

WELCOME

We are glad you have chosen our program. We hope your whole family will enjoy this center and the friends you will make here. You are encouraged to visit with your child prior to the first day of childcare. This gives the staff and child an opportunity to meet and get to know one another. This handbook has been written to describe our program, goals, policies, and the many details that go into making each day successful for your child. Please feel free to talk to your child's teacher or the director at any time. Once again, welcome!

Statement of Philosophy

The Viewmont Baptist Preschool Program is a Christian outreach ministry of the education department of the church. We strive to provide knowledge of God's love and age-appropriate learning experiences for each age group. We serve six weeks through five years of age. It is important to us that the needs of the whole child – spiritual, mental, social, emotional and physical – are met. Our Christian emphasis is "nurturing God's children with love and knowledge." Our goal is to give each child the academic and social experiences with other children before entering kindergarten. Our values and beliefs about children are deeply rooted in the history of early childhood education.

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| We believe | all children have the right to feel good about themselves and are the responsibility of all teachers to nurture each child's self-esteem. |
| We believe | that all our education and guidance decisions for children must be based on our knowledge of child development. |
| We believe | each person is a unique individual and has their own needs. Each person has the right to meet this need in his or her own way, in his or her own time. However, one of the responsibilities of having rights is recognizing and respecting the rights of others. |
| We believe | everyone is entitled to feelings, "good and bad "as well as the trial-and-error process that goes with feelings. It is important for people to understand these rather than deny them. |
| We believe | in helping children and adults to achieve their full potential in the context of relationships that are based on trust, respect, and positive regard. |
| We believe | each child and family will have the respect for personal privacy demanded by professional ethics. |

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It may look to parents like preschool is all about playing, but in fact, Harvard researchers have found some long-lasting educational benefits. Although parental involvement and education is often the main influence on a child's school success, researchers say early childhood education matters too. Researchers followed 1,400 children in Chicago for 25 years and found that preschool graduates typically had stronger language, math and socialization skills when they entered kindergarten compared with classmates who did not attend preschool. The study looked at educational achievement, socioeconomic status, health, and crime. Results demonstrated consistent benefits for children who began preschool at age 3 or 4 versus those children who began kindergarten when older and especially for males and children of high school dropouts. As the children became adults, they completed more years of schooling and attained better-paying jobs. In fact, research found that by age 28, the former preschool students had higher educational levels, incomes, socioeconomic status, and rates of health insurance coverage and lower rates of substance abuse and legal problems than the kindergarten students.

Policies and Helpful Information

The following guidelines will help keep your child safe and help our school run more smoothly and effectively on a daily basis. Please help us accomplish our goals by abiding by these policies.

Operating Hours

Preschool half-day hours are 8:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. (now all stay for lunch bunch). Please do not bring your child to the classroom prior to 8:45 a.m. and please pick your child up promptly at 12:45 p.m., unless they are staying for extended hours. This half-day rate stays the same each month regardless of closures. Should an emergency arise, that might delay your pickup, please notify the teacher as soon as possible by calling (828) 322-1205. Should late pickup become a problem, we will notify you.

Extended hours are not covered in your regular tuition. This is an additional charge either by the hour or by paying a flat fee. Please see extended-day options information.

There is a late charge for picking up your child after your scheduled pickup time 12:45 p.m. or 3:00. The charge is \$1 per first 5 minutes and \$1 per minute thereafter that you are late.

Registration Fees and Monthly Tuition

Registration will be held in January of each year for the following fall session. Viewmont Baptist Preschool staff, current students, and church members will be given priority. Then on the first of February we will start down the waitlist. You will be notified when registration will occur. **You will need to complete a registration form and pay a registration fee to hold your child's space each year.**

NOTE: Once all available positions are filled, remaining applicants will be placed on a waiting list according to entry date and notified as positions become available.

There is a **nonrefundable** registration fee for all students each year.

