

ADVENT LUTHERAN PRESCHOOL



PARENT HANDBOOK

2017-18

2156 Loch Rane Blvd

Orange Park, FL 32073

(904)272-6370

adventpreschool@bellsouth.net

Dear Family,

Welcome to Advent Lutheran Preschool! We are honored to have the privilege of teaching your child and are looking forward to a great year filled with fun, laughter, love and learning. It is our philosophy that early childhood should be a time of exploring and discovery in a fun and safe environment. Preschool children are curious and eager to learn. The staff strives to nurture and encourage these qualities in all who attend. Advent Lutheran Preschool's curriculum includes early literacy, beginning math, sharing and conversation, stories, songs and movement to music, creative art activities, physical education, and cooking, science, social studies and bible story time. The purpose of our preschool is to provide an environment where your child can grow socially, emotionally, physically, mentally and spiritually. Our weekly themes and developmentally appropriate activities will help to achieve this and, we hope, will assist you as you teach your child at home. You are your child's first and most important teacher. Therefore, at Advent Lutheran Preschool, we would like to work in partnership with you to provide the best possible start for your child. Our primary objective is to ensure a happy, healthy and secure environment for your child under the guidance of loving and committed teachers in a Christian atmosphere. Our classrooms have low student to teacher ratios to provide many opportunities for one on one time and individual instruction. Welcome!

This Orientation Booklet provides information about our program. We hope it answers any questions or concerns you may have.

Kristina Ranieri

Preschool Director

(904)272-6370

adventpreschool@bellsouth.net

OUR STAFF

Mother's Morning Out/Drop-in Care: Laura Howard

Two Year Olds: Ayla Roberts

Three Year Olds: Mildred Davison

VPK: Brenda Rau, Connie Ratica and Stephanie Holley

Cooking assistant, Library, Science: Amy Ambrosio

Cooking, Art Appreciation: Irene Winters

Music: Kristin Sakamoto

Physical Education: Coach Sally Ellis

Pastor: Jerry Nordsiek

Director: Kristina Ranieri

PREPARING FOR SCHOOL

STANDARDS

Advent Lutheran Preschool is licensed by Florida's Department of Children and Families. We comply with all standards set forth by the State of Florida. We are inspected several times a year by the Department of Children and Families, Episcopal Children's Services and the Clay County Fire Department.

ENROLLMENT INFORMATION

Prior to the first day of school the following forms must be on file:

Enrollment form

Certificate of Immunization

Physical

Medical Release

Discipline Policy (signed)

Attendance Policy (signed)—VPK ONLY

CLASS LISTS

You will receive a class list within the first weeks of school. Please check your information carefully and let us know of any changes or corrections that should be made. This list can be helpful for arranging play dates or preparing party invitations.

We ask that you do not pass out party invitations at school unless you are inviting all of the children in the class. This avoids hurt feelings. We appreciate your cooperation.

CLOTHING

Please send your child dressed in clothes that are comfortable, allow easy access when using the restroom and are appropriate for the weather. Be sure your child brings a jacket to school in the winter months. We play outside every day unless it is actively raining. Flip-flops, dress shoes, crocs and loose sandals do not work well on the playground or for active play. Rubber soled shoes are the safest choice. We will let you know in advance when we have a special event or picture day so you can dress your child accordingly. Although we wear smocks and are careful, sometimes clothing gets soiled with paint, glue, juice or other accidental spills. Parents need to provide a seasonably appropriate change of clothes, including underwear and socks,

for their child to keep at school in case of accidents. Clothing should be in a zip lock bag labeled with your child's name. Please check throughout the year to be sure of sizes and season of clothing are still appropriate. Label all extra clothing, including jackets and hats, lunch boxes, water bottles and backpacks with your child's name. We expect children in the 3, 4 and VPK classes to be potty trained, having minimal accidents. If your child is wearing diapers or pull-ups, please send extras along with wipes. Staff will actively work with you and your child on potty training.

ILLNESS

If your child is sick, please call and let us know if he/she is not coming to school. We worry about the children and wonder where they are if they do not arrive to school. When your child has a fever of 100F or higher, is vomiting, has diarrhea, pink eye, green runny nose, has an unexplained rash, or has other symptoms of something that may be contagious, please keep him/her home for the day! If your child becomes sick at school, you will be called to come and pick up your child. In the event we cannot reach a parent, one of your emergency contacts will be called. Children may return to Preschool **24 hours** after all symptoms are gone. In the event a child is diagnosed with a contagious disease (chicken pox, pink eye, head lice, etc.) please contact the Director as soon as possible so the appropriate actions can be taken.

Preschool staff will only give medication that has been prescribed by a Physician. It must be in the original container, marked with the child's name. A medication form must be signed and completed and kept in your child's file in the Preschool Office. **PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE MEDICATION IN YOUR CHILDS BACKPACK!** Any medication left in backpacks will be taken to the preschool office and must be picked up by an adult at the end of the day.

