

Visitation of Our Lady School Early Childhood Programs



Dear Parents:

We are happy to welcome your child into Visitation's Early Childhood Program. We are looking forward to a memorable year. This handbook was developed to familiarize you with our philosophy, objectives, policies and provide a description of our program. Please keep this booklet in a handy place since you may wish to refer to it throughout the year. We ask that you read through the booklet and then sign and return the form below on the first day of school.

Sincerely,

Pre-K Directors

Child's Name: _____

Date: _____

I have received and read the Visitation of Our Lady Early Childhood booklet. I understand and agree to abide by the policies and regulations.

Parent's Signature

Philosophy

The Pre-K program is a total program and as such will be concerned not merely with teaching the child to acquire certain skills and facts, but the whole child and her/his spiritual, physical, mental and creative development; her/his feelings, attitudes, and relationships; and her/his character and personality. The school experience should be a happy one which provides a stimulating educational Christian environment while helping to increase her/his self identity, her/his self-fulfillment, and the feeling that she/he is truly valuable as a child of God. The child should recognize school as a secure and loving place where she/he has a chance to experience independence, to develop social contacts with children her/his own age, to express her/his ideas verbally, to experiment, to investigate, to discover and to worship God.

Objectives

To work closely with the home in educating children toward the fullness of Christian life.

To specifically teach Catholic principles of Christian values.

To offer personal experiences in Christian living through prayer, guidance, and example.

To recognize the dignity of the person.

To develop in all children a respect of the rights of others, as individuals and as groups, with moral and spiritual values, ethical standards of conduct, and basic integrity.

To provide opportunities and experiences in each area of development: spiritual, cognitive, social, emotional, physical, and cultural.

To provide children with concrete experiences enabling them to later acquire basic skills, especially in the art of communication, in quantitative thinking, and in the sciences.

To help children develop the power to think constructively, to solve problems, to reason independently, and to accept responsibility for self-evaluation and self-instruction.

To see that all children have available experiences to develop a sense of wonder, an appreciation for beauty and culture as their knowledge of human development expands.

To help children to develop and foster physical and mental health, and to deal constructively with the psychological tensions inherent in change and adaptation.

To provide those learning experiences that encourage the development of the full potential of the individual.

Revised 06/09

The following policies are in addition to those contained in the Visitation of Our Lady School Handbook.

General Policies

Visitation Pre-K will be open Monday - Friday excluding holidays, from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Anytime spent at school prior to 7:30 a.m. and after 3:15 p.m. is considered before and after school care. Before and after care time is subject to an additional charge which is not part of the regular tuition.

Before school care for Pre-K-3 and Pre-K-4 students is available in the cafetorium between the hours of 7:00 & 7:30 a.m. All parents must report to C-19, the after care sign out room, each day to check their child out of after care.

After school care for Pre-K-3 and Pre-K-4 students is in the new Early Childhood Building.

Visitation follows the Jefferson Parish Public School System schedule regarding emergency closing due to weather. The announcements are broadcast on WWL television and radio.

In case of emergency closing due to a hurricane or inclement weather (snow, flood, etc.), it is the parent's or guardian's responsibility to pick up the student in a timely manner.

Visitation Pre-K-3 follows the minimum standards of a class A daycare center set by the State of Louisiana.

For more information on other policies such as uniforms, before/after care, tuition financing, and other general information, please refer to the school handbook which is posted online at www.vol.org.

Non-Transportation Statement

The parents or guardians must provide transportation to and from school. Pre K students are not allowed to use Jefferson Parish bus transportation.

Forms

Pre-K-3

2 Emergency Cards
La State Form 5307 (Master Card)
Asbestos Form
Appendix A (shot records)
Student Handbook form
Confidentiality of files, photos
and Internet web site forms

Pre-K-4

2 Emergency Cards
Shot Record Form

Asbestos Form
Technology Forms
Web site photo consent form
Student Handbook form

form

(State forms 5307.C, 5307.D)

Admission Policy

Visitation of Our Lady School does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, or national origin.

The following is the order of admission to this facility:

1. Siblings of those presently enrolled at Visitation.
2. Children of active, supporting parishioners of Visitation of Our Lady Church.
3. All others wishing admission.

In addition to the above, students must be toilet trained to be accepted into the program.

