

ADVENT LUTHERAN PRESCHOOL



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PARENT HANDBOOK 2024-2025

2156 Loch Rane Blvd Orange Park, FL 32073

(904)644-7416 preschool@adventop.org

Florida **VPK**

[#C04C1005](#)

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, learning and kindness. 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 safely, 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 to all of our children in a Christ like manner, understanding that all children are fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14).

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

Martha Morrow
Preschool Director
(904) 644-7416
preschool@adventop.org

OUR STAFF

List will be provided to all who are registered each year.

STANDARDS

Advent Lutheran Preschool is licensed and inspected throughout the year by Florida's Department of Children and Families (DCF) and Episcopal Children's Service (ECS).

We comply with all standards set forth by the State of Florida. We are VPK Certified.

SCHOOL HOURS

Advent Lutheran Preschool follows the Clay County Public School Calendar. (primarily)
School hours are Monday-Friday from 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

VPK 8:50 am - 12:00 pm

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

*After care Monday-Thursday 12:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m.

SCHOOL INFORMATION

ENROLLMENT INFORMATION

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

Advent Preschool Registration Form with nonrefundable registration fee

DCF Enrollment Form

HRS Certificate of Immunization from Physician

HRS Physical (Well Check) from Physician

Medical (Medicine) Release

Media, Photo and Technology release (signed)

Discipline Policy (signed)

Confirmation/ Acceptance of Handbook contents. (Last page signed)

Signed Flu Informational Brochure

Distracted Driver (signed)

Attendance Policy (signed)—VPK ONLY

Certificate of Eligibility for VPK from Episcopal Children's Services- VPK ONLY

TUITION AND FEES

Registration Fee -A non-refundable registration fee is due at the time of registration. A **Supply Fee** will be charged in August THIS DOES NOT APPLY TO VPK STUDENTS

Monthly tuition is due on the first day of the month and no later than the 5th of the month. Checks should be made out to Advent Lutheran Preschool. Payment can also be made on-line with service fee. Please make sure to label what the fee is for on the description line.

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 \$25.00 will be added to any tuition paid after the 5th. 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.** There will be an extended care registration/supply fee of \$50.00 for VPK students only.

RETURN CHECK FEE

There will be a \$35.00 charge for all returned checks.

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 playdates, preparing party invitations and class communication.

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.

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.

ILLNESS AND MEDICATION

If your child is sick or will not be in school, please call or message us on *Brightwheel* and let us know if he/she is not coming to school within the first hour of school starting. We worry about the children and wonder where they are if they do not arrive at school and for safety reasons must keep an accurate record of attendance. If we do not hear from you within 1 hour of school start time, you will be called. If we cannot reach you, your emergency contacts will be called. **This is a requirement by DCF.**

When your child has a fever of 100 F 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, they must stay home for the day! **They must be fever free for 1 day (24 complete hours) before returning to school.** 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.

In the event a child is diagnosed with a contagious disease (chicken pox, croup, flu, pink eye, head lice, etc.) please contact the Director as soon as possible so the appropriate actions can be taken. A doctor's note of clearance is required to allow the child to re-enter the program.

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 and a medication form must be signed and completed and kept in your child's file in the Preschool Office. **Action plans** for Epi-pens- Inhalers should be provided by the parent with **detailed Doctors orders**. **PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE MEDICATION IN YOUR CHILD'S 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. "Backpack" Hand Sanitizer is not permitted.

KEEPING US INFORMED

Regarding Medication, Illness or Family Situations

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 signed by a doctor and provide the appropriate medicine to be kept in the office at school, together with instructions for dispensing any medicine for 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. Please inform us so we can give a little extra tender loving care on a day that you may have had a stressful time- such as a death or illness in the family or even a difficult morning.