VBC charges a monthly tuition fee which is payable between the 1st and the 10th of each month. All tuition options are posted on our website, www.viewmontbaptistpreschool.com, under the tuition tab. At the end of the day on the 10th of the month, if payment is not received, your account will be assessed a **\$25.00 late fee and your child will not be allowed to return to school until tuition is paid in full** (unless prior arrangements have been made with the directors). Please make checks payable to VBC/Preschool. Full tuition must be paid to maintain your child's place in class.

Summer Sessions will have a separate registration held in March. Registration fees will be announced.

Additional Charges

Extended-day children staying in the afternoon will be charged a one-time \$20 laundry fee. We wash the cot sheets each week. This fee is for washing the sheet, this way we don't have to send the sheet home for you to wash and remember to send it back.

Emergency Plan

VBC Preschool has taken steps to create plans to keep the children safe in case of an emergency. Our utmost concern is that of your child's safety and of yours as well, so that family units can reunite safely, intact, and as soon as possible. We have a lockdown procedure in place.

As a preschool, we practice emergency drills with the children so that they know exactly what to expect in these situations. They are unaware that these are drills for fire, tornado, or lockdown.

Program

The children are introduced to a balanced program of interaction with friends and both teacher-directed and child-directed experiences. The daily schedule includes time spent in the learning center, group times for creative movement, music, storytelling and dramatization. Four-year-old field trips are part of the children's experiences.

The program we pursue is geared toward helping children develop habits of observations, questioning and listening. It gives each child awareness of one's own feelings and of one's right to express those feelings, sometimes channeling them into more appropriate means of expression. The children learn they can make free choices as long as they stay within the limits of consideration for other people. We encourage self-expression. Such an open-minded program prepares children to utilize their intellectual and creative abilities for future learning tasks.

Our program is a Christian program based upon the belief that play is the best way for children to learn. Each classroom is organized with centers for creative art, literature, science, pre-math, dramatic play, and cognitive and small-motor development. The centers encourage re-enactment of life's roles. The environment is planned to stimulate imagination and creativity, socialization, and exploration and discovery, while challenging the use of muscles important to developing bodies.

Enrollment and Admission

Viewmont Baptist preschool provides half-day preschool for ages six weeks through five years. The center is open to all persons, regardless of race, creed, sex or religion.

The director determines enrollment procedures. Upon admission and prior to attendance, parents are required to review the parent handbook and sign that you reviewed it on the registration form.

Admission procedures include the completion of all forms. The medical form must be completed within a two-week period from the date of admission.

It is critical that you update your child's file yearly and give notice of any changes of address or phone numbers.

Curriculum

Curriculum is integrated around themes and topics, reflecting the natural way children live and learn. Class meetings begin with a whole-group mini-lesson, and each lesson is followed by time for individuals to test new skills or concepts in the context of authentic activities monitored by the teacher.

In centers, teachers introduce age-appropriate standards and conventions of writing, reading, phonics, math, social studies, science, the arts, and manipulatives. Children then apply these to independent practice while instructors circulate among their students to confer and help each child, reinforce what they were taught and introduce new skills and concepts in context.

VBC Preschool is an extension of the congregation and ministry of Viewmont Baptist Church. Viewmont Baptist Church seeks to foster a Christlike environment of worship and service full of grace and truth. Our preschool is an environment that promotes spiritual, emotional, and psychological development of children in a Christian atmosphere that glorifies God and is biblically-based, which includes our approach to human sexuality. Our preschool curriculum will reflect such biblical teachings. Please contact the directors if you would like more information.

Items To Bring Other than Food and Change of Clothes

Cups

In accordance with state sanitation requirements, the following rule must be observed regarding sippy cups: All children in the Wobbler, Toddler, 2-year-old and 3-year-old rooms who bring sippy cups must have the cups labeled with the child's name. **The cups need to be the kind where the straw or the drinking part they put their mouths on will fold down into the top of the cup where it will not become contaminated.** The cups must go home every day with the child.