Policies Governing the Dismissal of a Student

1. Visitation of Our Lady reserves the right to dismiss a student whose needs we determine cannot be met in our setting. All students are conditionally accepted into Pre-K for a trial period deemed acceptable by administration.
2. Unacceptable behavior of the parent(s) will not be tolerated. Abusive language, threats, and/or insults to any employee will result in the expulsion of the child.
3. Behaviors that pose a threat to other children, or to the child himself, will result in the dismissal of the child. **A child who bites three times will be asked to leave for 3 days until that behavior can be rectified.** When readmitted if the child bites again he/she will have to sit out for 5 days. It is then the sole discretion of the school principal and the Pre-K director as to whether the child will be readmitted.
4. Students beginning Pre K-3 must be fully toilet trained and therefore have a level of independence on the potty. While we do understand that at this age there may be an occasional accident, should they occur on a regular basis your child will be dismissed from the program. An extra change of clothing is to be kept at school for emergencies.

Open Door Policy

Custodial parents or guardians, and non-custodial parents with written authorization of the custodial parents on file, are welcome to visit during regular open hours as long as the child is enrolled. Parents cannot, however, distract the child or staff from regular duties and activities during such visits. If you need to speak to the director, you will be able to make an appointment. We do not have morning conferences when you are dropping your child off. Please ask for an appointment.

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Each child must be escorted into the center by a parent or guardian. Parents or guardians must sign in and sign out the child on a daily roster. A parent or guardian must personally pick up the child unless a Transportation Authorization Form is on file designating a specific third party.

If the child is to be picked up early, please do so at 11:15 a.m. and let the director know in advance. **Except for emergencies, there can be no dismissal during naptime.** Dismissal is at 11:15 for any child whose parent wishes to check them out in the afternoon.

Our daily program begins at 8:15 a.m. Whenever a child arrives after 8:15 a.m., a tardy slip will be placed into the child's folder. After five tardies, the parents will be contacted and a conference requested to discuss how the situation could be improved.

Accidents and Illness Policies

It is the policy of VOL Pre-K-3 to no longer administer medications of any type. Parents may come to school to administer a medication, but must fill out a log sheet explaining possible side effects. Pre-K-3 and Pre-K-4 do not administer breathing treatments. Parents are welcome to come and do so, if necessary. Pre-K-3 will continue to have basic first aid supplies on hand and teachers maintain course credit in CPR and pediatric first aid.

Pre-K-4 will not administer medication of any type, including aspirin, Tylenol, or ibuprofen, unless prescribed by the child's physician. A drug administration form must be completely filled out and signed by the physician. This form must include possible side effects of the medication. Each dose of medication must be individually pre-measured and labeled with the child's name. Both the form and the medication must be given to the director or designated staff member.

The Pre-K-3 and 4 staff do not administer breathing treatments or test blood. Parents are welcome to come to the office to administer or test these conditions.

Pre-K 3 & 4 have a "no fever" policy. A child is not allowed to enter the facility until he or she is free of fever for 24 hours. A child sent home with fever, for example, at 2:00 p.m. on Monday cannot return until Wednesday.

Children will be observed for general good health when they arrive in the morning and will not be allowed to remain if signs of respiratory infection, skin disease, fever or contagious illness is observed. If symptoms of illness develop while the child is at school, parents will be contacted immediately. Parents are asked to pick up the child within a reasonable time.

Please note that it is required on a form, which is to be kept on file, that parents must sign a statement allowing the school to administer and obtain emergency treatment of their child if necessary.

All head and eye injuries will be reported immediately to parents. Incident and accident reports will be kept on file.

Pre-K-3 Food Policy

All meals and snacks are a mandatory purchase and are to be considered part of the total cost of attending our program. The cost of breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack is determined at the beginning of each school year. Money for meals must be paid in advance on the first of the month. Since the teachers purchase the items for snack, we ask that the snack/cooking fee be paid separately.

Refreshments for special occasions such as birthdays and holidays may be sent to school with prior approval of the director.

Pre-K-4 Food Policy

Students may purchase lunch or bring lunch from home. Lunch money due dates are listed on the school's monthly calendar, and a menu is posted on the school's web site. Students are not allowed to charge lunch. Past due notices are sent out weekly. Any questions concerning a child's lunch account balance should be directed to the cafeteria manager by phoning 347-2278. A Pre K-4 student must be accompanied by his/her parent to eat breakfast in the cafeteria. The Pre K-4 staff is not available to supervise the students in the cafeteria at this time.

Parents will provide daily snack, once per month, for their child's class. A snack calendar will be provided. We encourage parents to send healthy snacks.

Once a month, the children bake cupcakes so that the birthdays of students born in that month are celebrated. There is no need to send any birthday treats for your child.

