

## Parent Handbook

Little Blessings Preschool at Our Lady of the Lakes Catholic Church  
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License # CO7VO0106

### Little Blessings Preschool Parent Handbook

This handbook was developed and created for parents entering Little Blessings Preschool. It is a guide and resource for policies and procedures of the school. Parents have had input into the creation of this handbook and should be acknowledged for their time and effort. The staff of Little Blessings was also consulted in its development to ensure the handbook's comprehensive listing of all issues relevant to the children and families we serve. Revisions of this handbook should not be considered without consulting representatives of the community of Little Blessings. It shall be the director's responsibility to ensure that any revision is adapted from the community needs expressed by a majority of the parents currently enrolled or alumni.

#### Historical Beginnings

Margaret Kelly first established Little Blessings in 1988, for preschool age children of our Lady of the Lakes Catholic Church and the surrounding area. The program consisted of parent volunteers who assisted the teachers in activities bringing together the preschool age children of the community. In 1992 the Religious Education building was completed and Little Blessings occupied the present classrooms. Our school now offers both a three year old program and a four year old Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program implemented by the Early Learning Coalition of Flagler and Volusia Counties. The VPK program is free for all four years olds born on or before September first who reside in Volusia County. The VPK program gives each child an opportunity to perform better in school and throughout life with quality programs that include high literacy standards, accountability, appropriate curricula, substantial instruction periods, manageable class sizes and qualified instructors. Children must be signed in and out daily. Parents must also sign a VPK roster on the last school day of the month. Failure to sign this roster will result in non-payment by the state for your child and parents will be responsible for the entire month.

#### Mission Statement

Our purpose is to provide for the children in our parish community where emotional positive self-image development, spiritual, and educational needs will be met in an atmosphere of God's love and understanding.

## Program Philosophy

Little Blessings is a place where young children grow and learn about God, themselves and each other. It is important to us that each child sees their life and abilities as gifts from God and affirms themselves to his or her best for our loving Father. We pray daily to teach children that God and Jesus are with us to help us learn and understand each other. We thank God for our many gifts and blessings, and pray for others who are sick or are in need of help. We provide experiences that encourage awareness of others and appreciation for how God made us all different and unique. Early Childhood Education practices states that children at this age learn best in an environment that supports their family, culture and individuality. We provide a nurturing religious, social, emotional, and academic readiness skills program and pray you and your child's experiences will be memorable and helpful to their growth and development.

## Goals and Objectives

1. Inspire the children with the love and the presence of God and Jesus through daily prayers and Bible Stories.
2. Teach Christian principles that apply to everyday living in an environment of joy, harmony, and play.
3. Enhance physical and mental development.
4. Nurture the enjoyment of creative arts through painting, scissor and writing skills, music activities such as singing, dancing and listening to stories.
5. Learn to be responsible and work independently as well as cooperatively.

## Three Year Old Program Objectives

- Teach children to socialize in an appropriate manner
- Recognition of colors and shapes
- Recognition of child's name
- Developing beginning writing skills
- Encourage attentive listening skills
- Following directions

## Four Year Old Objectives

- Teach socialization and cooperative skills
- Teach reading and math readiness skills
- Development of problem-solving skills through exploration and hands/on activities
- Develop visual and auditory discrimination of letters and sounds

When parents have concerns they are encouraged to speak directly with the teacher first to resolve the situation. If the situation warrants, a conference may be needed with the teacher and director. Parents may request a conference with the director. Teachers will be present during the conference to maintain open communication and resolve any differences.

## Evaluation and Assessment

Parents will evaluate the preschool on the preceding goals. The process is designed to evaluate the effectiveness of Little Blessings in meeting the needs of the community we serve. Parents are encouraged to offer constructive ideas that may improve our preschool community.

Three times a year the teachers will assess children's progress on specific skills. Parents will be informed of specific skills in weekly newsletters. At least once during the school year teachers will request a conference with parents regarding their child's development. At any time parents may request a conference with teachers for specific concerns or questions regarding their child's progress.

Developmental screening will be completed. Parents will be notified before any screening is conducted and will be given a copy of the completed forms. Little Blessings utilizes the Florida VPK Assessment Booklet. If further screenings are necessary the teacher/director will refer the parents to Child Find.

## Enrollment

Parents are encouraged to attend a Meet and Greet prior to the first day of school with their child. Prior to entry into the preschool all children must have the following on file with Little Blessings:

- Current original Physical form (yellow)
- Current original Immunization form (blue)
- Emergency information on enrollment form

Please update the teacher when any of this information changes throughout the school year.

### Three Year Old Program

Registration fee \$75.00 (non-refundable) and first month's tuition is expected at the time of registration.

Tuition is \$150.00 per month, due the first week of each month.

