher-directed educational play and activities. Children will encounter learning through a combination of circle time, seatwork, centers, games, story-time, memory work, structured play, art, music and movement, outdoor fun, classroom "jobs," field trips, special events, and more.

Hearing Bible stories, learning to talk to God through the regular practice of prayer and exploring God's amazing love and acceptance through Jesus are at the core of your child's day at Discovery Church Preschool.

Progress Reports

Teachers will perform annual assessments to determine each child's developmental and academic progression. Results will be reviewed with parents at year end in a conference conducted by the child's teacher. A monthly newsletter/calendar will keep parents informed of what's going on in the classroom.

Parental Involvement

Parents are encouraged to participate in the education of each child through visits, volunteer time, conferences and special events, such as holiday parties and field trips.

Visits to Discovery Church Preschool by parents are always welcome. However, we ask that you make arrangements with your child's teacher so as to minimize disruption in the classroom.

Communication between staff and parents is highly encouraged. We urge parents to speak with their child's teacher and to keep them informed of any important events that may be happening in the home or family so that we can offer loving support and sensitivity to the child while they are at preschool.

Parent-teacher conferences will be scheduled during the year. However, should you wish to confer with your child's teacher at other times, please schedule an appointment with her or send a note in your child's folder.

Please refrain from speaking with your child's teacher during drop-off time (other than briefly to communicate information relevant to your child's well-being for the day/week). Please understand that her attention needs to be on the children. Your understanding is greatly appreciated.

Governance

Discovery Church Preschool is an entity of Discovery Church and is part of the church's Children's Ministry program. The preschool is governed by a Board. Serving on the Preschool Board are the Director of Family Ministry of Discovery Church, church Treasurer, and preschool director, among others. The Preschool Board oversees the operation of Discovery Church Preschool, provides administrative guidance and confers on decisions related to the hiring or dismissal of program staff and the development of program policies. The Preschool Board works to facilitate good relations with the church leadership in their shared desires to provide a high quality early childhood Christian education and discipleship program.

Enrollment

Enrollment is open to the families of Discovery Church starting in mid-January and to the community at large in early February. No drop-ins are accepted. Children must be enrolled to attend Discovery Church Preschool classes.

You must submit the completed Application for Enrollment form to the Director along with the registration/materials fee and a copy of your child's **current immunization records** before enrollment can be completed. The registration/materials fee is non-refundable except in one limited circumstance addressed in the Allergy/Asthma section of this handbook. **Children must be fully potty trained for the 3 and 4 year old programs.** The birthday cut-off is August 31st of the enrollment year.

Schedule of Operation

Discovery Church Preschool follows the schedule of the Johnston County School System, including holidays, breaks and teacher workdays. However, our school year begins in September on the Tuesday following Labor Day and ends in May on the Thursday prior to Memorial Day.

Inclement Weather Policy

Discovery Church Preschool will follow the inclement weather closings and delays of the Johnston County School System. If the Johnston County Schools are closed, then Discovery Church Preschool will be closed. In the event of a one-hour delay, preschool will open at 10:00am. If there is a two hour delay, preschool will open from 11:30am-1:30pm for all classes (2, 3 and 4 year olds). Discovery Church Preschool does not make up days missed due to inclement weather.

Tuition Payments

Tuition payments are due on or before the first Tuesday of each month of the school year. Please make your checks payable to Discovery Church Preschool. Tuition payments made by check may be placed in the tuition box located on the table beside the main door of the church. A fee will be charged for a check returned because of insufficient funds. If you choose to pay the tuition in cash, be sure to make the payment to the Director so that she may provide you with a receipt for the amount received.

Tuition paid after the first Thursday of the month will be considered late and a \$25 late payment fee will be imposed. If you find that you cannot pay the tuition by the date it is due, you must contact the Director on or before the first Thursday of the month to make arrangements for payment of the tuition and the late payment fee. The Director may, in her discretion based on individual circumstances, extend the time in which payment may be made for no more than ten business days. If you do not contact the Director by the first Thursday of the month to make arrangements for payment of the tuition and late payment fee, you will have forfeited your child's enrollment in Discovery Church Preschool and your child will not be permitted to return to the program.

