



Stepping Stones

P R E S C H O O L

Parent Handbook

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

Matthew 5:16 KJV

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Stepping Stones Preschool and Daycare Philosophy

Stepping Stones Preschool and Daycare operates as an outreach ministry and is under the authority of Independent Baptist Church. Stepping Stones Preschool and Daycare seeks to reach and minister to the children and families in the community by offering a high-quality weekday preschool program. Independent Baptist Church strives to strengthen the lives of the preschool families by providing opportunities for involvement in its many ministries.

Stepping Stones Preschool and Daycare's educational philosophy is to focus on the development of the whole child, taking into consideration each child's individual needs and development. The spiritual, social and emotional, intellectual, and physical growth of each child are all of equal importance.

We provide developmentally age-appropriate preschool experiences that are designed to help each child grow and develop:

- Spiritually by providing a chapel experience and by integrating a Biblical worldview throughout the curriculum and learning environment. Christ-centered character qualities are modeled through the love of our staff and the responses given to the children in our care. Bible stories, songs, and prayer give children an awareness of God's love for them.
- Socially and emotionally by encouraging participation in group activities, getting along with others, and developing a feeling of security and belonging.
- Intellectually by encouraging an enthusiasm for learning through observation, exploration, and hands-on experiences. Building knowledge and skills through the active process of interacting with materials, equipment, teachers and their classmates.
- Physically by encouraging experiences that develop large and small muscle coordination and motor skills.

We believe that each child is a unique gift from God and should be surrounded in a loving, Christ-centered atmosphere where they can feel confident and safe as they experiment, make mistakes, learn self-discipline, and have the opportunity to make good choices. Our teachers strive to create an environment where children are encouraged to grow in all areas of development by inspiring them to do great things as they discover the world God created for them.

Mission Statement

Stepping Stones Preschool and Daycare exists to provide a quality, developmentally age-appropriate, hands-on learning curriculum in a safe, loving, Christ-centered environment where children have the opportunity to develop a love for Jesus Christ and others and to grow and develop spiritually, socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually.

Statement of Faith

The basis for Stepping Stones Preschool and Daycare can be found in the Word of God. The following nine statements are our foundational beliefs:

- We believe in the verbal inspiration and authority of the Scriptures. The King James Version of the Bible reveals God, the fall of man, the way of salvation, and God's plan and purpose in the ages.
- We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in the three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- We believe in the Deity and Virgin Birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, and His ascension to the right hand of the Father.
- We believe in the visible, personal, and pre-millennial return of Jesus Christ.
- We believe that salvation is "by grace" plus or minus nothing. The conditions to salvation are repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.
- We believe that man is sinful and thereby separated from God. He is justified by faith alone and counted righteous before God only through the merit of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

- We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost: the saved unto the resurrection of life, and the lost unto the resurrection of damnation.
- We believe in the eternal security of the believer in Christ.
- We believe in the local church with the ordinances of baptism by immersion and the Lord’s Supper.

Curriculum Information

Stepping Stones Preschool and Daycare uses the Abeka curriculum, which is a comprehensive curriculum based on Christian values. Our daily curriculum features a traditional approach to teaching a learning, cross-subject integration, spiral review, and plenty of hands-on activities. Abeka is an age appropriate curriculum for preschool that takes into consideration the differences in motor skills and cognitive abilities among preschoolers. Our *two-year-old program* goes beyond playtime to introduce foundational academic concepts that will be built upon each year. Our *three-year-old program* begins exposing students to phonics and continues to add to the student’s knowledge of numbers, art, poetry, and the Bible. Our *four-year-old program* serves as a bridge between preschool and kindergarten, preparing students for a structured learning environment and teaching the basics of reading.

General Financial Information

Stepping Stones Preschool and Daycare neither solicits nor accepts government funds of any type. Therefore, it is necessary that fees, tuition, and before and after school care charges be paid when due. A monthly rate of tuition is used for the convenience of our school families. No financial adjustment can be made because of absences. A discounted tuition is offered for a sibling when both are enrolled at Stepping Stones Preschool and Daycare or another sibling attends Independent Baptist Academy. All accounts will be due on the day specified on the “Financial Information Sheet.” A late fee will be assessed for accounts not paid on time. When an account is one payment behind, parents will be asked to withdraw their children. For more specific financial information, see the “Financial Information Sheet.”