Diapers

If your child is not old enough to be potty trained, please bring diapers and wipes and give them to the teacher. The teachers will try to let you know when your child needs more diapers for the week. If you think about it, please ask them if it is time to restock diapers and wipes.

Blankets

If your child will be staying during nap time, please make sure to bring a blanket to cover them with. We will send them home on the last day your child attends each week so they can be laundered. Please make sure to

send it back on the first day your child attends each week.

Inclement Weather Policy

In the event of inclement weather, you will be notified via email or you can log onto our website www.viewmontbaptistpreschool.com or our Facebook page. There will be information on closings or delays on the home page. Information about closings or delays will be available as soon as we get it from Catawba County Schools and Hickory City Schools. If there is no announcement, we will operate on a regular schedule. If we are on a delay or the conditions worsen during the early morning hours, please check your email, our website or Facebook.

A two-hour delay
A three-hour delay

VBC Preschool opens at 10 a.m.
VBC Preschool is closed (We have to close when there is a three-hour delay because our staff would still be in the process of taking their own children to school, therefore there would not be enough staff members to open the doors at Viewmont.)

If the conditions warrant early closing, we expect parents to pick up children by the announced closing time in order to ensure that children and staff reach home safely.

There will be no makeup days or refunds for inclement weather.

Refreshments

VBC Preschool provides NO food. Please remind us if your child is allergic or sensitive to certain foods or beverages. We encourage parents to bring snacks in anytime throughout the year. We also encourage healthy snacks and lunches. Everyone must sign a Nutrition Opt Out form.

Birthdays

If a birthday is to be celebrated away from school and the entire class is not invited, please mail the invitations. If the entire class is invited, please feel free to bring the invitations to school. Please be considerate of our children's feelings and comply with the above request.

Children are invited to celebrate their birthdays at school. Please make arrangements with your child's teacher and they can help you with ideas of what kind of snack to bring.

Parental Involvement

We encourage parents to be involved in their child's education by signing up for special snack. A family may bring in special snack that goes along with the letter of the week or the theme for the week or month. We also invite parents to sign up for parties during special holidays. There will be a sign-up sheet for these events outside your child's classroom.

Field Trips

The only classes that go on field trips are the 4-year-old classes. We do ask for parents to go on these field trips with their children if possible. Each class will have a sign-up sheet and the parents will be notified in plenty of time to make arrangements to get off work.

Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences can be held if requested by parents or teachers. Conferences are a time when information concerning the child's abilities, needs, and progress can be discussed. The staff is also available for additional conferences throughout the year at the parent's request.

Since it is necessary for the teachers to devote their time during the school day to the children, we ask that you please set up a conference appointment if you need to confer with the teacher at length.

Clothing

Children should dress comfortably, simply and suitably for the weather. We do engage in a number of messy activities that, despite smocks, can get clothes dirty. We do not want to inhibit the children unnecessarily, so we ask you to send them in comfortable, old clothes that they can play in without hesitation. Remember that children will be playing outdoors, so be sure their clothing is sturdy and durable. Dress in layers on cold days! An extra set of clothing (properly labeled) including underwear, socks, pants, and shirt must be left at school in case of accidents. An extra sweater or jacket at school is also recommended since the temperature often changes noticeably in the fall and spring. Label all clothing prominently with your child's name.

Labeling

Please label all clothing, book bags, and lunch boxes and items inside lunch boxes with your child's name. This is very important for the teachers in determining ownership of these items. It is also important in helping the child learn to take care of his or her belongings.

