

2010/2011 Handbook

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Dear Parents,

WHAT YOU WILL FIND AT HILLTOP PRESCHOOL?

-  quality education, including activities and learning goals that reflect accurate knowledge of the age level served
-  equipment and manipulatives appropriate for each age group
-  learning materials that reflect an anti-bias approach to life, a multi-cultural view of society and an acceptance of individual differences
-  commitment to health and physical well-being, emotional/social well-being, language development, mathematical/scientific discovery and problem solving experience
-  freedom for your children to make choices, to create in areas of art/music, and to play
-  an atmosphere of love and respect for every individual
-  early childhood professionals who are dedicated to nurturing and teaching your children
-  a positive working relationship among all staff
-  a positive working relationship between the Church of the Brethren and Hilltop Preschool

WHAT YOU CAN DO THIS YEAR TO HELP BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN SCHOOL AND HOME?

-  ask your child specific questions about the school day
-  use your child's artwork, or other papers brought home, as a basis for conversation
-  listen and respond to new words your child says or observations he/she makes
-  go over newsletter together
-  post calendars
-  participate in scheduled activities
-  volunteer to help

WHAT IS A PRESCHOOL?

The first objective of a preschool is to meet the needs of children by providing experiences which will enhance their development as human beings.

Play is the work and the language of children. Using this approach, a child can investigate and express ideas. In creative activities the child can express feelings and emotions through the use of paints, crayons, clay, and other materials. Stories and conversation develop language abilities. Singing, dancing, and listening to music develop an appreciation of music and awareness of rhythm. Through field trips, children learn about the people around them. Playing, working, and planning in an organized situation establishes desirable habits and attitudes that will be needed throughout life. A positive self-image is nurtured through cooperative interaction. Science and math experiences are developed through exploration and experimentation of things found in our daily lives. Health and safety habits are developed through positive role models and proper environment.

WHAT IS HILLTOP PRESCHOOL?

Hilltop Preschool is a developmental program, not an academic program.

MISSION STATEMENT OF HILLTOP PRESCHOOL

The mission of Hilltop Preschool is to help children feel good about themselves and about their relationships with others through the development of the whole person. Our goal is to provide a safe, warm, loving environment where children can find joy in learning to play and work together.

PUBLIC NOTICE STATEMENTS

1. Administration

Hilltop Preschool is organized and operated by West Richmond Church of the Brethren and is a part of the church's total ministry. The school is religiously exempt from state licensure.

The Director, under the guidance of the Preschool Board, coordinates the school. The Board consists of up to 5 church members, up to 4 preschool family members, a treasurer, and the Director.

The teaching staff is selected on the basis of their educational background, as well as their personality, love for children and ability to work effectively with children. Each staff member is screened and exhibits the following: good character and reputation, good health, good communication skills in working with children and their families, and knowledge of the developmental needs of young children.

2. Health Requirements for Staff

All Preschool staff members are certified annually by a practicing physician to be free from any disability which would prevent them from caring for children. Each staff member must have a health form on file.

Soap is used at all times, as are disposable paper products. Disposable gloves are used as the need arises and are properly discarded. Personal hygiene is a focus of the curriculum and is emphasized in lessons, through activities, and by example.

Extreme care is taken throughout the morning to safeguard the health of the children and staff.

3. Enrollment Capacity

Maximum school enrollment capacity is 70 children. Children must be at least 2½ years old to attend Hilltop Preschool.

4. Building and Grounds

Hilltop Preschool utilizes existing classrooms, Monday through Friday, in the church building. The gathering room is used for special programs and occasions. The kitchen serves as a kitchen for the preschool. The preschool playground, adjacent to the church building, is used Monday through Friday during school hours. The playground is equipped with age-appropriate equipment. Indoor areas have heating and air-conditioning. Annual visits are made by fire and health inspectors.

5. Insurance

Hilltop Preschool is covered by a policy from Church Mutual Insurance Company. The policy limits meet all required statutes.

6. Handbook

The handbook has been prepared to provide parents with pertinent information about Hilltop Preschool's operation. Our program and procedures have been designed to provide a safe and enriching environment for each child. Please read your handbook carefully. If you have questions, please ask.

SCHOOL POLICIES

1. Eligibility Requirements

- A. Children must be at least 2½ years old before entering school. They do not need to be toilet trained.
- B. Three and four year-olds *must be* toilet trained before school begins in September. Children in diapers and pull-ups are not accepted in the 3 and 4-year old classes.
- C. Proof of identification (official birth certificate or passport, not photocopies) must be viewed by a teacher before school begins.