Sample Daily Schedule

8:00 – 8:45	Arrival/Attendance (Centers)
8:45 – 8:55	Bathroom Break
8:55 – 9:20	Morning Snack
9:20 – 9:45	Circle Time (Songs/Bible Story)
9:45 – 10:15	Table Time (Phonics/Numbers/STEM)
10:15 – 10:25	Bathroom Break
10:25 – 11:00	Recess (Indoor – Gymnasium, Outdoor – Playground)
11:00 – 11:10	Bathroom Break
11:10 – 11:45	Lunch
11:45 – 11:55	Bathroom Break
11:55 – 12:10	Table Time (Handwriting/Reading)
12:10 – 12:20	Bathroom Break
12:20 – 12:50	Recess (Indoor – Gymnasium, Outdoor – Playground)
12:50 – 1:00	Bathroom Break
1:00 – 2:30	Nap Time
2:30 – 2:40	Bathroom Break
2:40 – 3:00	Review/Pack-up and Dismissal

* See posted Daily Schedules in each classroom.

General Information

Ages of Children Served

Two and a half years and one day through four years old.

Preschool Hours

The preschool hours are from 8:00 a.m. through 3:00 p.m., with the academic portion of the day beginning at 9:00 a.m. Students arriving after 9:00 a.m. must check in at the IBA school office to be allowed entrance into the building. Should a parent need to pick up a student before 3:00 p.m., they must first report to the IBA school office to receive admittance into the Preschool building. Please give the teachers plenty of notice should your student need to leave early. All deliveries must be made to and left at the school office.

Early and Late Stay

Stepping Stone Preschool and Day care provides Early Stay services beginning at 7:00 a.m. at a rate of \$8 per hour and Late Stay services until 6:00 p.m. at a rate of \$8 per hour. Please note, there is a monthly discounted rate available. All students must be picked up before the 6:00 p.m. bell rings. If a student is not picked up when the 6:00 p.m. bell rings, parents will be charged a late fee of \$10.00 per child for the first five minutes and \$1.00 for each additional minute.

Sign-in/Sign-out

State licensing requires that every child is to be signed-in and signed-out with the parent's first and last name. When you sign-in, it acknowledges that your child is now our responsibility. Please walk your child to his teacher. Please do not leave your child unattended.

Snack

We provide a morning and an afternoon snack. Each snack provides the nutritional components of at least two food groups.

Lunch

All children will need to bring a healthy lunch from home. Some healthy lunch ideas are: sandwiches, cheese and crackers, yogurt, bagel and cream cheese, fruit, 100% fruit juice, meat and cheese, vegetables, and milk.

Rest Time

All children are required to observe a rest time. Please supply a small blanket and small pillow, with a bag to store them in. All rest time supplies will be sent home every Friday to be cleaned. Please label each item with the child's name.

Change of Clothes

Please bring a complete change of clothes to leave in your child's cubby, in case of an accident. This is to include pants/skirt or dress, uniform shirt, underwear, and socks, placed in a zip-lock bag marked with your child's name. Should your child use the extra clothes, a new set must be sent in the next school day.

Birthdays

Please defer to your child's teacher for specific instructions about what you can do to celebrate your child's special day.

Toys from Home

At times, students will want to bring a toy to school to play with. Please make sure these toys meet preschool standards. If a child brings a toy to school, please remember the child takes full responsibility for the toy. *If a toy is broken, damaged, or stolen, Stepping Stones Preschool is not responsible for reimbursement.* Parents, please help by making sure toys do not include any type of toy weapon and are labeled with your child's name.

Emergency Disaster Plan

In the event of an emergency or natural disaster, Stepping Stones will implement a plan that will include 72 hours of food, water, and protective care. Drills are conducted on a regular basis throughout the preschool year. The Registration Fee covers the cost of your child's Emergency Disaster Kit.

Parent-Initiated Student Withdrawal

A written two-week notice is required for all students who plan on withdrawal. Full payment is required for those two weeks, regardless of attendance. If payment has been made that exceeds the two weeks, a refund shall be made for the remaining time. A check will be mailed to you within 10 days.