MINOR ACCIDENTS

A First Aid kit is available, and will be used for minor accidents such as skinned knees, bumped heads, scratches and bug bites. Accident reports will be filled out by the teacher at the time of the accident and must be signed by the parent when the child is picked up.

EMERGENCIES

In case of an emergency, parents will be contacted immediately, and 911 will be called to transport your child to the nearest emergency facility. Please be sure emergency information is current in the Preschool Office.

SCHOOL HOURS

School hours are Monday-Friday from 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Morning extended care Monday-Friday 8:30-9:00 a.m.

After care Monday-Thursday 12:00 p.m.-1:30 p.m.

Advent Lutheran Preschool follows the Clay County Public School Calendar.

DROP OFF AND PICK UP

Classes begin at 9:00 am. Please do not bring your child into the classroom before 9:00 am. Our teachers need time to prepare for the activities of the day and want to be ready to greet you and your child. Please try to have your child to school on time. Late arrival can be disruptive to the entire class. All children need to be walked to their classroom. During drop off please keep conversations with the teacher short as they need to be able to focus their attention on the children.

AFTERNOONS -

Pick up is promptly at 12:00 p.m. All children are to be picked up from their classrooms. Children will be released only to those who are listed in the child's file. Changes in your child's pick up information can be updated by stopping by the Director's office. Parents must notify the teacher or Director in advance (in person or in writing) if someone else will be picking up their child. Picture ID will be required upon pick up.

LATE PICK UP

We understand that sometimes circumstances arise that prevent families from picking up children on time. Please call the school at (904)272-6370 if such a situation should cause the late pick up of your child. Late pick up causes undo stress and inconvenience on both your child and the preschool staff. Parents who pick up their child after 12:10 p.m. will be charged \$2.50 per five minutes.

CALENDAR/CLOSINGS/DELAYS

Advent Lutheran Preschool follows Clay County School calendar. If public schools are closed, we are closed. In the event of foul weather (tornado, hurricane etc.), Advent Preschool will follow the Clay County School System policy regarding school closings. If Clay County Schools remain closed, we will as well. If you have any questions as to whether school is in session, please call the office at (904)272-6370 or email adventpreschool@bellsouth.net. In the event that weather conditions become hazardous while your child is at school, we encourage you to pick up your child early.

DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

SEPARATION ANXIETY

For some, this will be the first time your child has separated from you for any length of time. This may be a stressful time for you and your child. Even some returning students may have a little anxiety and some separation issues for a short time. Try to establish a routine of saying goodbye with your child. Making it fairly quickly and not drawing it out will make it easier both for you and your child. If you are having a problem, please alert a teacher to help. Usually, if there are tears when you leave, they clear up quickly right after you leave. Please feel free to call us if you wonder how your child is adjusting. We hope to make transitions and separation as easy as possible for both of you.

COMMUNICATION

Communication is important to us. We write the day's activities on a white board outside the Director's office. You may wish to read this to your child before the start of class, so that your child knows what to expect. Newsletters will be distributed to each class via email and backpacks to inform parents of classroom themes and activities, as well as upcoming events. From time to time during the course of the year, there will be sign-up sheets posted in the hall outside the classrooms for parties and conferences.

TOYS

Your child's teacher will notify you about times to bring toys for sharing. Comfort toys such as a blanket or stuffed animal are permitted within reason and based on teacher discretion. Please leave all other toys at home, as they might get broken or lost at school.

SNACKS/BIRTHDAYS

Parents are responsible for packing a mid-morning snack each day for their child. Please limit snack to SMALL amounts avoiding high sugar foods. Snacks that are salty, crunchy, veggies and fruit (please cut grapes in half) are preferred. It's beneficial to let your child help to pick the snack, while encouraging healthy food choices. From time to time some classes may have a child with a severe food allergy. We may have to restrict certain foods from your child's classroom. You will be notified in writing at the beginning of the school year if there are any food restrictions in your child's classroom.

Your child's birthday is a time to celebrate. If you would like to bring a treat on your child's birthday please advise the teacher ahead of time and be sure it is something that everyone in the class will be able to enjoy. (If your child's birthday does not fall during the school year, you are welcome to celebrate at another time. Please try to celebrate at another time other than the last few weeks of school.) Doughnut holes are a really great alternative to cupcakes and children love them!

Instead of buying wipes, tissues, paper towels, cups and napkins from our budget, we ask parents to donate these items for our snack and classroom use. Please watch your newsletters for your class item to donate. Thanks!

