



PreSchool Partners Parent Handbook

2021-2022

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:15 – 2:30

Early Care: Tuesday - Friday 7:15 – 8:15

After School Care: Monday – Friday 2:30 – 6:00

4447 Montevallo Road
Birmingham, Alabama 35213
205.951.5151
preschool-partners.org

Mission of PreSchool Partners

Our mission at PreSchool Partners is to equip families of preschool children with the skills necessary to achieve school readiness.

Non-discrimination Policy

PreSchool Partners does not screen applicants (participants or staff) based on any creed or color requirements. PreSchool Partners admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, and other school-administered programs.

Children's Program

It is our belief at PreSchool Partners that children learn best through play. Our curriculum is based on research and best practices. We use the Creative Curriculum for Preschool, PATHS (Promoting Alternative THinking Strategies) Social Emotional Curriculum, Houghton Mifflin Every Day in Pre-K Math Curriculum, and the Zaner-Bloser Handwriting Curriculum. Teachers meet regularly to write, plan, and evaluate the curriculum. Our teachers and our curriculum encourage a life-long love of learning.

PreSchool Partners is a very structured program that teaches the academic, behavior, and social skills needed for a successful start in kindergarten. These skills include letter, number, shape, and color recognition, rhyming words, and beginning sounds. The children are also taught to write their first names - with the first letter of the name capitalized and the remaining letters in lowercase. We study letters and a theme each week and numbers each month. Daily activities include morning meeting, following directions activities, circle time (calendar, weather, stories, and singing), playing in learning centers (home living, blocks, puzzles, dress up, sensory, etc.), outside play, lunch time, nap time, and story time. Following directions activities help the children learn to listen to the teacher and follow simple 2-3 step directions. The children will play in small groups in the learning centers. This reinforces cooperating, taking turns, and sharing with others.

PreSchool Partners is an outreach program of Saint Luke's Episcopal Church. We offer Chapel on Wednesday mornings at 9:00 for children who wish to participate. Chapel is optional and parents can choose to opt out of this if so desired. The children and teachers say a blessing at lunch every day and we also say the Pledge of Allegiance every day.

PreSchool Partners is not able to accept children with special needs or disruptive behavior issues. We will work with the families to find the appropriate agencies that are equipped to work with children with special needs or disruptive behavior issues.

Class Ratios

We believe in keeping our classes small so that each child gets individualized attention. Our student/teacher ratio is 7 to 1 in the four-year-old classrooms and 6 to 1 in the two and three-year-old classes.

Teaching Staff

Our staff has many years of experience working with young children and **all** of the lead teachers have college degrees in education. All staff members are involved in continuing education (a minimum of 12 hours annually, 24 hours annually for the Executive Director) through attendance at trainings, staff meetings, and early childhood reading materials. Please visit our staff page on our website, www.preschool-partners.org to learn more.

Teacher Communication

It is the policy of PreSchool Partners that staff members are not allowed to give parents their cell phone numbers or personal email addresses. However, you were given your child's teachers' PSP email address at "Meet the Teacher", and you may communicate via that email or in the following ways:

-call the front desk at 951.5151 and ask that a message be sent to your child's teacher
-email Lella lella@preschool-partners.org or Bry bry@preschool-partners.org and ask them to relay the message

If a message is **urgent**, please call the front desk – that is the quickest form of communication. If your message requires a reply, the teacher will get back to you as her schedule allows, usually during naptime. Our teachers don't have a free period embedded in their day, so replying to emails or texts is not part of their daily classroom routine. We are a licensed childcare center and DHR guidelines require a certain teacher/pupil ratio that must be maintained throughout the school day. We do not use apps because the teachers are expected to give your children their FULL attention, which they cannot do if they are constantly using their phone to take pictures and post to an app. Your child's safety is our top priority and if a teacher is continually looking at her phone, she is not giving your child her full attention. **Please know that you are**

always welcome to walk your child to class in the morning and communicate with the teachers directly or speak with them when you pick up in the afternoon.

