



Liberty Pals
Enrichment Center

Parent Handbook

Established 1996



12001 Liberty Parkway
Vestavia Hills, Alabama 35242
(205)-969-1245

Dear Parents,

Welcome to Liberty Pals Enrichment Center!

We have prepared this handbook to help you have a better understanding of our preschool program and to assist and guide you as you seek answers to any questions that you may have regarding the center.

It is our sincerest desire to provide the utmost care for your child/children in a loving Christian atmosphere. God's word tells us that Jesus Himself "grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man". Just as His caregivers instructed Him, we are honored to teach and care for your child/children and take seriously the trust that you have given us to do so.

Thank you for sharing your preschooler with us. We are excited about this new year and look forward with great anticipation to what the Lord has in store for all of us as we partner together as a Liberty Pals family.

Please feel free to contact us at any time should you have additional questions or concerns.

Blessings,

Kari Burr -Director

Danielle Gambino - Assistant Director

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Liberty Pals Enrichment Center (LPEC)

Website: www.thechurchatlibertypark.org

Phone Number: (205)-969-1245

Preschool Director.....Kari Burr

Email: kari.burr@libertypark.org

Preschool Assistant Director.....Danielle Gambino

Email: danielle.gambino@libertypark.org

Regular Hours of Operation: 9:00am - 1:00pm

Early Care Drop Off: 7:55am/Extended After Care 1:00pm - 2:30pm

The Church at Liberty Park

Pastor.....Randy Overstreet

Associate Pastor.....Nate French

Church Office Phone Number: (205)-969-1236

Church Website: www.libertypark.org

Email: contact@libertypark.org

Purpose

It is our mission to provide an environment for children to explore and discover the world that God made through hands on experiences. It is our desire to help children develop a sense of responsibility and respect for themselves, others, and the environment. In Proverbs 22:6, we are instructed by God to “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it”. Therefore, it is the vision of Liberty Pals Enrichment Center along with The Church at Liberty Park to minister to and meet the needs of each child and their families using Christ-centered love and daily care.

Curriculum

Liberty Pals uses the Abeka Curriculum, which is a Bible-based curriculum originated in Pensacola, Florida. It is designed to encourage the development of the whole child: intellectually, socially, emotionally, physically, and spiritually, while also promoting a sense of self-worth and a personal joy of learning.

Enrichment/Extracurricular Opportunities

Chapel provides the opportunity for children enrolled in our 3K, and 4K/K-PREP classes to attend an age-appropriate worship service each Thursday morning. Children enrolled in our 2K classes will begin chapel attendance in January. Each service will include a time of prayer, praise through music, and biblical instruction.

Music Class provides a special time each week for the children to enjoy singing, playing instruments, and develop a sensitivity to the sounds of music through rhythm and movement.

Physical Movement will include outdoor play and planned activities to give the children an opportunity to exercise, interact socially, and play cooperatively.

Field Trips are designed for 3K and 4K classes to expand on daily curriculum and enhance learning. The students will experience in-school field trips offering hands-on crafts and activities with guest speakers as an alternative to a traveling field trip. Our **4K and K-PREP 101** classes will attend at least one traveling field trip per year. Parents are required to give written permission for their child to attend any traveling field trip. The center will send home a form that will include details of the trip and will need to be completed and returned to the teacher prior to the date of the trip.

After Preschool Extracurricular Activities are offered following regular preschool hours to our 3K, 4K and K-PREP 101 students. Activities offered will include Science Scouts, Soccer Shots, LPEC Preschool Dance, Art, Liberty Pals Amigos (*preschool Spanish*) and Liberty Pals Sous Chefs (*preschool cooking/baking class*). Fees for these activities are owed separately from tuition and will be paid directly to the director/teacher of each class.

General Policies

Enrollment

Our program is available for children six months through five years of age. All children must be registered and have all the required forms on file. The required forms include a completed student application with ACH form, an updated immunization form obtained from the child's pediatrician, a form listing the names of adults authorized to pick up your child, emergency care form, media release form, hand sanitizer permission form, and signed parent handbook agreement form.

Enrollment is limited to children who require no special education needs or a specialized physical environment. Liberty Pals reserves the right to refuse to accept or to dismiss a child where the needed accommodation would impose an undue hardship upon the preschool or would fundamentally alter the nature of the services provided by our staff and administration. Such action will be decided and handled on a case-by-case basis.