Health

You are the best judge of your child's health, and we trust you will not bring a sick child to the center. However, if in the opinion of the teaching staff that your child is sick, we will call you to come and pick up your child. The following criteria will be considered in determining if your child must go home:

- * fever of 100* or more
- * inflammation of the eyes
- * vomiting
- * more than one incidence of diarrhea
- * communicable disease
- * unknown rash

If your child was sent home due to illness, he or she **may not return to the center until he or she has been free from symptoms for 24 hours, without medication.** This is to allow your child ample time to recover and

stop the spread of illness to the other children. If your child tests positive for the flu, they must be fever-free for 48 hours before they can return to school.

It is your responsibility to notify the center if your child has a communicable illness, such as measles, chicken pox, headlice, conjunctivitis (pink eye), flu, strep throat, etc.

A child may be readmitted without a statement from the physician only if the child has been absent for a period of time equal to the longest incubation period of the illness specified by the Department of Health and Human Services.

In the event your child contracts lice, we must be notified. Once the child has been treated, they must be nit-free before they will be allowed to return to school.

On occasion, if a health concern persists the preschool director may request that a child be seen by a physician prior to returning to the center.

If your child becomes sick while at school and we call for someone to pick them up; they must be picked up within 30 minutes from the time we call. We **DO NOT** make up days.

Medications

If a dosage is required while at VBC Preschool, a permission for medication form must be filled out with the dosage amount and we must have the medication in the bottle with the prescribed amount on it along with the child's name.

FOR ALL CLASSES - No medications/topicals will be left for longer than 1 week. The EXCEPTION is emergency medications such as Epi Pens, Benadryl, Inhalers. If your child needs a diaper cream/topical or prescription medication, the permission form will be filled out at dropped off when you hand the cream/medication to the teacher and for only one week. At the end of that week, it will be sent home. If it is necessary to continue using it, the same process will repeat itself. The EXCEPTION will be if there is something that the child needs daily.

Immunizations

Parents must submit a copy of the child's immunization record within two weeks of admission. **We require all children to have current immunizations to enter our program.** We will also need a medical examination form for the child within the first 30 days.

Accidents

Children may be involved in minor accidents at the center (scraped knees, bruises, etc). An incident report will be filled out specifying the nature of the injury, time and place of occurrence, first aid steps taken, and the name of the staff involved. Two copies will be made and one will be placed in the child's file and one given to the parent unless parent initials that they do not need a copy.

Occasionally, there will be incidents involving other children, such as pushing, biting, hitting, etc. When you

receive a report on these incidents, at no time will the name of another child be written or given. We will discuss the incident with both families, but will not disclose names.

Biting is a behavior that happens frequently with children 12 months to three years of age. The staff will work with children and families to stop the biting. If a child continues to bite over a period of time and other children are suffering, as a last resort, we will be forced to ask that child to be removed from the center until the biting is no longer occurring. The same policy will apply to all behaviors that occur and adversely affect other children.

Hand washing

Frequent hand washing with soap and running water is necessary to prevent the spread of disease. **Children and adults need to wash their hands before coming to the classroom**, preparing or eating, before and after water play, after handling animals, toileting, coughing and wiping noses. Set a good example and teach children how to clean their hands.

Cleaning

We clean our toys on a daily basis. We have a toy bucket at our sink and when a toy has been in a child's mouth it immediately goes in the dirty toy bucket. The toys get hand washed and then put back out the next day. The larger toy items get wiped down and sprayed with a special bleach mixture that kills all germs.

Our floors are swept and mopped daily.

Washer and dryer is on site - we maintain clean cot sheets, school blankets, bibs, etc on a weekly basis and daily basis when needed.

Diapering areas are cleaned with a three-part regimen every time a child is changed on the changing table.

All high chair trays are removed and run through the chemical dishwasher at the end of each day to ensure the trays are clean and germ free.