The tuition payment reserves your child's space in Discovery Church Preschool, regardless of attendance. Our operating costs are based on enrollment and these costs remain the same even though your child may be absent from preschool. For that reason, no adjustments or refunds of tuition will be made because of absences for illness, injury, vacations, holidays, inclement weather or any other reason. We do not offer tuition discounts for prepayment or if you have more than one child enrolled in preschool.

Arrival and Dismissal

Morning arrival time is from 9:00 am to 9:15 am. Bring your child to the door of the main classroom, and make sure the teacher and/or assistant is/are aware of his or her arrival. **Please love and leave your child at the classroom door so that the teacher may promptly begin instruction and maintain the classroom with minimal disruption.** Please be prompt so your child can participate in the morning activity and the class can keep to its daily schedule.

Dismissal time for the two and three year olds is promptly at 12:30. Dismissal time for the four year olds is promptly at 1:00pm. Please arrive on time for your child's dismissal as the children have had a full day and are ready to rest. From time to time, situations may arise that may cause a parent to be late in picking up their child/children. Please speak with the teacher and the director if you need to make special arrangements regarding late pick-up.

A \$10.00 fee per occurrence will be charged to parents who have not picked up their child/children.

Meals and Snacks

Please bring a healthy lunch and snack for your child. Do not include food items that must be heated. If food items need to remain cool, please include an ice pack in your child's lunch box. Label the lunch box and all permanent food containers with your child's name. The snack should be in a separate plastic storage bag labeled with your child's name so that lunch and snack items are not mixed up. For snack, you do not need to include a beverage for your 3 and 4 year old. Water will be served in a disposable cup by your child's teacher. Parents of 2 year olds, please provide a sippy cup labelled with your child's name for water for snack for your child. Our teachers will assist your child in unpacking the snack and lunch items.

DO NOT INCLUDE ANY FOOD CONTAINING NUTS OR NUT PRODUCTS IN ANY FORM IN THE SNACK AND LUNCH PROVIDED FOR YOUR CHILD. Please carefully read the ingredients of any pre-packaged food included in your child's snack and lunch to be sure that it does not contain nuts or nut products and was not processed in a facility where nuts are processed. An allergic response to nuts can occur within minutes after exposure and can result in a life-threatening reaction. **To prevent such an occurrence, we need your absolute cooperation in adhering to the above requirement.**

If your child has ANY food allergy, you must advise the Director and your child's teacher before the first day of preschool. The Director and staff will make every effort to safeguard your child against a food-borne allergy, but they will need your advice and continued assistance to do so.

You may provide special snacks for the classroom on your child's birthday, special occasions or holidays if you wish to do so. Please make arrangements with your child's teacher prior to bringing any food items to be shared with your child's classmates on those occasions.

Toys from Home

In general, we discourage children from bringing toys from home except for specific program purposes, such as "sharing days." **No play weapons** (play guns, knives, swords, etc.) should be sent to preschool with your child as we do not consider them toys.

However, we understand that bringing along a "piece of home" is often important to little ones. If this is the case with your child, please speak with his or her teacher to see if an arrangement can be made for a special item that travels from home to Discovery Church Preschool. If the special item causes a conflict or disruption in the classroom, your child will be required to place the item in their tote bag and we will ask that they not continue to bring the item to preschool.

Children's Clothing

Please dress your child in comfortable play-clothes for a school day that includes recess, craft activities and more. We make every effort to use washable art items but occasionally even washable products stain clothes. Please keep this in mind when you dress your child for preschool.

Be sure your child is dressed in clothes they can easily remove by themselves in the restroom (i.e., no overalls). **For safety reasons, open-toed shoes and open-backed shoes (such as clogs) are not allowed.** Hats or hoods may not be worn in the classroom. Children will have outdoor recess when temperatures are reasonable. Please put your child's name or initials on all coats, hats, gloves and/or mittens, etc.