CLOTHING

Please send your child dressed in clothes that are comfortable, allow easy access when using the restroom (no belts) and are appropriate for the weather. 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 so are not allowed. Closed toe/rubber soled shoes are the safest choice.**

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 in a labeled Ziploc bag, including underwear and socks, for their child to keep at school in case of accidents. If your child utilizes these clothes, please return the borrowed items or replace your items with another set of clean clothes. Please check throughout the year to be sure of sizes and that the season of clothing is still appropriate. Be sure your child brings a jacket to school in the winter months. -labeled with their name! Label all extra clothing, including jackets and hats, lunch boxes, water bottles and backpacks with your child's name.

We will let you know, in advance, when we have a special event or picture day so you can dress your child accordingly.

Children in the 3, 4 and VPK classes must be potty trained & have minimal accidents. In the 2's classes, if your child is wearing diapers or pull-ups, please send extra diapers/pull-ups along with wipes and a small changing pad with your

child's name written on it in large letters. Staff will actively work with you and your child on potty training.

MORNING DROP OFF

All children need to be walked to their hall/sidewalk doorway entrance. During drop off, please keep conversations with the teacher short as they need to be able to focus their attention on the children arriving.

Classes begin at 9:00 am. (8:50am for VPK Students) Our teachers need time to prepare for the activities of the day and want to be ready to greet you and your child so please do not bring your child early. YOU MUST inform us within the first hour of the day if your child will not be attending. If we do not hear from you, **we are required by DCF to call everyone on your list to inquire about your child's absence.**

All students arriving before 9:00 am will be sent to early care and billed the \$7 fee. Please try to have your child at school on time. Late arrivals can be disruptive to the entire class.

VPK circle time (morning meeting) first thing in the morning sets the pace and lessons for the day. Counting, patterning, phonics and themes are discussed. If your child arrives late, they miss important learning time AND disrupt the kids who are already there and engaged in learning. We open the doors for VPK at 8:50. The students walk to their rooms at 8:55 and put their personal belongings away and begin circle time at 9:00am. If you arrive at 9:00 am, your child must still prepare before joining the group and then they miss important learning time activities as well as interrupt the kids already learning. **PLEASE BE ON TIME!**

AFTERNOONS

Pick up is promptly at 12:00 p.m. All children are to be picked up from the car line. With the exception of our early 2's-please walk up to get them from their classroom. 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. Please display your pick up sign given to you on the first day of school in your front window: place it on the dashboard or hang it with a child clothes hanger from the rear view window.

Parents must notify the teacher or Director in advance (in person or in writing or via Brightwheel App) 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. Late pick up causes undue stress and inconvenience on both your child and the preschool staff. After the car line closes, any child not picked up will be taken to the office and you must park and come to the Preschool Office door to pick them up. After **12:10**, your child will be taken to Stay And Play and charged accordingly. Your family account will be charged **on a 5 min increment for late pickups from Stay and Play and on Friday's. The cost will be \$5.00 for every 5 minutes. Please call/text on Brightwheel- if you will be later than our hours as we must pay our staff to stay later.**

RAINY DAY DROP OFF/PICK UP

If the weather is extremely bad (thunder and lightning, tornado warning, very heavy rain) we will use the covered drive-up for you to drop off/pick-up your child. If it is just light rain, please plan on walking in for the start of the day.

***STAY AND PLAY DAYS /MORNING CARE**

Extended care is offered before and after regular classroom hours on an as needed basis or as a contracted monthly fee. Contracted pay is due Dec 1 and will not be refunded unless the Director approved the reason. Stay and Play is an excellent opportunity for your child to get used to staying a little longer at school and increase social interaction. You will need to provide lunch and drink from home with a cold pack, as we are unable to refrigerate lunches. We cannot warm food in the microwave either.

Extended morning care will be offered each day from 8:30-9:00 at a cost of \$5 per day. Extended afternoon care will be offered Monday through Thursday from 12:00-2:00 at a cost of \$17 per day. (See attached tuition sheet for more details)

Children must be signed up in advance verbally through staff or via Brightwheel and payment is due on the Stay and Play day. A monthly contracted Stay and Play and Morning Care fee is available. This is a discounted rate so no refunds/credits or "rollover to the next month" will be given if our child is out or misses days. Payment is due by the 5th of the month. A late fee of \$5.00 for every 5 min will be charged to account. You will be notified by the Brightwheel app .