Vehicle safety

When driving into the parking lot, PLEASE DRIVE SLOWLY!!! Please do not pull your vehicle to the outside doors and park, blocking the drive-thru. You MUST PARK IN A PARKING SPACE. Please lock your vehicles at all times when in the parking lot of Viewmont Baptist Church. For the safety of our parents and children, we ask that you do not block or park in the alleyway. **Please do not leave your children unattended in the vehicle.**

Transportation

Transportation for local field trips will be provided by parents in their own vehicles. Each driver will be responsible for the safety and well-being of each child in the vehicle. We ask that all parents who drive abide by the following rules:

The total number of children and adults being transported in a vehicle will never exceed the number of available seatbelts in the vehicle.

Children will not be left unattended in a vehicle.

Children will enter and leave the vehicle from the curbside unless the vehicle is in a protected parking or driveway.

Each person in the vehicle will be seated in the manufacturer's designated areas and will remain seated while the vehicle is in motion.

All doors will be kept locked whenever the vehicle is in motion.

No cell phones will be used while the vehicle is in operation.

In the event the church bus is used for transporting children, it will meet and maintain safety inspection standards of the Division of Motor Vehicles of the NC Department of Transportation.

Safe Arrival and Departure

Upon arrival, all children must be accompanied inside the facility by an adult. The staff must be notified of the child's arrival. Upon the child's departure, an adult must come inside the facility and notify the staff that the child is leaving.

A sign in/sign out roster is outside each classroom.

Authorization is required in writing when anyone other than the designated adults arrive to pick up the child. Children must never be left unattended.

Discipline Policy

At the Viewmont Baptist Preschool, we view discipline not as a means of punishing the child who has acted inappropriately, but rather as a means of teaching a child. Positive discipline teaches children where the limits are set, how to maintain control over their bodies, and how to problem solve in the event of conflict. Discipline is the most effective when it follows logical consequences. The consequences for behavior have to make sense to the child. If a child is throwing sand outdoors, it is logical to tell the child that sand stays in the sandbox, and then if it gets thrown out again, the child will have to find somewhere else to play. But let's not leave it at that. Get the child involved in a discussion about what would happen if all the sand was thrown out of the box. A little bit of nonsense and humor doesn't hurt either. If the child were simply told to leave the sandbox after having thrown sand, what would he or she have learned by the experience?

Since the purpose of discipline is to teach, more verbal children should be encouraged to talk to their peers when conflict arises (i.e., a child who was struck by a peer should be encouraged to tell the peer that they do not like to be hit and it hurts). This helps children to empathize with one another's feelings and really see the results of their actions. Teachers will also talk to the student and guide them to make other choices.

Limiting the child's choices of activities due to inappropriate behavior is an effective means by which to teach

children to respect property and one another (i.e., a child who is stepping on plastic blocks should be warned that he/she will be asked to find a different toy if they do it again because stepping on toys can break them).

Separation of children may become necessary in the case of two or more children having extreme difficulty playing together without conflict. The teacher then needs to assign appropriate play areas for the children, with the message that they may try playing together again later on if they do well on their own. The use of timeout shall be limited. A timeout shall never be demeaning. Again, it is an opportunity to gain control over oneself, so that the child and adult can discuss the situation and a more appropriate action may be taken.

When talking to a child about their behavior, we give them help in determining what they feel is an appropriate consequence. This works especially well as children get older (i.e. a child who is hurting children with housekeeping utensils may be asked, "what can we do to help you remember how to use the utensils properly?"). You may be surprised at how a child may respond to this. If their suggestions are inappropriate, then teachers make the decision for the child. The child stands to gain the most if he/she makes retribution on his/her own terms.

Inappropriate behavior shall be viewed as exactly that. Children shall never be referred to as naughty or bad. We always address the behavior as the problem, not the child. Whenever possible, we give the child a choice. Let them own their actions by choosing what they will do. Teachers are expected to give unconditional acceptance of the child as a good person trying their best to learn about life.

Smoke-Free Campus

We are proud to be a smoke-free campus. It is against the law to smoke on Viewmont Baptist property.