2. Registration and Tuition Fees

- A. Registration begins in January at which time the registration fee is required. The amount is \$65.00 and is non-refundable.
- B. The first tuition payment is due August 1. This is non-refundable in case of withdrawal. Subsequent payments are due by the first day of the month, with final payment due on April 1.
- C. It is the responsibility of the parent(s) to notify the school's Director immediately if unable to meet the tuition obligation by the due date. Failure to meet these obligations could result in your child(ren) being withdrawn from the school until such time as these obligations are met.
- D. Checks should be made payable to Hilltop Preschool. They can be mailed to 7612 Wanyamala Road, Richmond, VA 23229 or placed in an envelope and sent to school in your child's totebag.
- E. For your convenience, tuition may be paid in monthly installments. However, the installments are the same each month regardless of holidays or absences.
- F. A late fee of \$5.00 per business day will be charged after the seventh day of each month.

3. Activity Fees

- A. An activity fee is collected in September. It covers all field trips and on-site programs for the year.

- F. Children who show signs of discomfort will be sent home in consideration of others.

10. Carpools

- A. Consult your class list for the names of other parents for carpooling.
- B. Please give your child's teacher the names of those children in your carpool.
- C. Keep us informed of any changes in carpool arrangements during the year.
- D. Both the morning and afternoon carpools will take place in the paved parking lot. Morning carpool ends at 9:10 a.m.
- E. There could be times when the church has programs going on that necessitate Hilltop to be flexible in its carpool location.
- F. If you are walking your child into or from the building, please park in the gravel lot by the playground. We ask that you hold your child's hand until you have reached the building or your car.

11. Programs and Parties

- A. Several holiday programs and parties will be held by individual classes as well as by the entire school.
- B. Parents sign up to help with parties during Open House.
- C. Parents will be notified of specific dates in the school newsletter.
- D. Please send your child's regular snack on party days.

12. Show and Tell

- A. We encourage children to share.
- B. Your child's teacher may ask that certain items be brought from time to time to enhance a unit of study. These items should be labeled.
- C. Please do not allow your child to bring toys to school that he or she may have trouble putting away after "show and tell" time.

7. Birthdays

- A. Birthdays may be celebrated at school. Children may bring a treat to share with the class. Please make arrangements with your child's teacher in advance.
- B. Children who have a birthday during the summer may celebrate an "unbirthday" at another time during the school year.
- C. Please do not ask us to distribute party invitations unless the entire class is invited.

8. Clothing

- A. Dress your child sensibly for work and play, inside as well as outside. **No flipflops.**
- B. Some of our activities are messy so clothes should be washable.
- C. Please label all outer clothing with your child's name.
- D. Children in the 2½-year-old class should have a change of clothes that can stay at school, including underwear and socks. Put them in a labeled plastic bag.

9. Health

- A. It is imperative that the Medical Form be completed and returned prior to your child's first day of school.
- B. Staff members may not administer medication to your child. This includes cough drops.
- C. Please cooperate in keeping your child home:
 - 1. For a fever, cough, sore throat, earache, rash, and nasal discharge.
 - 2. When eyes are inflamed.
 - 3. If your child has vomited or had diarrhea in the morning.
 - 4. If you feel your child will not be comfortable at school.
- D. Children who have had a fever should remain at home for 24 hours after the temperature has returned to normal.
- E. Please call Hilltop if your child has a contagious disease so other parents in the class can be notified.

4. School Hours

- A. The school hours are 9:00 - 12:00.
- B. Parents needing early childcare need to make prior arrangements with the director.
 - 1. The fee is a \$5.00 per day for children arriving between 8:45 - 9:00 a.m.
 - 2. The fee is a \$10.00 per day for children arriving between 8:30 - 8:45 a.m.
- C. Children should be picked up promptly at 12:00 p.m. There is a late pick-up fee of \$1.00 per minute, beginning at 12:05 p.m.
- D. If you must be late picking up your child, please call the preschool at 288-3887. If you have an emergency and must speak with someone immediately, call the church office at 288-6439.

5. Supplies

- A. Each child is asked to bring a tote bag to school each day (approx. 14" x 16"). Hilltop does have tote bags available for purchase.
- B. Please label the tote bag for easy identification. **No backpacks.**

6. Snacks

- A. Each child must pack a nutritious snack and juice, or a plastic cup for water. If sending a cup, please label it with a permanent marker or tape.
- B. Due to choking hazards and severe allergies in some children, please do not send the following items with your children:
 - 1. **Nuts or nut butters** (*Children who bring snack items containing nuts or nut butters will not be allowed to eat them.*)
 - 2. Popcorn
 - 3. Hot dogs
 - 4. Whole grapes
 - 5. Hard candies or cough drops

13. School Closings

- A. We will follow the Henrico County Schools for weather closings.
- B. Listen to WRVA (dial 1140 on your radio) or watch the Henrico County School Channel (cable channel 99) for the Henrico closings.
- C. If Henrico County Schools have a delayed opening of one hour, we will open at 10:00 a.m.
- D. If Henrico Schools have a 2-hour delay, we are closed. If you are unsure if we are closed, you may call Hilltop Preschool (288-3887) for an updated message.
- E. It is the policy at Hilltop Preschool that after three (3) school days are missed due to closings, any additional days will be made up on dates determined by the Director and the Board of Directors. In the event Hilltop Preschool does have make-up days, there will be two (2) extended class days (until 1:30 p.m.) for each full day missed. On those days, children will need to bring their regular snack and a lunch.
- F. If Hilltop Preschool is closed for the day, any related nighttime activities are also cancelled.