Principal-Initiated Student Withdrawal

When the principal determines that the preschool environment does not meet the needs of the child, a one-week notice shall be given for withdrawal. A prorated tuition refund shall apply if the account has been paid in full for the month.

Policies and Procedures

Registration Fee

The registration fee is paid prior to each child's initial enrollment and is non-refundable.

Tuition

Tuition payments are due on the first of each month and should be set up as an automatic payment through the Gradelink system. Any account not paid before the tenth of each month will be assessed a \$60 late payment fee.

Sibling Discount

A discounted tuition is offered for a sibling when both are enrolled in Stepping Stones Preschool and Daycare or another sibling attends Independent Baptist Academy.

Early and Late Stay Fees

In the event that you need to drop off your child early or pick them up late, the following fees will apply:

Early Stay: You will be charged \$8.00 per hour or \$100 per month

Late Stay: You will be charged \$8.00 per hour or \$200 per month.

Early Stay begins at 7:00 a.m. and Late Stay ends at 6:00 p.m.

Absences/Make-up Days

We are not able to give credit or provide a make-up day for absences due to illness, vacations, holidays, unscheduled days off (as in snow days), or staff development days. Students may not miss more than 2 consecutive weeks within the year. Children withdrawn for consecutive absences may lose their spot in the Preschool to a child on the waiting list.

Classroom Placement Policy

The Stepping Stones Preschool and Daycare staff reserves the right to move a student to a different class if we believe it will be beneficial to the student.

Discipline Policy

Stepping Stones Preschool and Daycare uses the Traffic Light Behavior System. Each morning the students will all begin on the Green light. The teacher will remind the students of the basic classroom behavior rules and the consequences of their behavior. Most students will stay on green all day. Some however, will need to be reminded, after a verbal warning is given, a repeat of incorrect behavior will result in the child's name being placed on the Yellow light. The consequences of the Yellow light will include the loss of five minutes of free time, possibly repeating instruction time or seatwork depending on the level of interruption, and the issuance of an apology if necessary. On very rare occasions, the students will be placed on the Red light. The Red light is reserved for deliberate acts of violence and disobedience. Once placed on the Red light, parents and the administrator will be

contacted and if necessary the student will be removed from the classroom pending actions from the administrator. A traffic light is displayed in the classroom with the student's names laminated and able to move easily from light to light. Each student has incentive chart to encourage and reward good behavior.

Biting and Intentional Harm Policy

A two-and-a-half-year-old child can understand the concept that biting and hurting others is not acceptable. The most effective action to stop biting can only be taken by the parents. In consideration for the health and safety of the other children, the following steps shall be taken:

First incident – the child will receive a double time out (10 minutes) and both sets of parents will be notified.

Second incident – the child will be separated from the rest of the children for the remainder of the day and both sets of parents will be notified.

Third incident – the parents will be contacted to pick up the child immediately and will need to meet with the principal to discuss further action.

Child Abuse Reporting

As required by the state of Maryland, all preschool staff are legally obligated to report any suspected incident of child abuse or neglect.

Court Order Policy

Stepping Stones Preschool and Daycare must have on file all current court orders, signed by a judge, that refer to preschool related enforcement. For the welfare of all students, please understand that all personnel and policies of Stepping Stones must maintain total neutrality in conjunction with all custody suits, whether settled or in progress.

Illness Policy

Stepping Stones Preschool and Daycare is not licensed to care for ill children. Please call and report absences to the school office by 9:00 a.m. If your child has any of the following symptoms, please keep them at home:

- Fever of 100.4 or higher
- Vomiting/diarrhea
- Constant cough/sore throat
- Heavy green runny nose
- Red, watery or mucous filled eyes
- Undiagnosed skin rash/infected sores on any part of the body
- Unusually fuss, cranky or fatigued
- Head lice

If any of these symptoms develop at preschool, you will be contacted to pick up your child within the hour. Please notify the school office if your child has been exposed to a contagious disease.

All children must be fever and symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school.

Medications

Stepping Stones Preschool and Daycare will only administer prescription medication that must be given more than twice a day. You must fill out an OCC 1216 form in the school office. Medications must be in the original container, labeled with the child's name and the required dosage.

