



www.tep-preschool.org

Parent Handbook

Trinity Preschool is a Ministry of
Trinity Ecumenical Parish
Episcopal – Lutheran – Presbyterian
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Trinity Preschool

Welcome to Trinity Preschool! Trinity participates in the Virginia Quality Rating and Improvement System.

Trinity Ecumenical Parish

In the spirit of Ecumenism, we at Trinity are living and serving together as one community of faith in which we trust and respect one another as we fulfill our common calling to ministry and mission. We are Episcopalians, Lutherans, Presbyterians, and other Christians from many backgrounds who are learning that we are enriched by sharing one another's traditions and strengthened by working and serving together.

Mission Statement

To nurture young children through education, fellowship, prayer, and compassion.

Goal

To provide a caring and compassionate social and educational experience for preschool age children in a Christian environment.

Objectives

- To teach and model Christian values such as love of God and neighbor, kindness, sharing, and respect for one another and for all of God's creation.
- To provide support, guidance, training, and resources to parents, and to encourage parents in their role as primary teachers of their children.
- To provide an environment where children can learn to make choices, plan activities, and review accomplishments.
- To teach concepts of colors, shapes, alphabet, numbers, counting and other pre-math skills.
- To develop pre-reading skills through the use of books, poetry, story-telling, and dramatic play.
- To promote the development of speech and language skills, attention span, and listening skills.
- To provide enjoyable experiences in music and art, and in fine and gross motor activities.
- To continue to uphold and improve the Virginia Star Quality Rating.

Programs Offered

Trinity Preschool follows the best practices as described by Virginia Quality Rating and Improvement System. The Trinity Preschool Leadership Team reserves the right to include children born after September 30, into a class under certain conditions.

Toddler Class - 2 years old by September 30

(This program provides a creative and structured environment as a means to introduce the young children to socialization beyond their family unit. Through games and creative play, shapes, colors, counting and ABCs are introduced while increasing their attention span and listening skills. Music, art and sensory experiences provided every day. If needed, the children will have an adjustment time to separate from their parents. Teachers use "Milestones of Child Development" in making daily plans

Maximum class size: 10 children

Now I'm Three—3 years old by September 30

This program provides socialization and aids in the development of listening and communication skills. Music, art, small and large motor skill activities, and sensory activities are provided. Children are taught colors, shapes, numbers, letters, and name recognition. Teachers use "Milestones of Child Development" in making daily plans. Child should be toilet trained or close to it.

Maximum class size: 14 children

Pre-Kindergarten—4 years old by September 30

This program sets goals of increased ability to do independent work and increased attention span and focus on the task at hand. Children learn patterns and sounds of letters, visual discrimination, reading and math readiness, and the fine motor skills involved in cutting, tracing, and writing. Teachers use "Virginia's Foundation Blocks for Early Learning: Comprehensive Standards for Four-Year-Olds" in making daily plans.

Maximum class size: 12 children

Summer Fun Camp—Ages 3 to 5

This week-long camp is held in June, Monday-Friday, from 9am—1pm, with the parents supplying lunch and the school providing a snack during the day. The themed camp will include arts and crafts projects, stories, music, games, and various learning experiences. The camp is open to children outside of Trinity Preschool. Children must be toilet-trained.

Please visit our website at www.tep-preschool.org for more information on our programs.

Policies and Procedures

Registration Fee

A registration fee is required for all of our classes and is due at the time of registration. This fee is non-refundable and is discounted when paid prior to June 1.

Paying Tuition

Your tuition supports our program and needs to be paid in a timely manner. Tuition is due the first day of the month for your child's class. If late, you may be called by our business manager and you may be penalized at \$15 late fee. Please make checks payable to TEP (Trinity Ecumenical Parish), and have your child's name on the "Note" line on the check. You may mail your check or give it to the church Administrative Assistant. Receipt, if needed, is available in the parish office at the time of tuition payment. Please note that tuition payment must be made regardless of your child's attendance. Tuition may be paid online at www.smltep.org. Click on "Give Online" to establish a profile and make payments to the preschool.