Registration Fees and Tuition

A registration fee and supply fee are due at the time of registration. **These fees are NON-REFUNDABLE under any circumstance.**

Monthly tuition is due by the 5th of each month and will be automatically deducted from your bank account.

There will be **no adjustment in tuition fees** for vacations, holidays, child illness, or when we are forced to close due to circumstances beyond our control.

Late Fees

All children must be picked up by 1:05pm each day. There will be a \$1 per minute late charge for any child picked up after 1:05pm. After the 3rd tardy, there will be a fee of \$25 charged each time a "late pick-up" occurs.

Pals Playtime

Playtime is an early/late care option that is available for children enrolled in our 2K, 3K, 4K, and K-PREP 101 classes. It is offered Monday through Thursday each week. Early drop-off begins at 7:55am with a fee of \$9 for the first child and \$6 for each additional child. All students attending late care must be picked up no later than 2:30pm. Applicable fees for late care are listed below:

1:00pm until 1:30pm - \$5

1:30pm until 2:30pm - \$9 (for students entering late care after extracurricular activities)

1:00pm until 2:30pm pick-up - \$14 and \$8 for each additional child

If your child is picked up after 2:30pm, our "late fee" policy will go into effect (see page 6).

Please make every effort to pick up your child on time, as our teachers have other afternoon obligations as well.

PLEASE NOTE: There will be no carpool service offered for early/late care. Parents will need to walk inside the building or to the playground for pick-up and drop-off.

General Carpool Information

The use of our carpool line is strongly encouraged. Your participation in carpool drop-off and pick-up lessens the child/parent separation anxiety and provides a happier start to your child's day. Therefore, please try to refrain from walking your child to his/her classroom. It is much easier for a child to say "good-bye" at the car, rather than the classroom door. Please make every effort to have your child arrive at preschool on time. Late arrivals tend to disrupt the morning routine of the classroom and may often lead to the unnecessary emotional distress of your child.

It is a requirement of Alabama law that all children be buckled in car seats before the vehicle pulls away from the carpool line. If you do not have a car seat, insist that your child not be buckled, or ask us to load your child in the front seat, we **WILL NOT** be able to load your child. It is the responsibility of the parent to make sure the car seat is properly installed. **We will not install car seats in any vehicle.**

Carpool will occur in a single line underneath the lower parking area portico. Parents will receive a car mirror hang tag with your child's name and it should be hanging visibly to our faculty both at "drop-off" and "pick-up" each day.

Parents should not get out of the vehicle. At "drop-off" a faculty member will remove your child from the vehicle and escort him/her into the building. At "pick-up" a faculty member will escort your child and assist you by loading him/her into the vehicle.

Our faculty **WILL NOT** climb into your vehicle to remove or load your child from/into a “third row” seat. Therefore, if your child’s car seat is not accessible, you will need to pull into a parking space and walk to the entrance of the building to “drop-off” or “pick-up” your child.

Please refrain from cell phone usage while in the carpool line in order to provide necessary communication with your child and our staff as he/she is unloaded/loaded each day.

Drop-Off: Begins at 8:50am and ends promptly at 9:10am. No children will be accepted before 8:50am, unless they are registered for “Pals Playtime/early care”. If you arrive after 9:10am, you must walk your child to his/her classroom.

Pick-Up: Afternoon carpool begins at 12:45pm and ends promptly at 1:05p.m. If you arrive after 1:05p.m. our “late fee” policy will go into effect (see page 6).

Security

Authorized Pick-up

Children will be released to authorized adults only. A completed authorized pick-up form will be required and kept on file for each child. This form will remain in effect for the duration of the child’s enrollment. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to keep the authorized list up to date. **Any changes will require notification to the director/assistant director via phone call, email, or written note.**

Building Safety

It is our desire to provide the highest quality of safety for your child. An automatic door-lock system is in place at the preschool’s entrance and therefore, the center’s doors will be locked from 9:10am until 2:30pm each day with the exception of 12:45pm-1:05pm carpool dismissal.

If you need to enter the building during preschool hours, please ring the buzzer on the right-hand side of the door and the lock will be released.