Attendance Policy

The children in the program must have good attendance Monday through Friday. We cannot prepare your child for kindergarten if he/she does not have consistent attendance. Children who are chronically absent in early education programs are less likely to read on grade level by third grade. We understand that young children often get sick, and we certainly do not want them to come to school when they are sick (see health section below), but consistent attendance is critical to kindergarten readiness. We may require doctor's excuses if a child has excessive absences. If your child is having attendance problems, your family may be asked to leave the program. **You must finish the school year in good standing to return for another year with this child or any other children.**

Health

Please do not send children to school when they are sick. A child who shows signs of a fresh cold, fever, diarrhea, or any other contagious condition must not be brought to school. Please help us keep our children healthy and prevent spreading infections by using good judgment before sending a sick child to school. **Children must be free of fever, vomiting, and diarrhea for a minimum of 24 hours (without medication) before returning to school.** Conditions that are highly contagious may require a note from a physician indicating when the child may return to school.

It is the policy of PreSchool Partners that any medication, whether prescription or non-prescription, be given before or after school hours by the child's parent/guardian. It is against our policy for staff members to administer any medication to a child while in our care. However, if a child needs asthma medication and it is essential that the student receive the medication during school hours, we will need you to complete the medical authorization form.

Classroom Management and Discipline

The teachers of PreSchool Partners will handle discipline problems in a loving, positive manner. The goal is for the child to develop self-control and obey the rules, not because they are afraid, but because of the caring and trusting relationship they have with their teachers. We follow the practice of Conscious Discipline, which integrates social-emotional learning, discipline and self-regulation so the children learn to problem solve for themselves and allows the teachers to spend less time policing behavior and more time turning everyday situations into learning opportunities.

It is our goal for all children to have a positive experience at school. We believe that parents and teachers working together will provide the best experience for all the children. We will work diligently to help children with challenging behaviors to adapt to their classroom and learn to self-regulate. This may involve meeting with the parents to work on implementing the same strategies in the home that we use in the classroom.

We will redirect the child as needed as well as give the child access to the calm down corner in his/her classroom. However, if we are unable to get the child's behavior under control, that child will be required to withdraw from the program. We must consider the safety of the teachers and other children when making these decisions. It is not fair for one child to disrupt the rest of the class and prevent them from learning or feeling safe. We must do what is best for the entire school rather than one individual child.

Biting Policy

PreSchool Partners recognizes that biting may occur as an unacceptable behavior when young children are in a group setting. Teachers will give immediate attention to the injured child and in these incidences, both parents will be notified. An incident form will be completed by the teachers and will require the parent's signature to acknowledge the incident. Information regarding the incident will be considered confidential. Teachers will work with children and parents on techniques to address the biting behavior, but PreSchool Partners reserves the right to deny, suspend, or cancel a child's enrollment if it is deemed in the best interest of the child or the school.

Early School and After School Care

Early School Care begins at 7:15. Parents must walk their child into the school and check them in. You may register for this program any time during the year. There is a \$25 non-refundable registration fee and a monthly fee of \$40. Parents can also pay a daily drop-in fee of \$5 or \$10 for one week of early school care. There are no discounts for early care.

After School Care: There is a \$25 non-refundable registration fee and a weekly rate of \$50. Parents can also pay a daily drop-in fee of \$20 for after school care. There are no discounts for after school care and you must pay the \$50 weekly fee even if your child only attends 3 days of the week. We have tried to keep the costs to our families as low as possible and the weekly fee of \$50 is already a reduced rate. You can always choose to pay the daily rate of \$20 if you will not be using after school care on a regular basis. After School Care begins at 2:30 and ends at 6:00 pm. You may register for this program any time during the year. There is a \$20 late fee if your child is not picked up by 6:00.