STAY AND PLAY

Extended care is offered before and after regular classroom hours on an as needed basis or monthly. Stay and Play is an excellent opportunity for your child to get used to staying a little longer at school and learning to negotiate his/her lunch with help (please provide a packed lunch from home with a cold pack as we are unable to refrigerate lunches). The children really enjoy playing a little longer with their friends. It also gives parents the opportunity to run errands, shop, eat lunch with a friend or go to an appointment.

STAY AND PLAY DAYS

Extended morning care will be offered each day from 8:30-9:00 at a cost of \$5 each day. Extended afternoon care will be offered Monday through Thursday from 12:00-1:30 at a cost of \$10 each day. Children must be signed up in advance and payment is due each stay and play day. Extended care is offered at a monthly rate of \$55 for mornings and \$85 for afternoons. Payment is due by the 15th of the month along with tuition payment.

THEMES

Our program puts a strong emphasis on each child's literacy development. A sampling of themes listed below are enhanced with quality children's literature.

August GOING TO SCHOOL, ALL ABOUT ME
September SENSES, FRIENDS AND FAMILY, PETS
October PERSONAL AND FIRE SAFETY, PUMPKINS
November FARMS, THANKSGIVING
December FORESTS, GINGERBREAD CHRISTMAS
January DINOSAURS, WINTER, POLAR ANIMALS
February SHADOWS, VALENTINES,
March DR. SEUSS, GARDENS, SPRING
April EASTER RAIN/WORMS
May FLOWERS, BUGS, POND/OCEAN

VPK ATTENDANCE POLICY

Advent Lutheran Preschool will be operating a Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten for 3 hours a day, 5 days a week for 180 days. All enrolled families will receive a calendar showing the scheduled days off during the school year.

Attendance during the scheduled days is of utmost importance to remain in the VPK program. Not only is school funding linked to attendance, but also the child's success upon entrance into Kindergarten.

You will be required to sign and comply with the following policy on Attendance and Tardiness to remain in the VPK program.

Tardiness: Arrival for the VPK program is between 8:55 and 9:05 a.m. Arrivals after 9:05 are disruptive to the group and are difficult on the arriving child. We understand that it is occasionally unavoidable to be "running late", but please make every conceivable effort to have your child to school on time.

Absence: Daily attendance in the VPK program is necessary for optimal learning. However, you will be allowed absences not to exceed 20% of the days scheduled during the school year. That means that in our 180 school year your child can miss no more than 36 school days. The policy has been set by the State of Florida.

Please note: If your child will be absent for an extended period of time you must notify the school.

Verifying your child's attendance and absences:

The office staff will ask you to stop by the office at the end of each month. You will be given a form to review and confirm your child's recorded attendance for the month. Your signature on this form will not only verify attendance, but also will direct Episcopal Children's Services to direct payment for the month's VPK program for your child to Advent, and that you continue to choose Advent to provide your Child's VPK program for the upcoming month.

DISCIPLINE

Parents often wonder about our discipline procedures. We try to practice preventive discipline as much as possible, by carefully planning class time, keeping to a predictable schedule and redirecting inappropriate behavior. We believe very

strongly in specific, positive reinforcement—catching them being good! Our activities are developmentally appropriate and most everything in the classroom is designed for children to use. We do have a few rules which we develop with the children, such as walking instead of running, keeping hands to yourself, etc. We use warnings and choices, and as a last resort, we use “taking a break” (usually 1-2 minutes). We then talk with the child to make sure he/she understands what to do and why. For running and physical harm, we may need to raise our voices, especially if we are across the room. The classroom is often humming with activity, and we may need to quickly get a child’s attention if he/she is putting him/herself or another child in danger.

If a child's behavior becomes detrimental to the child or the classroom environment, a request will be made to discuss the situation with the child's parent. A plan will be developed to address the behavior. Progress will be monitored and reviewed by the staff and parents of the child. If, after all attempts at resolving the behavior have been tried and it is determined that the child's needs cannot be met by this program, alternative settings will be considered, including expulsion from this program.

SAFETY

Please be extra alert when entering or exiting the church parking lots. DRIVE SLOWLY. Always be mindful that a small child may not be visible between parked cars. When coming into or leaving the church building, please also be aware of your child’s whereabouts, keeping him/her by your side at all times.

Please DO NOT leave children in parked cars when dropping off or picking up your preschool child. Asking a friend to stay with your child (ren) in the car is advised, instead.

HALLWAY/COURTYARD EXPECTATIONS

Thank you for remembering the following when entering or exiting the church/school hallways and spaces:

ALWAYS walk with your child (ren) when coming or going. Please DO NOT allow your child (ren) to run ahead of you.

Please be aware that Advent Lutheran Preschool functions alongside other goings-on within the church (working church staff and meetings, church events and funerals, etc.) Thank you for remembering to be respectful and quiet in the church hallways and spaces.