Drop off

We ask that parents bring their child into the preschool room in the morning. Do not let your child come into the building alone. The children are to hang their coats and book bags on their assigned hook or cubby.

Sign-in

Please use the provided sign-in sheet when bringing your child to class each morning. This is the appropriate time to inform the teacher of any change in the pick-up of the child for that day. If another person, other than those so named previously, will pick up the child, we require written notification. (Procedure explained more fully below.)

Pick up

Children will be picked up from their classrooms, where the parents will sign them out.

Teachers must know who will be picking up your child. We must have written permission if there is to be a change in drivers. If your child is going home with another preschool friend, or relative, please send a note. The information form requires that you provide a complete list of people who are allowed to pick your child up from school. If an individual comes to school to pick up your child and is not on the list, we will not release the child. We reserve the right to request to see a picture ID from individuals we are not familiar with in order to keep your child safe.

Health and Safety Issues

Immunization Records

Children must have all immunizations recommended by the family physician, pediatrician, or the health department. A copy of your child's immunizations record is required as part of registration.

Identification

In order to comply with certification requirements and to insure that we are not inadvertently assisting in the harboring of a missing child, we require proof of your child's identity. Any one of the following documents will satisfy this requirement:

- Birth certificate
- Social Security card – *we will not keep* this number in our files for your protection
- Passport
- Adoption or foster care papers

We also need to be informed of any previous schools or care centers your child may have attended in the past.

Illness

Sick children should not be brought to school. If your child has a fever the day of school or the day before, or has an earache, inflamed eyes, flu symptoms, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, a bad cold, or rash, then your child needs to stay home. If your child becomes sick at preschool, we will contact you immediately. Children can return to preschool following an illness when the child has been symptom free for 24 hours. Please do not send your child if their fever has been reduced by Tylenol.

Our church employs a Parish Nurse who is available to us for support. However, she is only in the church building on Monday and Wednesday mornings.

Health Measures

We strongly encourage and teach good health practices to our children. Children's hands are washed when they first arrive in the morning, following any use of the bathroom, before eating snacks, after messy work, and after playing out-of-doors.

We teach children to cover the mouth when sneezing or coughing, using the inside of their forearm, rather than their hands.

Surfaces with which the children come in contact are cleaned daily. We spray and wipe all table tops, door knobs, hand rails in the stairwells, and bathroom fixtures. To the best of our ability, we remove toys upon which a child has sneezed or coughed.

Safety Precautions

We hold fire and tornado drills. All of our fire exits are clearly marked. We have an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) unit in the building and teachers have been instructed in its use. Teachers are First Aid and CPR trained. All school doors are kept locked except for the front door of the church building which is monitored. Teachers keep cell phones on at all times for communication with the office and in case of emergency events.

We teach the children to hold onto stair rails, walking down the right side of staircases.

Proper Attire

Your child should come to preschool in play clothes. It is important for them to feel comfortable so that they can be a part of the learning experience. Please send them in clothes that they can manage when going to the bathroom. We do try our best to protect their clothes by wearing smocks when doing messy art projects, but accidents will happen. We use washable paints and markers. Tennis shoes or rubber soled shoes with closed toes have also been found to be the most comfortable and safe kind of shoes. Since we do play outdoors when the weather permits, please be sure your child has appropriate outdoor clothing to suit the season.

General Information

Items to Bring

Your child needs a backpack labeled with his/her name and a change of clothes, also labeled. Please remember to update the clothing as the seasons change. Also include pull-ups or diapers if your child is not toilet trained or might have an accident.

We do go outside during the winter months so long as it is not precipitating, so please send warm clothing with hats and mittens. Please also label all outer clothing.

Do not send in any personal toys or stuffed animals that your child may not want to share with the other children. You may send a book or item with them on days designated for Show and Tell. They may also bring items which pertain to the current theme or unit.

Your child's teacher will request certain items for you to bring to school to help ensure good health practices. These items may include paper towels, hand soap or sanitizer and tissues.