After School Care Pick Up: After school care pick up works like this:

If you arrive before 4:00 to pick up your child from after school care, please use the front door. If you arrive after 4:00, please come to the door on the right side of the school (by the colorful letter garden) to pick up your child. Please ring the doorbell on the right of the door and someone will answer the door for you. If no one answers the door, please call the after-school care phone, 205-441-3094 (the number is also posted at both doors) and someone will come open the door for you. Make sure you arrive by 6:00 p.m. or you will be charged a \$20 late fee. If you are consistently late, your child will not be allowed to stay in the after-school care program.

Naptime

Our curriculum includes naptime from 12:30-2:00. This is an important component of our program since growing children need lots of rest to be at their best for learning. We recognize that not all children require a nap, but we do expect the children to lie quietly on their cots and not disturb their classmates. If the non-napping child is unable to lie quietly and consistently disturbs the other children who are trying to nap, we may ask you to pick your child up after lunch.

Field Trips

We take field trips to the McWane Science Center and the Birmingham Zoo every year. These field trips are for the parents and children to enjoy together. Children's Theater performs 2 plays during the year at PreSchool Partners for the children. We also have several guest visitors who come to the school during the year, including police officers, fire fighters, a petting farm, and more.

Clothing and Personal Items

Because children learn best through hands-on activities, the children will tend to get "messy." Children should wear play clothes that are comfortable and washable so they can participate fully in their childhood experiences at PreSchool Partners. Clothes should be easy to put on and take off so that the children will not get frustrated while learning self-help skills. **No belts** please since they are difficult and sometimes lead to "accidents." **The children will go outside daily as the weather permits, so please consider the weather when dressing your child.** Also, **no backless shoes** are allowed at school. The children constantly take them off, trip over them, and can't run and play in them. Each child in the program must have a complete change of clothes in their classroom in case of an "accident." This includes underwear, pants, shirt, and socks. **All items sent to school must be labeled with the child's name. This includes lunch boxes, backpacks, clothing, and coats.**

School Property

It is the parents' responsibility to take care of school property, which includes the PreSchool Partners book bag (\$10), take home folder (\$2), and library book buddy bag (\$5). If your child loses or destroys one of these, you will be charged to replace them.

Nutrition Policy

PreSchool Partners provides a snack daily consisting of items such as cereal, cereal bars, yogurt, string cheese, applesauce, and milk. The parents are required to pack a lunch for their children. **We cannot heat up food**, so please pack lunches that do not require heating. Please pack healthy lunches (See Meal Patterns for Children handout for ideas) that include a growing food such as a sandwich, fruit, and a drink such as water or 100% fruit juice. **Our staff is required to refrigerate meat or dairy products.**

If a child forgets his/her lunch, PreSchool Partners will provide a pre-packaged lunch with water. If a child doesn't bring lunch on a regular basis, the Director will contact the parents to discuss remedying the problem. A charge of \$5.00 per lunch may be assessed to the parents who continually do not send a lunch with their child. **If your child attends our after-school care program, we will provide a snack, or you may send a snack for them in addition to their lunch.**

Drop Off and Pick Up Procedures

It is **mandatory** that every person who drops off or picks up a PreSchool Partners child checks the child in and out **every day with their signature**. We must have this for our records – this is for your child's safety.

When you arrive at the school in the morning, you must make sure your child gets to their classroom safely. **For early care, you must park and walk your child to their classroom.** Parents may drop off in the carpool area in front of the school. The teachers will be in the carpool lane to help unload in the mornings from 8:15-9:00. **You must get out of your car and walk your child into the school building if you arrive after 9:00.** This is for your child's safety. We cannot be responsible for children who are not placed with a teacher, so do not drop off your child and hope they make it safely to class.