Important Notes & Communications

Important notes will be sent home in your child's Visitation folder. The weekly newsletter contains important information. Please check your child's folder and remove your child's papers on a daily basis. Pre-K-4's weekly newsletter is on the Pre-K-4 web site.

Phase-In

We want to give your child the opportunity for a successful transition into school and to feel secure in their new environment therefore, the Early Childhood Program implements the use of a Phase-In Program. During the summer parents will receive notification regarding which days their child will attend school. During this week your child will only attend school the 2 days that are indicated in the phase-in letter.

Open House

Visitation of Our Lady's Open House is usually held in February or March of the school year for the parents interested in enrolling their child the following fall. This is to give parents an opportunity to tour our facilities and ask questions concerning our program.

Back to School Night

"Back to School Night" is held within the first month of school. It is an informational meeting for parents only to discuss rules, policies, procedure, and curriculum.

Conferences

Formal conferences are scheduled twice per year. However if you are concerned about your child and need to speak to the director, please let her know and she will set up a conference as soon as possible. Before school is not the time for an unscheduled conference.

Report Cards

There are three report card periods in Pre-K. No report cards are sent home the first nine weeks. When report cards are sent home, please sign and return the report card and the envelope to school the next school day.

Discipline Policy

It is the policy of Visitation of Our Lady Pre-K that:

1. No child is subjected to verbal or physical abuse including corporal punishment.
2. A child who is removed from the group for disciplinary reasons shall not be out of the sight of a staff member.
3. A child is not deprived of meals or any part of meals for disciplinary reasons.
4. The use of time-out (one minute for every year of the child’s age) is the method of discipline used.
5. Both Pre-K-3 & 4 have positive incentives to encourage and motivate the students.

Repeated incidents of biting (three) by a child will not be tolerated. After a third biting incident, a child will not be able to attend school for 3 days. When readmitted, if the child bites he/she will have to sit out for 5 days. If there is no improvement after this reasonable time frame, then withdrawal may be necessary.

Suspected Abuse and Neglect Policy

It is the policy of this facility to report all incidents of suspected abuse and neglect in accordance with LA 14:403 to:

The State Child Protection Agency
1333 S. Clearview Parkway
Jefferson, LA
(504) 736-7025 or (504) 736-7033

Complaint Policy

Pre-K-3 is under Louisiana State Licensing regulations. If you have any complaints concerning Pre-K-3, you may contact:

DDS Bureau of Licensing P.O. Box 3078 Baton Rouge, LA 70821	or	Louisiana Dept. of Social Services Program Manager, Bureau of Licensing 2751 Wooddale Blvd. Suite 330 (504) 922-0015
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Louisiana State Licensing requires that the staff of Pre-K-3 be of good reputation within the community and subjected to police check and fingerprinting.

Complaints concerning Pre-K-4 should be directed to Visitation of Our Lady School Office. The phone number is 347-3377.

Visitation of Our Lady's Early Childhood Program

We have incorporated several of the best educational approaches in early childhood to create a program that is uniquely our own. Our program is a busy one and includes many different kinds of activities. Through all of our activities, the child will be encouraged to develop good feelings about himself/herself and school, and attempt new experiences. The work done in Pre-K will be for the learning experiences involved and not for the end product that your child can carry home. Because of this, your child will not be working with workbooks but with manipulative materials that are suited to his/her special interests and abilities. This does not mean your child will not be participating in learning new concepts and developing skills. The artwork and papers that your child does bring home may not be perfect according to adult standards, but more importantly they will be his/her own work.

The Christ Our Life Series preschool religion programs for three and four-year-olds recognizes that young children possess the gift of faith from baptism and therefore have an innate readiness for religion. It engages them in experiences that prepare them for God's message and helps them respond to it in their lives. Through the program children come to see the religious dimension of their everyday lives and realize that life and religion are an integrated whole.

Pre-K-3 is divided into four basic Montessori curriculum areas: Math, Everyday Living, Sensorial and Language. The use of themes is incorporated to enhance the learning experience.

Math: Montessori materials are used in the development of early concrete number concepts.

Everyday Living: Using practical life materials, children learn basic care of themselves and their environment, and to be contributing members of a group.

Sensorial: Through work with sensorial materials children learn to match and grade colors, textures, sounds, weights, and forms to sharpen their awareness of detail, comparison, and contrast.

Language: Materials used in this area help enrich the child's spoken language and vocabulary as well as his/her fine motor skills.

Pre K-3 works on a year long at home project – the ABC scrapbook. Three pre-literacy activities are done daily in the hopes of instilling a love of reading and writing in our little ones.