Communication Between Staff and Parents

We cannot stress enough how important it is to have good lines of communication. We want you to fully understand your child's experience at Trinity Preschool and we want to know about family events or situations as they might pertain to your child's time here with us. Please do not hesitate to ask for some time to speak with your child's teacher. The teachers freely share their cell phone numbers and welcome calls to discuss issues of concern.

We communicate through this handbook, orientation sessions, newsletters, e-mails, or notes in backpacks. Please read all communications you receive.

Conferences

There are two parent/teacher conferences during the school year and are held during normal school hours. A copy of your child's report is given to the parent.

Snacks

Parents and teachers will provide snacks for all the children in the class on a rotating basis. Snacks will be nutritious and from two food groups. The children will bring water bottles, which must go home to be cleaned and returned each day. Children are encouraged to serve themselves and to use proper table manners.

Parties

We enjoy celebrating holidays and learning about the various traditions associated with those special calendar events. The classes will hold parties several times during the year for the families, with volunteer parents hosting. The children will often share songs they have learned.

Birthdays

All children love the special recognition of their birthday. If you choose to provide a treat, please inform the teacher in advance. You will be told of any allergy warnings for your child's classmates. You may come during snack time to share in the "celebration" or simply leave the treat when you bring your child to school.

Activities and Field Trips

We offer at least two field trips per year. We do not provide transportation for these, but rather invite you and any other children in your family to attend the field trip with the class, providing your own transportation. We may request to view your driver's license and proof of insurance.

Chapel Time

The primary goal of chapel is to bring children to the understanding that God loves them dearly. Children attending Now I'm Three and Pre-Kindergarten attend a chapel time once a month facilitated by the pastors of Trinity Ecumenical Parish. Chapel time lasts approximately fifteen minutes and consists of the reading of

Bible stories, lessons appropriate to the season, prayer and conversation centered on faith. Each month, your child will receive a one page take home sheet that further expounds upon the chapel lesson. This take home portion of chapel is designed to involve you further in your child's faith journey. All classes include a devotion during the school mornings.

Volunteering/Parent Involvement

We welcome parent involvement and have indicated some ways in which you can participate in your child's experience here at Trinity Preschool. Please feel free to speak with your child's teacher if you have other suggestions for ways in which you can be involved, such as sharing a talent, reading a story, helping with an art project, or providing a musical experience. Parents will provide the daily snack on a rotating basis. In addition, volunteers are needed to host class parties, make play dough, handle Scholastic book orders, coordinate/help with fundraisers, and perhaps to assist with photos of class activities.

Punctuality

There may be times during the year that an emergency will come up and you will be unable to bring or pick up your child at the designated times. We need you to notify the church office if a situation occurs which will result in a change from the normal schedule. We feel it is important for the children to be on time so that they can participate fully in the group. The morning activities and circle time are an important time for your child to interact. Please call the church office if you know that your child will be late. It is also very important that your child be picked up at noon. The teachers also need this time to plan and prepare for the next day. If a parent is consistently late in picking up their child, the issue will be discussed with the parents involved.

Inclement Weather Policy

In the event of inclement weather, our preschool follows the Franklin County School System. Please tune into local TV news stations for closings.

If the public schools are closed, Trinity will be closed. If they are starting 1 hour late, the preschool will meet at its normal time – 9:00 to 12:00. If the public schools are starting 2 hours late, the preschool will meet from 10:00 to 1:00 p.m. Since that will result in running over the lunch hour, a small packed lunch should be sent with your child.

If the weather turns bad during school hours and we learn that Franklin County is sending students home, we will notify parents and request that our students be picked up.

Absences

We look forward to seeing your child at school! Our teachers plan art projects, snacks, and other activities based on the number of children expected each day. If your child is sick, please call your child's teacher or the church office at 540-721-4330. Please inform us if you know in advance that your child will be absent for any reason.