In the afternoon, you must park your car and walk in the building and pick your child up from their classroom. If you send someone to pick up your child, please make sure that person is on the authorization form you gave us. Any pickup person, other than yourself, will be asked

to identify themselves if they are unfamiliar to us. We want to protect your child as if he or she were our own. For their safety, we ask that you update your list of authorized pick-up persons as needed. **We are not able to update this information over the phone – it must be done in person.**

Parking

Please park across the street from the school. We have limited parking spaces along the school building, and these are reserved for the teachers. Please do not park in the townhomes parking spaces. Also, please do not park in the carpool lane as this is also the fire lane.

Late Policy

There will be a \$20 late fee (per child) if you have not picked up by 2:30. You must pay this fee at the time of pick up or by the next day at the latest. Your child will face expulsion if you are continually late to pick up or if you do not pay the late fee in a timely manner. **Please call us if you are going to be late for pick up.** It is YOUR responsibility to pick your child up from school everyday.

Tardy Policy

If a child is tardy to school more than 3 times in a month, then on the fourth time they are late, the parent will be asked to take their child back home. A child is considered tardy after 9:00 a.m. We realize that sometimes circumstances arise that may cause a child to be late to school, but consistent tardiness affects the entire class and is not fair to the teacher or other students. The main goal of PreSchool Partners is to prepare both the students and their families for kindergarten and part of that preparation includes the importance of getting to school on time.

Tuition

Tuition is due on the first of each month and will be considered late if not paid by the fifth of the month. **There is a late fee of \$20.00 for late tuition payments.** These fees, along with the registration fee, are non-refundable. **Please make sure you are given a receipt for your tuition payments.** There is a \$25 fee for returned checks. If we receive 2 returned checks, check payments will no longer be accepted. If at any times you have concerns about your ability to pay, please contact the Director (951-5151) for a confidential discussion.

Screen Time Policy

Screen time is defined as the use of television, videos, video games, and computers. Screen time will be offered as a free choice and limited to no more than a total of 1 hour per week. Screen time is prohibited during meal or snack time. The use of computers/tablets will be limited to no more than 20-minute increments. All screen time will be educational and will be used to enrich the theme or letter of the week. On occasions, screen time will be used in the rainy-day activity room (Parent Classroom) for physical activities when the weather does not permit outdoor play.

Physical Activity Policy

Every child shall have an opportunity for the appropriate amount (1 hour) of active play each day. Active play shall take place outdoors when weather and environmental conditions permit. When the weather and or environment do not permit outdoor activity, active play shall take place indoors. Children who exhibit out of control behavior during active play may be given a time-out of no longer than 5 minutes. Children cannot be made to remain indoors or seated as punishment for earlier class behavior. Our security guard checks the playground every day to ensure it is safe for play.

Birthdays

Birthdays are a special time in a child's life, so if your child has a birthday during the year and you would like to celebrate it, please notify the teacher about the arrangements. You may bring cupcakes, cookies, ice cream or some other type of treat to school for the children to have at lunchtime. These treats need to be at school by 11:45. We do not allow balloons or gifts to be brought in.

School Closings

The scheduled dates for closing are listed in our school calendar on our website (preschool-partners.org) as well as in the back of this handbook. In the event of inclement weather, please check our Facebook Page and Fox 6 News for closing and/or early dismissal information.

Fire and Tornado Drills and Evacuation Plan

Fire and tornado drills will be conducted monthly. We encourage our families to practice these at home as well. In case of the need for evacuation, we will be across the street at Hope Community Church.

Child Abuse Policy

PreSchool Partners believes that all children, regardless of age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, or religious beliefs have the right to protection from abuse. The staff and volunteers of PreSchool Partners are required to report any suspicion of child abuse, including but not limited to, physical, sexual, emotional, verbal, or mental.

The staff and volunteers of PreSchool Partners are not trained to deal with situations of abuse or to decide if abuse has occurred. However, the staff and volunteers will report any suspicion or allegations of child abuse to the Executive Director and all suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

The staff and/or volunteers will always be aware of the safety, dignity and well being of the child and will not act in an accusatory manner toward any persons who may be involved. Should a child be in immediate danger, it will be reported to the local police department and the Department of Human Services.