Please provide a seasonally-appropriate change of clothes for your child in a large Ziploc bag labeled with your child's first and last name to be kept at school in case of an accident. The teacher will send home a reminder when it is time to change from warm to cool weather clothes and vice versa.

Field Trips

Your child will have opportunities to join classmates for enjoyable field trips. Field trips will be offered as long as we have enough volunteers available to safely supervise the children. Teachers will not provide transportation for students. You or your designee must provide transportation for your child and accompany him/her to any off-site field trip.

Occasionally, there may be a small fee related to the field trip. These are considered separate from the annual student fee and are not covered by the monthly tuition. Payment of such fee may be payable at the event location. If not, payment must be received prior to the field trip in order for your child to participate.

Illness

To ensure the health of other children and our staff, **do NOT bring your child to preschool if they are sick or you suspect that they may be becoming sick.** Similarly, please do not allow a sick sibling to enter the classroom(s). Sick symptoms may include fever or vomiting within the last 24 hours, diarrhea, nausea, or other indications of a contagious illness such as a sore throat, a chronic cough, heavy nasal discharge or nasal discharge that is not clear, an undiagnosed rash, lesion or irritation of the skin, pink eye or any other drainage from the eye (conjunctivitis) and swollen or enlarged glands.

If you (or a sibling) are sick and contagious and your child is well and will be attending preschool, please contact the Director and she or a staff member will meet you at your car to bring your well child into the building. At dismissal, the Director or a staff member will bring your child to your car. At both arrival and dismissal, please pull in to one of the handicap parking places in front of the church.

Do not bring your child to school if your child has head lice. Your child must be lice and nit (eggs) free before returning to preschool.

When in doubt, please err on the side of safety and keep your child at home. The Director will decline admittance to a child who exhibits any of the above symptoms upon their arrival at Discovery Church Preschool.

Your child must be symptom-free for at least 24 hours before returning to preschool.

If your child becomes ill or displays any of the above symptoms after preschool has begun or we have other concerns about your child's health, we will separate the child from the other children, make the child as comfortable as possible and contact you immediately to pick up your child. If we are unable to reach you within 30 minutes, we will begin calling the emergency contacts you listed on the child's enrollment application.

Please contact the Director if your child is absent from preschool because they have been diagnosed with a contagious illness or head lice. We ask that you do this so that our staff and other parents can be advised of the diagnosis (the name of the child shall remain confidential) and take any necessary precautions.

Administering Medications

Teachers and the director are not permitted to administer medication of any kind to your child. If your child requires medication while at preschool, you must come to preschool to administer the medication. Medications include both prescribed and over the counter medicines, as well as creams, lotions, powders and ointments of any kind. If your child must wear sunscreen while playing outside, please apply it before coming to preschool.

Minor Injuries

Your child's safety is a paramount concern at Discovery Church Preschool and we will take every precaution to ensure their safety and well-being. Despite our best efforts, minor scratches, scrapes, bumps and bruises may sometimes occur. In these cases, the teacher will apply simple first aid to the injury as necessary, such as cleaning with soap and water and applying a band aid. The teacher will prepare an injury report for the child's file and the teacher and/or Director will review the incident with you when you pick up your child. Upon your request, you will be provided a copy of the injury report.

Serious Injuries and Medical Emergencies

If your child sustains a serious injury or other medical emergency, the teacher or Director will immediately call 911 to request assistance from the Clayton Area Rescue Squad. While that call is being made, another teacher will contact you to advise you of the emergency. If you cannot be reached, the teacher will attempt to contact one of your emergency contacts. The teacher will continue to call until either you or an emergency contact person is reached. If EMS personnel determine that immediate transport to the emergency room is required and you or an emergency contact person have not yet arrived at preschool, the Director will accompany your child to the hospital emergency room and will remain with the child until you or an emergency contact person arrives. The teacher will prepare an injury report for the child's file. The teacher and Director will review the incident with you and will also provide you with a copy of the injury report.