Visiting the Center

All visitors **must sign in at the front desk** and will be asked to wear an identification label while inside the building. Each visitor will be required to sign out upon exiting the facility.

If you need to check your child in late, or check your child out early, please park your vehicle, walk to the entrance of the preschool, and ring the buzzer on the right hand side of the door and the lock will be released.

Discipline

Classroom

Discipline in the classroom is necessary and should be handled in a developmentally appropriate way. Verbal confirmation and praise promote acceptable behavior.

However, if a child demonstrates unacceptable behavior, he/she will be removed from the situation for a period of redirection as sometimes a simple change in activities can make a difference and correct the behavior. After a time of redirection, if the inappropriate behavior occurs again, the child will then be removed from the situation to sit in "time-out" within the classroom in order for the child to calm down and decide when he/she is ready to rejoin the class with appropriate behavior. If the inappropriate behavior persists after every effort has been made within the class to correct it, the child may need to be removed from the classroom to sit in a period of "time-out" with the director/assistant director.

If these attempts do not improve the child's behavior, the parents will be notified and may be asked to take the child home for the remainder of the day. A parent/teacher conference may need to be scheduled to seek the best solution in order that the child may continue to have a positive preschool experience.

It is the goal of the center to provide a safe environment for all children attending the preschool. Therefore, after all necessary attempts have been made to correct a child's over aggressive or inappropriate behavior, it will then be the discretion of the center to suspend the child for a period time or dismiss the child from the program if the situation is still unresolved and necessitates itself.

Biting Policy

The procedure for handling a biting problem is as follows:

- The biting will be interrupted by the staff and the child who bit will be spoken to on their level in a loving, but calm and firm manner. We will explain that, "You cannot bite your friends because it hurts them. We do not hurt our friends."
- The staff will stay calm and not overreact, but will remove the biter from the situation
- The bitten child will be comforted.
- The wound will be assessed by the teacher, cleansed with soap and water, and cared for with the appropriate bandage and "TLC".
- The teacher will work together with parents and try to determine the cause of the incident to hopefully deter future biting and reinforce appropriate behavior.

For first and second incidents:

The parents of both children will be notified of the biting incident. Appropriate forms will be filled out (Boo-Boo & Incident Report).

For the third incident:

The parents of both children will be notified of the biting incident. Appropriate forms will be filled out (Boo-Boo & Incident Report) and the biter will be suspended from the center for a period of time as follows:

6-24 Months - 2 full preschool days
2K /3K/4K/K-PREP - 5 full preschool days

**The suspension policy will be implemented if all three incidents occur within the same semester. 1st Semester: August-December 2nd Semester: January - May

However, if a biting incident occurs after suspension, the biter will then be dismissed for a longer period and possibly for the remainder of the semester. The child will continue to be enrolled during the suspension period provided tuition is kept up to date. If tuition is not kept current, this will be considered a withdrawal from the program.

Health Requirements and Information

All children must be able to participate in all daily activities of the center. The children will have a scheduled playground time and will go outside each day as weather permits and the “real-feel” temperature is at least 45 degrees. It is not possible for a child to remain inside during the scheduled outside/playground time of the class. We are not equipped with extra staff to supervise individual children.

Special Health Information

Please make the center aware of any special or unusual conditions that your child may have that would require extra individual attention, (i.e. food allergies, asthma, hearing loss, visual problems, etc.).

Certificate of Immunization

All children must have a certificate of immunization with a current expiration date on file. This form may be obtained from your child’s pediatrician and must be kept current. Once the form has expired, there is a ten-day grace period to submit a new form. **If a new form is NOT received within ten days, NO child will be able to attend the preschool until the new form is received.** Parents will receive written a notice of expiration date.

Medical Emergencies/Accidents

In the event that a child has a medical emergency or severe accident during preschool hours, and time is crucial, the center will call “911” and the parents will be notified immediately.

Illness

In order to reduce the spread of germs in the center, children will wash or sanitize their hands frequently throughout the day and when transitioning from one area to another as needed after exposure to shared items. To use hand sanitizer in the center we are required to have an authorization form on file signed by the parent. This form will be kept on file and will remain in effect for the duration of your child’s enrollment.