CALENDAR/CLOSINGS/DELAYS

Advent Lutheran Preschool follows the Clay County School calendar. For the most part 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 unless the closure is due to CC school building damage. We may choose to reopen at an earlier date.

If you have any questions as to whether school is in session, please call the office at (904) 644-7416, tune into your local news, check *Brightwheel* notifications, or email us at preschool@adventop.org In the event that weather conditions become hazardous while your child is at school, we encourage you to pick up your child early. If we are closed due to a State of Emergency and severe weather beyond our control, tuition will not be credited for another month. If closure is due to our school, credit may be given depending on the circumstance.

COMMUNICATION

Communication is important to us. You may wish to read our daily board located outside the school drop off door to your child before the start of class, so that your child knows what to expect. Monthly newsletters and calendars will be distributed to each class via backpacks and Brightwheel 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 via Sign up Genius online. You will also be included in the school wide "*Brightwheel*" communication system and if you choose, or Facebook.

THEMES

Our program puts a strong emphasis on each child's literacy development. We use a thematic approach to learning covering a variety of topics including Animals, Community Helpers (firetrucks and police), dental health, Fall, Winter and Spring times, and of course holiday enrichment to enhance our quality curriculum.

Throughout the year, our preschool hosts (with your help) fun events. We

need parents to actively volunteer to ensure a smooth, safe and fun time for our students. In the fall we have Community Helpers Days, Halloween and Costume Parade and the Thanksgiving Friend Program. In the winter we have a school wide Vision Screening, Christmas Party/Performance, a quilting demonstration and a dental hygienist visit and Valentine fun. In the spring we have a Dr. Seuss birthday celebration, St. Patrick's Day fun, Easter Celebrations, and the end of the year parties.

SEPARATION ANXIETY

For some, this will be the first time your child has separated from you for any length of time. Please establish a routine of saying goodbye to your child; leaving fairly quickly and not lingering. This 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, they clear up quickly 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.

TOYS

Your child's teacher will notify you about the 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 and we cannot be held responsible for these special toys.

SNACKS/BIRTHDAYS

Parents are responsible for packing a mid-morning snack each day for their child. Please limit snacks to SMALL amounts avoiding high sugar foods. Snacks that are salty, crunchy, veggies and fruit (please - larger fruits, like grapes must be cut in bite size pieces) are preferred. Please do not send in hot dog pieces unless they are cut in fourths and no popcorn for children under 4 as stated by the American Academy of Pediatrics. **Two** drinks- a juice box or thermos **and** a spill proof water bottle **labeled with your child's first and last name** is also required for all day sipping & playground.

It's beneficial to let your child help to pick out 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.

BIRTHDAYS

Your child's birthday is a time to celebrate. If you would like to bring a **store bought 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. We ask that summer birthdays be celebrated at a time other than the last few weeks of school.

SUPPLIES

At the beginning of each year, you will be given a supply list for your child for his or her class.

In addition, we will be asking for center donations of wipes, tissues, paper towels, germ gel, cups and napkins and we ask parents to donate these items for our preschool use. Please watch your newsletters for your class item to donate. Thank you for your continued support!

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, this is tax deductible & shipping is free to the school.

VPK ATTENDANCE POLICY

Advent Lutheran Preschool offers a Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program for a little over 3 hours a day, 5 days a week for 171 days (540 hours). 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. VPK students' parents will be required to sign and comply with the following policy on Attendance and Tardiness to remain in the VPK program. 80% attendance is required. That means that in the 171 day school year, your child can miss no more than 31 school days.

The policy has been set by the State of Florida. We will no longer receive VPK Funding from the State for any absences over the allowed 31 days and you will need to pay out of pocket for the current year's tuition or be withdrawn from the program.

VERIFYING YOU VPK ATTENDANCE

On the last day of each month, your child's teacher will ask you to review your child's monthly attendance form 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 send the direct payment to our preschool for the month's VPK program for your child. The parent who signed the original form must be the one signing the monthly attendance form. Other family members are not legally allowed to sign this form.