Allergies and Asthma

Allergies and asthma can produce life threatening emergencies. If your child suffers from allergies and/or asthma, be sure you have completed your child's enrollment form accordingly. If the allergy or asthma has caused or has the potential to cause a life threatening reaction in your child or if an antihistamine, an epinephrine injection or a rescue inhaler has been required to relieve an allergic or asthmatic reaction, you must include an Allergy Action Plan or an Asthma Action Plan approved by your child's health care provider along with a picture of your child with the enrollment form. (The photo and action plan will be posted in your child's classroom).

Your child's safety and well-being while at Discovery Church Preschool are of paramount importance to us. After the enrollment form is submitted and before your child is enrolled, the Director and your child's prospective teacher will meet with you to learn the severity of your child's allergy and/or asthma condition and to review the plan with you. If during the course of the meeting you decide that Discovery Church Preschool cannot meet your child's needs with respect to the allergy and/or asthma condition, you may withdraw the application. If the Director and the prospective teacher reach the same conclusion, we may decline to enroll your child. In either case, the registration/materials fee will be refunded to you.

Emergency Information

Up-to-date parent and emergency contact numbers, as well as physician and health information, will be maintained on-site for every child. **If your information changes for any reason, please inform the Director and your child's teacher immediately.**

Security Information

Please inform the teacher and Director if someone else will be picking up your child from preschool. **You must provide written authorization to our staff in person prior to the day that a person other than one approved by you on your Application for Enrollment will be picking up your child.** The person picking up your child will be asked to show a photo ID before we release your child to them.

Please inform the Director if there is a separation agreement, divorce decree, court order or other legal agreement addressing custody of the child you are enrolling.

Safety

To ensure the safety of your children while at preschool, all doors of the church will remain locked throughout the day. At arrival and dismissal, one of the staff members will be at the front door to let you in the building. At other times during the day, please ring the doorbell located to the right of the front door and a staff member will let you in the building.

Social Media/Privacy

Please use care when posting pictures from preschool on social media, keeping in mind that some parents may not be comfortable having their young child/children's pictures posted as such. We recommend that you ask parents' permission before posting pictures from preschool that include children other than your own.

Confidentiality

We value the partnership created with the parents of children enrolled in Discovery Church Preschool and we want to maintain those relationships based on open, honest communication and mutual respect. For that reason, we consider the information you provide to us about your child and any other information about your child that we may accumulate during the year as confidential. Unless you direct us to do otherwise, we shall share that information only with persons who require the information to ensure your child's health, safety and well-being while enrolled at Discovery Church Preschool.

Dismissal from Preschool

The Preschool Director reserves the right to dismiss a child from preschool if we cannot meet the needs of the child. Before dismissal, all attempts will be made to work with your child to meet his or her needs. A problem-solving meeting will be held with the teacher, parents and any other agencies requested to help develop a plan to resolve the problem and best meet the needs of the child within a specified time limit. If the problem cannot be resolved and the child's needs are not being met, the child will be dismissed from the Preschool.

Withdrawal from Discovery Church Preschool

You are required to notify the Preschool Director two weeks prior to your child's last day. The monthly tuition, as well as any other balances on your account, must be paid in full prior to withdrawal. The registration/materials fee is not refundable.

Alcohol, Drugs, Firearms and Tobacco Policy

Discovery Church Preschool is an alcohol, drug and tobacco free facility. The use of alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs and tobacco in Discovery Church Preschool is not tolerated and any person doing so will be immediately directed to leave the facility. In addition, we will not release a child to any person who we believe to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs to the extent that they cannot safely transport the child. (The Director will contact one of your emergency contacts to transport the child).

Firearms are not permitted in the facility under any circumstances, except for firearms carried by law enforcement personnel. A person carrying a firearm, concealed or visible, will not be permitted to enter the facility.

Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

If we have reason to suspect that a child enrolled in Discovery Church Preschool is being abused or neglected, the Director will, pursuant to North Carolina law, report the suspected abuse or neglect to the Johnston County Department of Social Services.

Tuition Fee and Registration/Materials Fee

Tuition and Registration/Materials fees for the current preschool year are included in the back of this handbook for your reference.