Per Comar 13A.17.11 "A child may not be readmitted to care after an absence of 3 days or more due to illness without a written statement from the parent or physician that the child may return to a regular schedule."

Medical/Dental Emergency

- A staff member qualified in CPR/First Aid will be present during preschool hours
- Please keep dietary restrictions/allergies and emergency contact information updated at all times
- In case of a medical/dental emergency, 911 will be call under whatever conditions are necessary to preserve the life, limb or wellbeing of the child
- In the case of a medical/dental emergency, the parent/guardian is responsible for any medical bills incurred due to the medical/dental emergency.

Lice Policy

If live lice are discovered on your child, you will be contacted to pick up your child. Please be proactive in your treatment at home. At home treatment should include over-the-counter treatment as recommended by your pharmacist. Your child may return to preschool when there are no live bugs present and all nits have been removed. A Stepping Stones staff member must verify that your child is free of any bugs and/or nits before being allowed to return to preschool.

Passive Technology (TV) Policy

Teachers will assign one day a week for TV time. TV time is 30 minutes. Programing is at the teacher's discretion and will be in keeping with the teachings and philosophies approved by Stepping Stones Preschool and Daycare.

Uniforms

All students are required to wear a uniform purchased through the Independent Baptist Academy School Store on the French Toast School Store website. Please see the school office for the school specific code.

Shoes

All shoes must have a closed heel and closed toe. Specifically, no sandals, clogs, or any other style of open-toed shoes may be worn to school at any time. Tennis shoes or canvas-like tennis shoes may be worn. Shoes with holes for strings must have laces in them and **laces must be completely and properly laced at all times**. Shoes with "mock" holes that cannot be laced are not acceptable. High top shoes that are so high that socks are not visible are not allowed. They should not be much higher than the ankle bone. Please do not wear "slip on" shoes as there is a tendency for students to frequently play with them during the day.

During the winter months, they are permitted to wear boots. On rainy days, they may wear rain boots that meet the dress code guidelines. On snowy days, they may wear snow boots that meet the dress code guidelines. Boots must be made of durable materials such as leather, suede, rubber, etc.

Girls may wear ankle-length leggings during the colder months. When wearing leggings only white or dark, solid colors are permitted. No patterns or bright neon colors are allowed.

Girls Jewelry and Hair

Neither face nor hair glitter is permitted. No faddish hair colors such as green, blue, bright red, orange, etc. are allowed. There is to be no interspersing or weaving of non-natural hair accessories in the student's hair of non-natural colors. The administration has final decision on hair styles. Only one pair of earrings may be worn at a time in the lobe of the ear.

Boys Haircuts

Boys haircuts should be tapered to the natural hairline on the sides and back, and combed neatly across or up off the forehead. The hair in front must not touch the eyebrows, and the hair in the back may not be long and full enough that it touches the shirt collar. Hair on the sides may not be over the ears. In general, hair must not be allowed to get too full, whereby, when it is washed and dried, it appears *shaggy*. Think, curly hair must not be longer than two inches high. Rat-tails, tracking, bowl cuts, spiked hair, Mohawks, braids, or cornrows, etc., are not acceptable hair standards. (Flat tops are not considered spiked). Twists and afros may not exceed a two-inch

thickness at any time. The administration has final decision on hair styles.

Potty Training Policy

All students attending Stepping Stones Preschool and Daycare are required to be self-sufficient in the bathroom. They must be able to undress themselves, use the toilet, wipe, put their clothes back on and wash their hands. If the student still needs to wear pull-ups, then the student is not trained. Understandable some students will have the occasional mishap at this stage of development. For a mishap a student should be sufficiently trained to clean themselves. Students that regress in potty training, or are not sufficiently potty trained when they start, will be asked to further their training with their parents at home before they return to Stepping Stones. Often times students will have a few accidents right after they start attending because they are in a new place and adjusting to the environment. After this initial grace period students are expected to not have any accidents except on a rare occasion. If a student has 12 or more accidents a month, that is an average of 3 a week, they are not sufficiently potty trained and parents will need to withdraw them from Stepping Stones until they are better trained.

