



ST. ANDREW LUTHERAN PRESCHOOL

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT OUR PRESCHOOL PROGRAM 2012-2013

St. Andrew Lutheran Preschool is a program based on developmentally appropriate practices in early childhood education as evidenced in standards established by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), Fairfax County Early Learning Guidelines and the Virginia Department of Education. Children grow and learn best in a play-based program with hand-on activities where they are encouraged to explore and create. Pre-academics are intertwined throughout the curriculum and presented in ways that are fun and meaningful. We work to create a caring community of learners where each child is valued and encouraged to value others.

St. Andrew is a Christian preschool. How is this represented in the program?

We are an outreach ministry of this church, and we recognize the importance of this ministry to young families. The children attend Sanctuary once each month with their class. During Sanctuary Time, we present a simple Bible story, sing Bible songs and pray; we experience God's love in age-appropriate ways. Grace is said before our peanut-free snacks. We celebrate holidays from a religious perspective. For example, the theme for December is the story of the Nativity. We are mindful that children will learn the most about God's love by the way it is demonstrated to them. We have families from many denominations and different cultural and religious backgrounds. We are all God's children.

What age children does the program serve?

We offer classes for 3, 4 and 5 yr. olds. All children must be toilet trained before entering the program. Children eligible for the 3-year-old program must be 3 on or before September 30, 2012. Children eligible for the 4-year-old program must be 4 on or before September 30, 2012. Children for the Pre-K class need to be 5 yrs. of age on or before January 31, 2013.

What qualifications or standards do we seek in our staff and our program?

The lead teacher is required to hold a degree in early childhood or a related field of child development. We seek to employ those persons who have an understanding of the developmental stages of children and who demonstrate an ability to relate to children in a loving, positive manner. A skilled teacher is flexible and seeks to meet the needs of each child on an individual level, helping them to be incorporated into the group. We work to stay current in the field of early childhood education through continued professional development. Our three year old classes have two teachers and fourteen students. Classes for our four and five year olds have two teachers and sixteen students.

All staff pass criminal history and Central Registry checks from the Commonwealth of Virginia and have current training both in First Aid and children's CPR. Staff also receive training in the administration of epi-pens. Our program is inspected yearly for fire safety and health procedures.

How do teachers promote peace in the classrooms?

Our policy is to be pro-social. We work to demonstrate appropriate ways to interact socially and to solve conflicts in a manner that does not demean anyone. We model social skills to help children resolve conflicts in a compassionate and respectful manner. We strive to help our children develop a sense of trust and belonging, both with peers and adults.

How do teachers communicate with families?

Our teachers keep in touch through weekly emails that summarize the classroom activities. Monthly, each teacher sends home a class calendar and information about the classroom themes. The teacher can be contacted by email or by notes sent in your child's backpack. Each child is given a letter-sized plastic envelope to keep in their backpack. Parents may choose to send in notes in this envelope which is checked daily by the

teachers. The plastic envelope is also used to send home important school information. Monthly tuition checks may be sent to school in the envelope as well. We have scheduled conferences twice yearly and more frequently if necessary. We want to keep our lines of communication open and flowing.

Do you like parents involved in the program?

We love parent volunteers, though there is no volunteer requirement. We have special events for both moms and dads to come and enjoy time in the classroom or a special program by the children. Special times include Dad's Day, Mother's Day, Family Fun Day and the class Christmas program. The teacher may ask for parent volunteers to help with classroom activities or to share their talents.

How is "separation anxiety" handled, and what is done to ease the transition to school?

We realize that, for many of our young ones, the Preschool experience will be the first substantial time away from home. This can be hard for both the child and the parents. We have pre-visits a few days before classes begin in the fall. During this time the child meets with the teacher and one or more of his classmates. This provides a time to get acquainted with the teacher on a more one-to-one basis. The parents remain nearby with the assistant teacher, completing necessary forms and providing information that is helpful in understanding their child. Also, to aid in the transition between home and preschool, our first week of classes are shortened. Each class meets for two hours the first week instead of the regular three-hour program. We also offer, to all families new to our program, a brochure published by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). This offers information and advice for parents in dealing with good-byes. If after the first few days, your child remains troubled, please be assured our teachers have lots of experience with this and know many ways to smooth the way. We will keep you informed about progress in this area.

How do I register my child? What is the cost to attend?

Our Preschool Information Night will be held Monday, January 23, 2012 at 7:00 pm. Application forms for Fall 2012 will be available beginning January 9, 2012 at 9 am in the church narthex. Instructions and deadlines to return forms are included with the materials. We use both an "In House" and a community lottery system. We work to keep classes balanced with the number of boys and girls. You will receive confirmation by letter and your child's place will be secured when the registration fee and May 2013 tuition is received. If our mailing indicates that your child is on our waitlist, we will tell you the waitlist number. There is no charge to be on the waitlist. Please call the Preschool Office 703-266-7744 for information about our classes for the 2012-2013 school year. The registration fee is \$95. A one-time activity fee of \$90 covers field trip costs and pull-in programs for the year. Both of these fees are nonrefundable. Tuition for two-day-a-week classes is \$190 a month. The tuition for three-day-a-week classes is \$250 a month. Tuition for four-day-a-week classes is \$295 a month.

**We hope that this has helped answer some important questions about our program.
Our staff would be happy to answer any further questions you may have. Please call 703-266-7744.
We love to talk about our program!**