Your Ongoing Responsibilities:

- Please notify the director of any change in your contact information. It is important that we always have a way to reach you in case of an emergency.
- Inform us of any changes in the list of people approved to pick up your child from school.
- Update immunization records each time your child has a doctor's visit.
- Let us know if your child is sick and will be absent.
- Let us know of changes at home that may affect your child while at school, physically or emotionally.
- Please share any other information which might prove beneficial to the positive interaction of your child with the teacher and other students. Please know that all information is kept confidential.
- Be an active part of your child's preschool experience in whatever ways you can!
- Read all communications sent home through email or your child's backpack.

Maintaining a Positive Environment

At Trinity Preschool we have an open door policy. We always welcome comments, concerns, or questions that parents have about the program. Our goal is a positive preschool experience for you and your child. If you have a particular concern about your child's class, please raise the issue with your child's teacher first. We also realize that there are situations in which a parent may feel more comfortable discussing an issue with the director and we encourage that interaction. Whatever the concern, we urge parents to come talk to a staff member prior to discussing an issue in the hallway, playground, etc... Please adhere to our policy of confidentiality. Concerns can be most easily handled through this process.

Toilet Training

All children entering the Now I'm Three class should be potty trained. However, we understand that the child may still be in "pull-ups" and that they may have an occasional accident. We will work together with the parents in their child's potty training experience. Having other children in the class, who are already potty trained, frequently enhances the process by setting a role model for your child to follow. However, after the child has more than two "bm" accidents, we will call the parent to come change the child and bring a clean set of clothes if needed.

Discipline

Based on showing kindness and respect for each other, we have established guidelines for behavior at our school. The children are taught to share, take turns, and to use their words to express their wants and feelings. Children are encouraged to work out their problems on their own and to ask if they need help. Each day they are learning how to relate to their classmates and learning what behaviors are acceptable in the classroom. Foremost, we use praise and thanksgiving when a child displays a positive behavior or response, as reinforcement and motivation to adopt that behavior and build their self-esteem. Teachers use methods of positive discipline to reverse inappropriate behavior. They speak respectfully and kindly to the child as models for their interaction with their classmates and remind them that no matter what their behaviors they are valued and loved as a Child of God. Teachers will confer with parents if a problem continues, and parents are free to speak to the teachers regarding any behavioral concerns at home or school.

Supporting Children With Special Needs

Trinity Preschool attempts to meet the individual needs of all children, including those with special needs, be they physical, educational or behavioral. The school has the benefit of having on staff an individual who holds a Masters in Early Childhood Special Education and Learning Disabilities, with experience in Early Intervention. This individual will offer suggestions and counseling for teachers. Trinity will use all its available resources and will work closely with parents to serve all children.

Transition Plan

The teachers strive to make the transitions to the following year's classes smooth and comfortable for the children. The parents are included in this process.

Transition Plan for the Toddler Class:

At Trinity Preschool, the Toddler and Three class use the same classroom, as they do indoor playroom and outside playground, so the children will already be familiar with these settings when they move to the Threes class. The parents of the Toddlers will have the opportunity to bring their children to the current Threes class near the end of the school year, so that the child can meet the teacher and assistant teacher, and experience a Three's circle time. The children will meet the other adults who come to the Threes class: the Pastors in the chapel and the music leaders. Teachers will pass evaluations and any special information on to the Threes teacher.

Transition Plan for the Three Class (going into a new setting)

The Threes are already familiar with the indoor playroom and outdoor playground, as well as with the Pre-K teachers whom they see during joint activities. In the spring, the Threes and their parents will come to the Pre-K class to explore the classroom and to experience a Pre-K circle time. The children will be taken to the church library, where they will meet the librarian, who will tell them what they can look forward to when they visit bi-weekly as a Pre-K student. They will also meet the science teacher that comes monthly to Pre-K. The teachers will pass evaluations and any special information on to the Pre-K teacher.