The Montessori approach to learning recognizes that each child possesses an intense motivation toward his/her own self-construction. A child spontaneously seeks to develop himself/herself through an understanding of his/her environment. Because children at this age level need and desire order, you will find that our Montessori environments are prepared in such a way to meet that need. Maria Montessori believed in having a “prepared environment which had in it a certain order that allows the child to develop at his/her own speed according to his/her capacities.

The classroom materials are arranged in sequence with each one designed to advance the learner in his/her understandings and in the length of time he/she needs to concentrate. The built in control of error in the materials themselves avoids corrections from the teacher. The child can see his/her own mistake and feels good about correcting it himself/herself.

Children move themselves toward learning. The teacher prepares the environment, guides the activity, functions as the leader and offers the stimulus for learning, but it is the child who learns, who is motivated to understand and complete his work. It is like a child learning to walk. You can hold out your hand patiently enticing the child to come but it is the child who needs to take the first step and can do so only when ready.

One of the main objectives in the Montessori approach is to help the child achieve “inner discipline” or “self discipline”. Patterns of thoroughness and concentration established early in childhood produce a confident and competent learner in later years. Children at this young age find a joy in learning and though what they do is called “work” to them it is fun and fulfilling.

The Montessori approach is designed to help the child build within himself/herself the foundation for a lifetime of creative learning. In our fast changing society this objective becomes even more important! In addition, Pre-K-3 enhances the curriculum through the use of thematic units, the Letter People series, and spelling before reading.

In Pre-K-4 the Montessori materials are housed and utilized in one specific area. Children also work individually and in small groups in learning centers such as: Language Arts, Math, Science, Music and Movement Exploration, Art and Cooking. Most of the activities available will be in the form of games or manipulative materials.

Language Arts: Our language arts program will include listening to stories and poems, discussion and interpretation of stories and pictures, dramatization, recitation, development of language and listening through sharing time, and the composition of group and individual stories. Through all of these activities, it is hoped that the children will develop a real love for and enjoyment of stories and reading. In this center a large variety of pre-reading skills will be developed. These skills will vary according to the needs of the children. We will work on listening experiences (because children must recognize words and sounds by ear before they can recognize them by sight), activities to increase the ability to follow directions, development of language skills (both formally through specific lessons and informally as conversation is encouraged throughout most of the day), visual and auditory discrimination, spatial awareness, appreciation of literature (through stories, children are able to relate speaking and listening by listening to language patterns and sentences), letter recognition, activities which encourage left to right and top to bottom eye movement, and listening for sequence in stories (through games, pictures, and creative dramatics).

Math: Throughout the year, the children will have a chance to experiment with various materials that are available in the math center. These materials will help the children develop an understanding of such concepts as set and number, shapes, color etc. They include such activities as number games, measurement, patterning and sequencing. We will work on sets, number and counting, informal problem solving and comparison of size and shape.

Science: Our program includes both group discussion experiment type lessons as well as opportunities for children to experiment with materials at the science center on an individual basis. Our program will include an introduction to living and nonliving things. We will discuss the seasons of the year. An important area of our science program involves classification of various items. Other areas that we will cover include magnets, plants and a study of dinosaurs.

Movement Exploration: Through this center, the child will have the opportunity to develop a better understanding of left and right, listening skills, balance, large muscle coordination and creativity through movement. Our program will include basic locomotion skills such as walking, running, jumping, hopping, rolling, skipping, leaping and balance. We will be working on skills involving equipment such as balls, hoops, ropes, balance beam and parachutes. Many action songs and rhythmic games will be learned as well as simple folk dances. There will be a great deal of emphasis on creative dance and rhythms where the children can express themselves and move about in a way that their bodily coordination will permit.

Art: In this center we will merely attempt to create an atmosphere for creative expression, and offer praise and encouragement to every child. Opportunities for working with many different types of materials will be provided. Art activities are those activities that allow the child to create, discover, and express himself/herself.

Cooking: Cooking provides the opportunity for enrichment activities as well as for basic skill development. During these activities, children have the opportunity to develop sensory awareness, to see scientific changes take place as foods are changed from one form to another, to develop the ability to follow directions, to learn the importance of sequence and to begin to work with measurement.

Creative Drama: In this center the children respond to and recreate situations, poems, and stories. Besides the obvious benefits of allowing the child to express himself/herself creatively and to see various situations through someone else's eyes, it can help children to interpret and understand stories as well as to provide him/her with an opportunity to recognize sequence in stories.