Smoking Policy

PreSchool Partners is a smoke free facility. Smoking is always prohibited anywhere on the campus.

Parental Involvement

We love that we have such wonderful parents involved in our school. This program truly is a partnership between the parents and teachers. We have an open-door policy regarding parental participation if it is not disruptive to the classroom. Also, we welcome any suggestions or ideas you may have for the program. We have many opportunities for parents to be involved including room parents, family engagement committees, and garden volunteers.

Policy Regarding Contacting Parents

There will be times throughout the school year when the Executive Director or your child's teacher will need to be able to contact you by phone. This may include severe weather events, sickness, discipline problems, etc. It is imperative that your contact information is kept up to date. We have contact update sheets available at the Reception Desk for your convenience. **If your phone number changes, you must contact the school to give us the correct number to call in case of an emergency. If we attempt to contact you and are unable to do so, you will be given one warning to update your contact information. If we are unable to contact you again after the first warning, you and your child will no longer be eligible to participate in the program. This is for the safety of your child!**

Attendance Policy for Parent Program Participants

Every child enrolled in the program who receives reduced tuition must have a parent/primary caregiver representative for the Parent Program on Monday mornings from 8:30-10:30. This representative cannot be the parent of another child in the program except in the case of siblings.

In order to receive reduced tuition, a parent representative may miss no more than 3 Mondays per semester. Please call the school (205-951-5151) and let us know that you will not be attending that Monday and why (sick child, work conflict, etc). We take roll every Monday in addition to signing in. **The doors will be closed at 8:55, so you will be counted absent if you are not present by that time. You will also be counted absent if you are not present during roll call.** The Parent Program is from 8:30-10:30 and reduced tuition is based on your participation in the program, so you need to be present the entire time. If you miss 4 Mondays, your child will have to sit out of school for a week. If you miss another Monday after that, you will be dismissed from the program due to lack of commitment.

Please note that a parent may come on Monday without their child, and this will not count as an absence. For example, if your child is sick, the parent may still come to the Monday classes and there will be no absence counted. If the parent cannot attend, you may get a representative to attend in your place. **However, the representative may not be another parent already enrolled in the program.**

For parents who give birth during the semester, we suggest finding a representative to attend in your place if possible. If you don't have a substitute, you will be allowed to miss 3 Mondays in addition to the 3 Mondays you are already allowed, for a total of 6 Mondays. However, if you use all 6 Mondays for maternity leave, you will not be allowed to miss any more Mondays during that semester.

For parents of children enrolled in the three-year-old program, you may opt out of the Parent Program when you child enrolls in the four-year-old program if you finish the entire school year in good standing. Good standing is determined on the following weighted scale:

| | |
|----------------------------|-------|
| Parent's Monday Attendance | (50%) |
| Child's Weekly Attendance | (20%) |
| Communication/Cooperation | (10%) |
| Tardiness | (10%) |
| Tuition Payments | (10%) |

Parents who take the 6 Monday maternity leave will not be eligible to opt out of the Parent Program since they would have missed over half a semester.

Tip: Our advice is to use your 3 absences for serious emergencies such as sickness, accidents, funerals, etc. We will strictly enforce the attendance policy. Your child will be disappointed that he or she must miss a week of valuable learning and fun at school due to your absences. We believe that the information provided on Mondays and the relationships you establish with the other parents will be valuable to your family's future. We want you to attend regularly because you are an asset to our group, and we learn so much from each other.