Behavior Management and Discipline Policy

The behavior management and discipline policy for Discovery Church Preschool is attached on page 13 of this handbook. Both the teacher and the parent will be required to sign this document. The original shall remain in the child's folder at preschool and a copy shall be returned to the parents.

Conclusion

The policies, procedures and other information contained in this handbook have been established for the safety and welfare of all children entrusted to our care. Should you have any questions, please contact the Preschool Director.

It is a blessing to us to be able to share the love of Jesus Christ with your child. It is our prayer and our mission to provide a foundation of Christian love and truth that will prepare young children for a lifetime of joyful discipleship.

The policies, procedures, and other information in this handbook are current as of the date of publication printed on page 2. The policies, procedures and other information may be amended, deleted or modified at the discretion of Discovery Church Preschool Board when such amendments, modifications and deletions are in the best interest of Discovery Church Preschool and the children enrolled in Discovery Church Preschool.

[Jesus] said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them." ~ Mark 10:14-16

Blessings for a wonderful year at Discovery Church Preschool!

**DISCOVERY CHURCH PRESCHOOL
2016-2017 Tuition and Fees**

2 Year Old Class/3 Days

Tuition \$185/month

Registration/Materials Fee \$100/year

3 Year Old Class/4 Days

Tuition \$175/month

Registration/Materials Fee \$110/year

4 Year Old Class/3 Days

Tuition \$165/month

Registration/Materials Fee \$110/year

4 Year Old Class/4 Days

Tuition \$185/month

Registration/Materials Fee \$120/year

2 and 3 year old classes are from 9:00am-12:30pm

4 year old classes are from 9:00am-1:00pm

Discovery Church Preschool Behavior Management and Discipline Policy

We use the following policy to maintain a pleasant and loving classroom in which children may learn. Our policy is designed to remain consistent, and all of our teachers follow it.

If a child misbehaves, the teacher will explain that what he/she did that was inappropriate and that this behavior was a “poor choice,” “not nice,” or “not appropriate.”

- When possible, the teacher should point out the positive behavior of others to redirect children who are off task or misbehaving.
- Emphasis should be placed on praise and positive reinforcement by staff.
- Teachers help children use words to express needs, desire, frustration and anger.
- Children are spoken to in a friendly, but firm (not angry) voice when necessary.

Steps for Discipline

- First Occurrence: Verbal warning and/or redirection by the teacher.
- Second Occurrence: Follow-up warning, plus a reminder of consequence (time out). The teacher will maintain eye contact with the child and ask the child to repeat the consequence (time out).
- Third Occurrence: Time out. The teacher is to take the child by the hand and lead them to an area located away from classroom activity but within the teacher’s sight. The teacher should remind the child of the reason (misbehavior) for time out and ask them to consider the choice they made.

When time out is over (1 minute for each year of age), the teacher will ask the child to explain why he/she was put in time out. The student should respond with a description of the inappropriate behavior. When the child returns to the group, the incident is over and the child is treated with the same affection and respect shown to the other children. If the child continues the same misbehavior, repeat steps one and two, and the third step is a call to the parent.

Poor behavior choices involving intentional, malicious physical or emotional harm to another student, teacher or property shall result in automatic time out. (The harmed child/children will be comforted and after the time out, the child who caused harm will be asked to apologize to the harmed child/children). The parent will be informed at the end of the school day. A conference will be held with the parents if serious inappropriate behaviors continue and cannot be resolved through our policy above. For the second offense, a call will be made to the parent. For the third offense, the parent will be contacted and asked to pick up their child. This is to ensure the safety of everyone, as well as a positive learning environment.

Child/Children _____

Parent signature _____

Date _____

Teacher signature _____

Date _____

Director signature _____

Date _____

I hereby certify that I have read the Discovery Church Preschool Handbook (available online on the preschool link of the church website www.discovery-church.com) and that I understand and will adhere to the policies contained within.

Signature _____

Date _____

Print name _____

Name of child/children _____