Alcohol

When picking up your child(ren) if a staff member smells alcohol on you, your child(ren) will not be released to you. Even if you have only had one drink and you may not be impaired, (we do not have the ability to determine that). If we do release your child to you and you are impaired, we may be held liable. We will call someone else on your pickup list to come get your child.

Chronic Disruptive Behavior

We will make every effort to work with parents of children having difficulties in child care. We are here to serve and protect all of our children, though. Children displaying chronic disruptive behavior, which has been determined to be upsetting to the physical or emotional well-being of another child, may require the following actions:

Initial Consultation:

The director may require the parents of any child who attends Viewmont Baptist Preschool to meet for a conference. The problem will be defined on paper. Goals will be established, and the parent will be involved in creating approaches toward solving the problem.

Second Consultation:

If the initial plan for helping the child fails, the parents will again be required to meet with the director. Another

attempt will be made to identify the problem, outline new approaches to the problem, and discuss the consequences if progress is not apparent.

Discharge Policy

Viewmont Baptist Preschool reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of a child for the following reasons:

- Non-payment or excess of late payment of fees
- Not observing the rules of the center as outlined in the parent agreement
- Physical and/or verbal abuse of staff by a parent or child

Grievance Procedures

If you have concerns or requests about your child's care, we ask that you first share these with your child's teacher. You are also encouraged to discuss these concerns with the director if issues cannot be resolved to your satisfaction.

If these concerns involve center policy, please communicate these concerns directly to the directors. Open communication between parents, staff, and administration is an important factor in the successful partnership between Viewmont Baptist Preschool and your family.

Grievance Procedures for Parents of Children

The process starts with a written request for a meeting with the director to discuss the problem and look for a solution. If the problem is not settled, the parents may appeal to the preschool chairperson and the pastor of Spiritual Formation.

A. Initiation: a parent may initiate a grievance proceeding when either the student or his/her parents or guardian believes that the violation, misapplication, or misinterpretation of Viewmont Baptist Preschool policies or procedures has occurred with regard to the student.

B. Procedure: the procedure for initiation and conduct of a grievance shall be:

Step 1 - Director Conference

A parent or guardian wishing to invoke the grievance procedure shall make a written request for a conference with the director to discuss the grievance and seek a resolution. The following guidelines shall be observed in step one:

*A grievance shall be filed as soon as possible, but no longer than 10 days, after disclosure of the fact giving rise to the grievance. The director shall grant the conference within five school days following receipt of the request.

*The request shall include a statement describing the grievance.

*The director will state his/her position on the questions in writing to the parent within five school days following the conference.

Step 2 - Appeal to the chairman of preschool board or pastor of spiritual formation

If the grievance is not resolved at step one, the parent may appeal the director's decision in writing to the board chairperson. The appeal must be made within five school days following receipt of the director's position statement in step one.

The chairperson, pastor of spiritual formation, and preschool personnel committee shall review the grievance within five days following receipt of the appeal. A written response shall be made to the parent or the guardian, and the director from the chairperson or his designee within 10 school days following the chairperson's review.

Termination

The parent agrees to provide ***two weeks' notice*** should it become necessary for the child to withdraw from the preschool.

If you have a problem, the first thing to do is speak with your child's teacher about the issue. If you continue to have concerns, please come speak to the directors. If a complaint is filed with Raleigh, and after being investigated the complaint is deemed unsubstantiated, we reserve the right to discontinue providing services for your family.

Holidays

Due to calendar changes, these days will be determined annually.

Enrichment Programs

Viewmont Baptist Preschool will offer a variety of classes for preschoolers during the year. They are in addition to our regular preschool programming. Some classes require additional fees. You are under no obligation to register for classes requiring additional payment.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Suspected child abuse and neglect will be reported to the Department of Social Services.

The preschool will not tolerate sexual harassment in any form. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Our commitment is to nurture our students' individual potential and cultivate in childhood an enthusiasm for learning that spans a whole lifetime.