Please **DO NOT** send your child(ren) to the preschool if he/she exhibits any of the following symptoms listed. We will contact the parent of any child(ren) who exhibits one or more of the following symptoms and he/she must be picked up immediately upon notification of the parent:

- Fever - Children **MUST** be “fever-free” for twenty-four hours without the aid

of medication. Any temperature that reaches 100.0 degrees or higher will be considered a fever.

- Chronic cough, runny nose, discolored drainage, watery eyes, sore throat, etc.
- Vomiting and diarrhea – Children **MUST** be free of vomiting and/or diarrhea for 24 hours from the most recent episode. (Diarrhea should be defined as an unusual frequent or involuntary runny stool loss.)
- Abscess or draining sores of any kind
- Rash – Children with a rash will not be allowed to attend the preschool until it has been diagnosed and is determined “non-contagious” by a physician. A written documentation from the child’s pediatrician will be required upon his/her return to the preschool.
- Severe headache
- Excessive irritability or unusual passivity/lethargy
- Head lice
- COVID-19 Typical Symptoms

PLEASE NOTE: The center asks that parents/guardians always leave your cell phones on in order for us to reach you easily should an illness or medical emergency arise. After two unsuccessful attempts to reach a parent(s), we will then proceed to reach the person(s) listed on your emergency contact form.

Allergies

It is the responsibility of the parent to make the director/assistant director aware of any allergies your child may have.

Medicine

If a child requires medication during the hours of the center, the parent must come and administer the medication.

Children with severe allergies who may need emergency medications (i.e. Epi-pens, inhalers, puffer, etc.) will need to create a plan with their child’s teacher to discuss location of the medication(s) and how to administer. The parent is responsible for keeping these emergency medications up to date. A written documentation of the emergency medication plan will be required.

Please keep the director, assistant director, and your child’s teacher informed of any medications taken or health problems that could affect your child while he/she is in the care of Liberty Pals.

Potty Training

Potty training is important and is developmentally appropriate for each child according to his/her readiness. We will work closely with parents to insure readiness and proper timing. When a child reaches a 2K class and shows signs of readiness, the teacher will assist the child in learning proper restroom habits.

All children entering 3K classes must be potty trained before the school year begins.

The procedure for continuous potty incidents are as follows:

For first and second potty incidents:

The incident(s) will be documented, and the parents of the child will be notified.

For the third incident:

The incident will be documented, the parents of the child will be notified, and the child will need to stay home from the center for a period of time as follows:

3K/4K/K-PREP - 5 full preschool days

We encourage this time will be used to focus on training to ensure your child's success upon return to the center.

Please Note: This policy will be implemented if all three incidents occur within the same semester. The child will continue to be enrolled during this period provided tuition is kept up to date. If tuition is not kept current, this will be considered a withdrawal from the program.

Nutrition

6-12 months:

- The parent is responsible for providing an adequate supply of bottles for the child. Please use plastic bottles and label each one.
- The parent is responsible for providing the adequate amount of baby food for your child. Please be sure to label all jars or containers.
- Please provide your child's teacher with specific feeding instructions.

12-24 months/2K/3K/4K/K-PREP101:

- Please send a nutritious snack and lunch that your child will eat.
- Please clearly label and package your child's lunch and snack separately.
- Please do not send food that needs to be heated or carbonated beverages.

Inclement Weather/Emergency and Closing Procedures

In case of inclement weather, the center will follow the Vestavia Hills City School System's policy. If there is an emergency due to weather, we will close or open accordingly. Parents are asked to monitor severe weather situations and be sure to check your cell phones regularly in order that you may be easily contacted in case of emergencies or early closure.

Power Outage: Unusual power outages may necessitate the closing of the center.

Water Shortage: The center will reserve the right to close if a water shortage occurs for an unusual length of time.

Fire Alarm: Children and faculty will evacuate according to the recommended fire drill procedures. If children are unable to return to the classroom for any reason, parents will be notified and asked to pick up the children in accordance with the specific instructions needed.

Severe Weather Plan: Children and faculty will seek shelter in the recommended safe locations of the building.

Flood or Structural Damage: Should the building suffer structural damage or flood waters that would endanger or threaten the safety of the children in any way, the parents will be notified and asked to pick up the children in accordance with the specific instructions needed.

Holidays: The center will follow the Vestavia Hills City School System calendar as closely as possible.