Advent Lutheran Church members work hard to create and maintain a pleasing courtyard. Although keeping siblings occupied while waiting for the doors to open can be difficult, please ensure they do not pick or walk on the plants or throw mulch onto the sidewalk.

ADULT CONDUCT

We highly encourage interaction among our preschool families and feel blessed that many friendships develop over the course of the year. In your daily conversations with each other, please remember to be respectful and ever-mindful that little ears may be listening...and eyes watching. Our language and behavior should model the values of our school and the church as a whole. Thank you for your cooperation with this matter.

KEEPING US INFORMED

Please keep us informed of a change in your child's health, address, phone number or family situation. We also need to know about any diagnosed allergies your child may have to things such as food, medicine or animals. If your child has a diagnosed allergy, you must fill out an allergy form and provide the appropriate medicine to be kept in the office at school, together with instructions for dispensing any medicine for allergic reactions.

Please note: We only dispense medication during school hours in emergency situations in response to symptoms, i.e.: allergic reactions.

Children like to share enjoyable family events, such as a trip, wedding, or visit to grandma, etc. Let us know, so that we can help him/her share it at circle time. Also, stressful times such as a death or illness in the family or even a difficult morning can be distressing to your child. Please inform us so we can give a little extra tender loving care that day.

KINDERGARTEN READINESS

One of our goals is to have your child as ready as he/she can be to enter the more structured kindergarten classroom. We have guidelines from the state, and also have consulted with area kindergarten teachers to learn what skills/abilities they desire for children entering kindergarten.

HOME REINFORCEMENT

We only have your child for a short time, and we try to pack a lot of learning into that time frame. However, some extra reinforcement is often needed. We may send some take home projects along with your child. These are activities which can be done with your help and are theme-related (often literacy extensions). Please have fun working with your child on these projects. The United Way Success by Six calendar is an important resource which provides daily kindergarten readiness activities you can do with your child. It includes a kindergarten readiness checklist at the back. This calendar is an excellent resource to assist you in helping your child

prepare for kindergarten. Also, please do not hesitate to consult your child's teacher for additional kindergarten readiness ideas.

PARENT PARTICIPATION/CLEARANCES

Parent participation is welcomed and encouraged, especially after the first four weeks of school, when most children have adjusted to the new school year. Please feel free to discuss with your child's teacher when you might help in the classroom, read a book to the class or share a hobby/skill/talent. There are several times throughout the year when we ask for volunteers to assist with holiday activities.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

In October and May, we will conduct school-wide parent-teacher conferences to give you an idea of how your child is progressing. Please watch for online signup notices to schedule a conference. Please DO NOT bring children to conferences. Our teacher assistants will be available to care for children in a separate room during your parent/teacher conference, if needed. Also, there will be opportunities for you to touch base with your child's teacher throughout the year. Please feel free to contact us with questions or concerns along the way.

TUITION AND FEES

Registration Fee -A non-refundable registration fee is due at the time of registration.

Monthly tuition is due no later than the 15th of the month. Checks should be made out to Advent Lutheran Preschool. Payment can also be made on-line. Go to adventop.org, click on Donate today and enter pertinent information.

In order to provide adequate funds to pay our staff and purchase materials for your children to use at school, timely payments are required. Late fees in the amount of \$15.00 will be added to any tuition paid after the 15th. If a financial problem should occur, arrangements should be made with the Director for an alternate pay date. Monthly tuition is not prorated for vacations, holidays or early withdrawal after the 1st day of each month.

Return Check Fee

There will be a \$25.00 charge for all returned checks.

SCHOLASTIC READING CLUB ORDERS

Every few months we will offer Scholastic Reading Club Orders. If possible, please place orders online using our school access code: **GPKVR**. If online ordering is not preferred, please return book order form with a check made payable to Scholastic.

These are books you may order for your family, while providing free books for our school library.

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QUESTIONS/CONCERNS

Most of all, please talk to us with any questions or concerns. Even if it seems minor, if your child shares a concern with you, please let us know. We can't always see everything that goes on in the classroom every second. We want to be aware of any concerns you may have. You may contact Mrs. Kristina in the preschool office, by email: adventpreschool@bellsouth.net or by phone: (904) 272-6370.

Thank you for entrusting your child (ren) with us! We are looking forward to a great year!

Acknowledgment of Parent Handbook

I acknowledge that I have received my copy of Advent Lutheran Preschools Parent Handbook. I understand that the Parent Handbook does not cover every situation that may arise, but simply is a general guide to the school policies. I will keep my Parent Handbook for future reference and observe the policies and procedures.

Parent Signature _____ Date: _____

Student Name _____

SIGNATURE OF THIS PAPER INDICATES THAT YOU HAVE ACKNOWLEDGED AND AGREED TO THE PARENT HANDBOOK POLICIES