Our children meet on Tuesdays & Thursdays 8:30am to 11:30am

Lunch Bunch available-\$35.00 monthly 11:30am to 12:30pm

### Attendance Policy

Please refer to the yearly calendar for scheduled teacher planning days or holidays. Children are expected to be in preschool everyday unless illness arises (after three consecutive sick days documentation is required). List of holidays our preschool is not open are as follows:

Labor Day

Veterans Day

Thanksgiving Holiday

Christmas Holiday

New Year's Day

Martin Luther King's Birthday

Presidents' Day

Holy Thursday

Good Friday

Spring Holiday

Memorial Day

### Sick Policy

Children often become ill when first initiated into a large group of other children. We strive to maintain a clean and sanitary environment for the children, by sanitizing tables and washing hands before meals, and after bathroom time and playtime outside. Inevitably, however, children become sick. Children who have fever of 100 degrees or higher for any period within 24 hours of a school day are asked not to attend school, until fever free for 24 hours. This ensures every precaution of the spread of viruses and germs between children. Children who have severely running noses or who seem lethargic should remain at home. Please call the school if your child will not be present due to illness. When a child becomes ill at school, parents will be contacted to pick up their child as soon as possible to reduce the spread of infection to the other children and the teachers. The director will remove children with severe symptoms from the classroom and keep them safe and comfortable in the school office until a parent or guardian arrives. Please note that our staff is not permitted to administer any medications. A parent or guardian must come into our facility if necessary to administer any medications.

### Medical Emergency

Although we strive to provide a safe and secure environment for children to play and work, accidents sometimes happen. The teachers are trained in First Aid and CPR (on file) to recognize the difference between serious injury and injury that can be treated at school. Incident and accident reports (parents are required to sign these forms) are routinely filled out by the teacher in the event of minor injury such as, bleeding, scrapes, insect bites, and bruises. In the event of an allergic reaction: from a food or insect related parents must provide documentation as needed, forms must be completed and submitted. In the event of a serious medical emergency 911 will be called. Parents or guardian will be contacted immediately. We will not transport a child to the hospital. Parents will be informed of the situation by phone prior to transportation. A teacher will accompany the child if the parent is unable to arrive at school in time for transportation. Please be sure we have current phone numbers on file throughout the year.

### Weather Emergency

Little Blessings will follow Volusia County School's Closing Procedures in the event of a hurricane or other severe weather condition. Please listen to your area radio and television stations for this information. Our school has a required weather radio on site. If a tornado warning occurs while the children are in school, we will move them to a more secure area. During tornado watches or warnings, the classes will meet in the restrooms of the school, until the warning has subsided. In the event of an evacuation the children can be picked up at the Social Hall directly in front of the Little Blessings building.

### Hurricane and Tornado drills

Mandatory monthly fire drills are a requirement of the Deltona Fire Department and Department of Children and Families, as well as two tornado drills for the school year.

### Disenrollment

If a family needs to leave Little Blessings during the school year we request parents to give information in writing prior to leaving the program. There are different procedures for the VPK program and the Three Year old program. Please see the director. Prior knowledge of a child's withdrawal assists us in preparing the other children for why a friend will no longer be attending. It is expected that all tuition and fees due are paid before disenrollment is final.

### Daily Schedule

Each day begins with the children entering the classroom and becoming involved in the activities provided. Teachers encourage parents for the comfort of the children in the separation process if necessary. Transitional items are permitted if the child is comforted by the item. Teachers will make every effort to comfort and then redirect the child to join in activities presented. It is helpful for parents to know that the teachers strive to meet every child's needs at transition time. We encourage parents to develop a separation routine with their child, then to follow it each day. This assists children in understanding the schedule of the day and offers security and a sense of safety. Specific classroom schedules for each class are posted on the wall in the classroom. Upon pickup, only parents/guardian or a written emergency contact person on file showing proper picture identification may leave the facility with that child.

### Snacks

Parents provide snacks. We request that snacks consist of nutritious food and either 100% real juice, water or milk. Teachers will make parents aware of any food allergies to avoid at that time for safety of other students such as peanut allergies. Please feel free to bring in items that will encourage your own child to try new and different foods.

### Lunch

As required by the Department of Children and Family Guidelines all children will have an insulated lunch bag with an ice pack to keep food temperature safe. Lunches must meet nutritional guidelines set by the USDA.

### Birthday Parties

We will celebrate each child's birthday during the school year. Parents may bring in a special treat, store bought and sealed to share with the class on or near the child's birthday. We encourage parents with fingerprints on file with the Diocese of Orlando to remain for the party if possible.

### Discipline Policy

Young children are just beginning to understand the appropriate ways of responding in social situations. The teachers will respond to quarrels and problems in the classroom by encouraging children to solve problems through using their words. Emphasis is placed on the children learning how others feel in situations, and creatively discussing ways to alleviate problems. If aggression is part of the situation, the teachers will redirect children's behavior to more appropriate play. In extreme situations teachers may need to remove a child from the problem area, and allow the child time to express their feelings safely with the teacher. Teachers will communicate the situation with the parents if it becomes a continuing problem in the classroom. We strive to assist families in helping young children understand appropriate social actions and respecting the rights of others.

### Grievance Procedure

Parents who have a concern or grievance regarding their child's enrollment at Little Blessings are encouraged to speak with the teachers and or the director immediately. The circumstances of the grievance will be discussed and addressed in a mutual manner. If the grievance is with the director, the parents are encouraged to contact the Parish Administrator of Our Lady of the Lakes, currently Father Kenny Aquino. If the grievance is with a teacher, the director should be informed by the parent and a meeting will be arranged to resolve any differences. Little Blessings preschool strives to support all members of our community equally. It is the goal of this program to support all families and everyone's needs.

### Photography and Image Assignment, Waiver and Release

All parents/ guardians of children must sign a waiver and release document at time of enrollment.

### Health and Safety

If a child develops signs of pink eye or lice at school, parents will be called and asked to pick their child up immediately. The child may return with a Doctor's note for the pink eye. Please be sure to follow proper procedures for the lice.