There will be a LPEC preschool calendar provided for you each year with all holidays, closed days, and important dates listed.

Dress Code

Please dress your child in comfortable play clothes. We would prefer that all children wear tennis shoes to ensure that they can run freely and play without any hindrance. While boots, crocs, sandals, and flip-flops are very fashionable, they are not safe for your child to wear on the playground.

Please send an appropriate change of clothes for your child in a zip lock bag that is clearly labeled with his/her name. The teacher will keep these clothes in the classroom or in your child's backpack and will only use them if necessary. Accidents can happen at any time, regardless of age. Keep in mind that the extra clothes should be changed according to the appropriate weather season.

Sending Things from Home

LPEC strives to provide toys and manipulative classroom supplies that are adequate and developmentally appropriate for all children attending the preschool. There will be some occasions when children are instructed and allowed to bring a special item from home to share with his/her class. Older children may have the opportunity to participate in "Show and Tell" and the teacher will set guidelines to follow regarding this learning activity. Please do not allow your child to bring items from home on other days that are not designated as such. The center will not be responsible for lost or broken items.

Pet Policy

Animals and pets are not allowed inside the center. During certain weeks throughout the year, there may be an occasion when a 4K/K-PREP teacher will arrange for a child's pet(s) to visit the classroom. If this occurs, the teacher will make an appointment to set up a planned time for the visit and the class will meet the pet outside.

Parental Involvement

The best assurance for the success of your child's experience in preschool is the close cooperation and understanding of parents and faculty working together. We encourage open communication with our parents and teachers.

Room Parents

Each class will have a volunteer room parent. The responsibility of this parent is to help the teacher coordinate special events or class parties.

The center will have head preschool moms to assist the director/assistant director with preschool wide parties, teacher appreciation, or other special events.

Conferences:

Parent-Teacher conferences are always welcomed and may be held at any time the need arises. Children enrolled in our 2K, 3K, 4K, and K-PREP 101 classes will participate in age-appropriate assessments during the second semester of each preschool year. The teachers will send home the completed evaluations and parent conferences may be scheduled as needed.

If you need to address a concern or a problem, please schedule a conference with your child's teacher at a mutually agreeable time. Often a phone conference will handle the situation. However, if you are unable to solve the problem to your satisfaction after talking with the teacher, please contact the director or assistant director.

Birthdays

Please make arrangements in advance with your child's teacher to celebrate his/her birthday. All celebrations will take place in the classroom and should consist of a simple "store bought" snack or dessert treat (i.e., cupcakes, cookies, donuts, etc.).

Please DO NOT SEND candles, decorations, balloons, party favors, or gifts.

Mystery Reader

3K and 4K/K-PREP teachers may schedule a special time for a parent to visit the center and read a book to the class. We encourage you to participate in this fun experience and ask you to be willing to follow the teachers' guidelines regarding the activity.

Field Trip/Chaperones

Parents will be notified in advance of any field trips and transportation is provided by the parents. **All drivers/chaperones are responsible for the students in their care during a field trip. Therefore, under no circumstance are younger siblings allowed to attend field trips.**

Seasonal Celebrations

Seasonal celebrations will be held at various times throughout the year. Parents may assist the room mom of the class by volunteering to donate food/drink items, party themed plates and napkins, simple decorations, etc. We will invite parents to visit the classroom on special days when it is appropriate. Listed below are the seasonal celebrations held each year:

- Orange Parade - October
- Thanksgiving Feast - November
- Christmas Party - December
- Valentine Tea Party - February
- Easter Egg Hunt/Special Snack - March or April
- End of the Year Party - May

Ways Parents Can Help

- Make sure your child is well rested and nourished with a good breakfast or bottle before arriving at the center. Monitor your child's health behavior before dropping him/her off each day. Please **DO NOT** send your child to preschool if he/she is sick.

- Get to know your child's teacher and work with her to confer about your child as needed.

- Please refrain from carrying on lengthy conversations with other adults or faculty while they are caring for other children in the classroom or during carpool.

- Take time to check your child's daily work folder/binder. Important notes from the teacher as well as a behavior chart will be communicated through this folder each day.

- Teach your child his/her full name, age, address, and phone number at the age-appropriate time. Please notify the center as soon as possible with any changes regarding your address, phone number, or email address.