Monday Schedule for Parent Program

8:30 - 8:45: Parent Chat
8:45 - 9:00: Announcements
9:00 - 10:00: Speaker
10:00 - 10:30: Families Reading Together

Speakers: We will have a variety of speakers visiting us and sharing their knowledge. Topics will include child development, discipline, budget planning, using television as an educational tool, responsible parenting, etc. **Please do not talk or leave the room when the speakers are giving their presentations as this disturbs the speaker and the other parents. Please turn off all cell phones during the presentations.**

Families Reading Together: Each week you will be given a book to help establish a home library for your child. This book is yours to keep. The Program Director will read it aloud and give you suggestions on how to read effectively to your child as well as offering tips to enhance your child's reading readiness skills. You will also be given a homework assignment each week to do with your child that goes along with the book. You will need to turn in the homework every Friday. By the end of the school year, you will have a great library for your child!

School Calendar 2021-22

| | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Friday, August 20, 2021: | Meet the Teacher |
| Monday, August 23, 2021: | First Day of School |
| Monday, September 6, 2021: | No School - Labor Day |
| Friday, September 24, 2021: | Donuts with Dad |
| Monday, October 11, 2021: | No School - Columbus Day |
| Thursday, November 11, 2021: | No School - Veteran's Day |
| Mon.-Fri., November 22-26, 2021: | No School - Thanksgiving Holidays |
| Friday, December 10, 2021: | McWane Center Field Trip* |
| Monday, December 20 - Jan. 4, 2022: | No School - Winter Break |
| Wednesday, January 5, 2022: | First Day of Second Semester |
| Monday, January 17, 2022: | No School - Martin Luther King Day |
| Friday, February 4, 2022: | Bagels & Best Buddies |
| Friday, February 18, 2022: | No School |
| Monday, February 21, 2022: | No School - President's Day |
| Mon.-Fri., Mar. 28- Apr. 1, 2022: | No School - Spring Break |
| Friday, April 15, 2022: | No School |
| Thursday, May 5, 2022: | Muffins with Mom |
| Friday, May 6, 2022: | Zoo Field Trip* |
| Friday, May 13, 2022: | Graduation - 4-Year-Old Classes |

*Early dismissal dates - we will not return to school after the field trip.

PreSchool Partners
Curriculum Units/Letter of the Week
2021-2022

August

23: Welcome! All About Me

30: Apples/ A, R, T, N

September

6: Feelings/ B,S, L

13: Colors/ C, P, M, F

20: Dinosaurs/ D,V, G, H

27: Community Helpers/ E, K, W, X

Hickory, Dickory, Dock (red) (triangle) (0,1,2)

October

4: Farm/ F,J, Z, Q

11: Shapes/ G, Y, U

18: Fall/ H, A, R, O

25: Pumpkins/ I, N, T, S

Itsy, Bitsy Spider (orange) (circle) (3,4,5)

November

1: Weather/ J, L, C, D

8: Five Senses/ K, P, M

15: Thanksgiving/ L, B, F, V

22: No School

29: Kids in the Kitchen/ M, G, H, K

Jack Be Nimble (yellow) (rectangle) (6,7,8)

December

6: Christmas/ N, W, X, Z

13: Christmas

Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star (green) (star) (9,10)

January

5: Winter/Review

10: Opposites/ O, J, Q, Y

17: Pets/ P, I, A

24: Fairy Tales/ Q, E, O, U

31 : Rhyming/ R, T, N, L

Humpty Dumpty (blue) (square) (0,1,2)

February

7: Space/ S, C, D, P

14: Transportation/ T, M, B

21: Creepy Crawlers/ U, F, G

28: Weird Science/ V, H, K, X

Jack and Jill (pink) (heart) (3,4,5)

March

7: Wild West/ W, Z, J, Y

14: Pirates/ X, Q, I, A

21: Spring & Pond/ Y, E, O, U

28: Spring Break

Little Bo Peep (brown) (diamond) (6,7,8)

April

4: Zoo/ Z-Review

11: Favorite Books/ Review

18: Camping/ Review

25: Ocean Life/ Review

Little Miss Muffet (purple)(oval) (9, 10)

May

2: Fun & Games/ Review

9: Summer/ Review

(black & white)