Transition Plan for the Pre-K

The teacher will learn the dates of kindergarten registration for Bedford and Franklin Counties and will pass that information on to the parents. The teacher will provide books about kindergarten to read to the children. At the spring conferences, the teacher will speak with the parents regarding kindergarten readiness skills and share the Phonetic Awareness of Literacy Screening results. The teacher is happy to fill out forms and provide recommendations, conference reports, records, etc., for the next school year, if requested by the parent. As exciting as it is for a child to enter the world of kindergarten, experience has shown that talking about that transition can be overdone, in some cases leaving the child with a bit of anxiety about the unknown, and a reluctance to leave the comfort of preschool. It is suggested that teachers and parents be aware of the child's attitude regarding the upcoming transition.

Exemption Status as a Religious Institution

Under the exemption law, the following public notice statements are to be provided to parents.

1. **Staff Qualifications**

All staff complete a Criminal Records and Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry check, a Staff Health Report, and the Parish's Safeguarding God's Children Workshop.

Lead Teacher – Teaching degree, Certificate, Associate's or Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood and/or Elementary Education. Experience teaching younger children, ages 2-3-4 years old, is preferred and/or experience in the Primary Elementary grades.

A nurturing and loving personality who would incorporate teacher and child directed activities into the curriculum, along with the awareness and demonstration of God's love for all His children. An understanding of the importance of working with the parents to increase their knowledge and understanding of child development especially in the emotional and social areas. To help the parent enjoy their child and create a strong emotional bond that will aid the child's growth in all areas of his/her life.

Assistant – Experience working with young children along with a nurturing and loving personality. Able to assist the teacher and work together cooperatively for the best interest of the children.

2. **Physical Facility**

Trinity Preschool is located on the lowest floor of the church facility, occupying three rooms. We have a large playground which is surrounded by a secure 6 foot wooden fence. The Playground was constructed according to Federal standards, which includes a thick matting of engineered mulch. For inclement weather situations, we use a large open room in the lower level of the church building where children can play with balls and small riding toys.

3. **Enrollment Capacity**

The Toddler program is facilitated by one instructor and one assistant, with a capacity of 10 children. The Now I'm Three program has a capacity of 14 children with one instructor and one assistant.

The Pre-Kindergarten program has a capacity of 12 children with one instructor and one assistant.

4. **Food Service**

A nutritious snack is provided by parents and teachers on a rotating basis. Children bring a water bottle, which goes home each day to be cleaned. Special treats are provided by parents for the designated parties and birthdays. The staff wears plastic gloves when dispensing snacks to the children.

5. **Health Requirements**

Each staff person is required to obtain a statement of health from a certified practicing physician. The annual statement declares the person free of any disability which would prevent them from caring for children.

6. **Public Insurance**

Our preschool maintains a policy through Church Mutual Insurance, covered under Trinity Ecumenical Parish.

7. **Training**

Instructors attend annual CPR and First Aid training. We also participate in the "National Safeguarding Our Children" program on a yearly basis, as well as ongoing professional development.

8. **Background check**

All incoming staff persons sign a sworn statement regarding their background. A check is run through the State Police with a request that they include a Criminal History and Sex Offender Search.

Our Trinity Parents Say——

From a student: "Everyone is so happy when they get here!"

"Thank you to the church for the wonderful, safe facility. The curriculum was excellent-amazing how much you squeezed in with just three mornings a week."

"Thank you to teachers for your love, patience and energy with our children- God gifted you both!"

"TEP Preschool has been a wonderful blessing for my child. I am very happy with the class size and the new playground is wonderful."

"Indoor play area is wonderful, if weather outside is bad they can still exercise indoors."

"My son really enjoyed Chapel Time and we will go back over the book that was made."

"I love all the art projects my child did, I have them all hung up! I felt like the school was very top notch and the standards of education and cleanliness were high above other schools."

"I am very impressed with the program and the teachers. I really thought both teachers seem to really care about my child."

"Teacher/Parent communication was excellent. I love the newsletters and the conferences were helpful, too."

"Trinity is a well-rounded program, meeting our child's spiritual, educational, social and developmental needs."

"My child learned how to spell her name within a couple of weeks, we had tried for a year!"

"The Parent Handbook is very easy to read and also helpful!"