TARDINESS:

Arrival for the VPK (4 & 5 year old) program is 8:50 a.m. Arrivals after 8:50 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 effort to have your child to school on time. School for our younger classes begins at 9:00am.

ABSENCE:

If your child will be absent for an extended period of time you must notify the school through the Brightwheel app or a note. If your child is sick please refer to the sick policy. Tuition is not adjusted when children miss school.

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. VPK is designed to follow the

Standards for Kindergarten Readiness so it is imperative that you participate in the program with as few absences as possible. State Early Learning Testing is required by the ECS- VPK program. You will receive a report, with scores and progression of learning three times a year showing the progression to kindergarten. We will ask you to sign a copy of the report upon receipt of the scores.

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. Many parents access the ECS4Kids.org website to find parent information on helping your child make learning gains.

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

DISCIPLINE

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. There are a few rules we teach 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 minute for each year of their age). We talk with the child to make sure he/she understands what to do and why. We may need to raise our voices, because our classrooms are often humming with activity, 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 conference will be held 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.

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 outside of 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. You will need to check in the office and get a visitor tag to enter the classrooms.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Throughout the year Teachers may conduct school-wide parent-teacher conferences to give you an idea of how your child is progressing. Please watch for online signup notices and sign up notices from your child's teacher. Please **DO NOT** bring children to conferences. A teacher will be available to care for children in a separate room during your parent/teacher conference, if needed. Conferences in January will be **mandatory** for parents of VPK students.

There will be opportunities for you to talk with your child's teacher throughout the year. Please feel free to contact us with questions or concerns along the way.

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 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 in the car is advised. PLEASE don't park in the handicapped parking spots even for a few minutes unless you have a handicapped place card. True handicapped people and some church members need these spots often throughout the day.

HALLWAY/COURTYARD EXPECTATIONS

Please be aware that Advent Lutheran Preschool functions alongside other events 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. We are a Christian School and we follow the biblical principles according to gossip or inappropriate talk amongst each other regarding school issues in and out of school. Kindness is key. If inappropriate conversations occur and are brought to the attention of Administration you may be called in for a conference.

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 want to be aware of any concerns you may have.

You may contact the Director,

Mrs. Martha Morrow in the preschool office, by email: preschool@adventop.org or by phone: (904) 644-7416.

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

Sickness Policy Agreement :

I attest that:

Anyone bringing my child/children to Advent Lutheran Preschool is/are not experiencing any symptoms of illness such as cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, diarrhea , vomiting or sore throat.

I hereby release and agree to hold Advent Lutheran Preschool harmless from, and waive on behalf of myself, my child/children, my heirs, and any personal representatives any and all causes of action, claims, demands, damages, costs, expenses and compensation for damage or loss to myself that may be caused by any act, or failure to act of Advent Lutheran Preschool, or that may otherwise arise in any way in connection with any interaction with Advent Lutheran Preschool.

I understand that this release discharges Advent Lutheran Preschool from any liability or claim that I, my child/children, my heirs, or any personal representatives may have against Advent Lutheran Preschool with respect to any bodily injury, illness, death, medical treatment, or property damage that may arise from, or in connection to, any services received from Advent Lutheran Preschool.

This liability waiver and release extends to Advent Lutheran Preschool together with all officers, directors, employees, volunteers, and others associated with the day-to-day ministry of Advent Lutheran Preschool

PLEASE TURN THIS PAGE IN AFTER READING

Send in as documentation that you have received and understand the information in the Waiver/Illness Policy

My signature acknowledges understanding of an agreement to follow the Illness guidelines from Advent Lutheran Church Preschool

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

Children(s)' Name(s): _____

Acknowledgment of Parent Handbook

I acknowledge that I have received my copy of Advent Lutheran Preschool's Parent Handbook. I understand that the Parent Handbook does not cover every situation that may arise, but is a guide to the school policies. I will keep my Parent Handbook for future reference and I agree to observe the policies and procedures as written in the handbook.

Parent Signature _____ Date: _____

Student Name _____

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