14. Field Trips

- A. Field trips will be taken by the classes during the school year. 2 1/2-Young / 3 year-olds do not take field trips.
- B. Parents are needed to help with transportation. Teachers will set up a schedule of drivers.
- C. We do not encourage siblings going on field trips. Most of our trips are arranged to provide an educational lesson. Therefore, please make arrangements for siblings.
- D. Hilltop Preschool t-shirts **must** be worn on all field trips. The t-shirts will be sent home before the first trip. Children arriving at school on field trip days without their shirts **will not** be allowed to go on the trip..
- E. All children **must** have a child safety seat that fits. Please label the seat with your child's name. Your child **will not** be allowed to participate without a safety seat.

15. Parents in the Classroom

- A. Parents are always welcome in the classroom. We only ask that you please let us know when you are planning to visit.
- B. Due to our small classroom size, we must ask you to please leave siblings at home unless you are attending a family event.

16. Conferences

- A. Conferences in the fall will be held at parent or teacher request. A written evaluation of your child's adjustment to school will be sent home before Christmas Break.
- B. The spring conference will be an evaluation of your child's progress during the school year.
- C. Additional conferences may be scheduled at the request of either the teacher or parent.

17. Suggestions

- A. We welcome any suggestions or comments regarding our programs or policies.
- B. Please feel free to contact any of the Board members or the Director. Hilltop Preschool has an answering machine to take your messages at anytime. We will return your calls as quickly as possible. The school's phone number is 288-3887. You may also email us at hilltop4preschool@gmail.com.

18. Discipline

Discipline is usually not a problem at Hilltop Preschool. If we do have a child who misbehaves, we talk with them about their behavior. Occasionally we might need to use a supervised "time out" but this is rare. If a child continues to be disruptive or becomes uncontrollable, we will contact the parents.

19. Withdrawal

- A. Enrollment is for the school year.
- B. If withdrawal is necessary, a written statement needs to be received 30 days prior to your child's last day at school so that vacancies may be filled.

- C. Hilltop Preschool reserves the right to ask parents to withdraw a child if he/she is unhappy, not ready for the preschool experience, or making it impossible to maintain a happy or safe atmosphere in the classroom (This includes biting, hitting, or other acts of aggression).

20. Child Abuse And Neglect

All childcare providers in the state of Virginia have to report any suspected cases of child abuse and neglect. If this situation should occur, the Director will notify the Protective Services unit of the Department of Social Services.

21. Two & A Half Year-Olds/Young Threes - Special Concerns and School Policies

- A. We discourage the bringing of bottles, pacifiers, or security blankets.
- B. If you *walk* into the school to bring or pick up your child, park in the gravel parking lot. This allows our carpool line to run efficiently.
- C. Objectives
 1. Grow in understanding and love for him/herself, family, and others in the world.
 2. Grow in the ability to think, solve problems, and develop language skills.
 3. Enjoy creative expression in music, art, and play.

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Calendar for 2010/2011

September 6.....Labor Day (Monday)
September 7-9.....Teacher Work Days
September 10Open House -- Children & Parents Visit Classroom (Friday 9-10:00 a.m.)
September 13Classes Begin (Monday)

October 11.....School Closed – Henrico County Schools Closed (Monday)

November 2.....School Closed -- Henrico County Schools Closed (Tuesday)
November 19.....Thanksgiving Program and Feast (Friday)
November 25-26.....School Closed -- Thanksgiving Holiday (Thursday-Friday)

December 13-31School Closed -- Christmas Break

January 3School Resumes (Monday)
January 17School Closed – Martin Luther King Holiday (Monday)
January 31School Closed – Henrico County Schools Closed (Monday)

February 21.....School Closed – Henrico County Schools Closed (Monday)

March 16.....No School – Parent/Teacher Conference Day (Wednesday)

April 7.....Kindergarten Registration at Public Schools (Tuesday)
April 18-22.....School Closed -- Spring Break (Monday - Friday)

May 18.....Last Day of Classes (Wednesday)
May 19.....Last Day of School -- End of Year Program (Thursday)
May 19-20.....Teacher Work Days

School may be closed an additional day in the spring for the teachers to attend a conference.

School will be closed on all days that the Henrico County School System is closed. Hilltop Preschool retains the right to modify their calendar as it may deem necessary.
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