



# Parent Handbook

## Excellence in Education and Ministry

Revised June 2021

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*A WELCOME MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR*

I am so excited to have this opportunity to partner with you as our school provides the best care for your child. My desire is that we will be an extension of your family and that you feel a part of our church family as a participant in our center. Sending our children to preschool is one of the biggest and most difficult decisions we make as a parent or guardian. With that in mind, we want to make sure that you feel confident about choosing CITG as your child's preschool. At CITG, we love each child for who they are and we respect them as unique individuals. You have made a great choice by enrolling your child where he/she will feel loved and respected. Please do not hesitate to communicate your needs and suggestions to us. This will enable us to provide the best care for your child. We value and appreciate your opinions. Please take time to read the following information in this handbook. The purpose of which is to keep you well informed of our policies and procedures. Thank you for entrusting your child to us. We count it a privilege to serve you.

Blessings,

*Ms. Vania Mendez*  
Preschool Director

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## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Our Mission at Church in the Gardens is to partner with parents to provide a safe, loving and nurturing environment where children find joy in learning and grow in God's Word.

## **PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS**

Early Childhood Education lays the foundation for future learning experiences and molds a child's attitude toward learning. "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). Church in the Gardens Preschool is a ministry of Church in the Gardens and our mission is to team up with parents to provide a safe, loving and nurturing environment where children can find joy in learning and grow in God's word. We believe that development is a process which is fostered when each child experiences success and challenges daily. We provide quality care that enhances the social, emotional, physical, mental and spiritual development of each child through developmentally appropriate activities.

We believe parents and teachers must form a partnership to guide children through the developmental process with positive reinforcement and redirection. Each child is "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Proverbs 139:14) and will be respected and valued as unique individuals.

The Word of God is at the center of all we do. We will learn daily about God's love for us and His love through us to our classmates, teachers, families, and people in our community and around the world.

## **STANDARDS**

Church in the Gardens Preschool was established in 1967, and is licensed by the Florida Department of Health, Children and Families, and complies with all of the standards put forth by the Agency. The school's operation is governed by a paid Administrator and a volunteer School Advisory Board. This Board meets on a regular basis in order to develop and carry out policies and curriculum.

## **NON DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

Church in the Gardens Preschool makes openings known to all. Children are admitted regardless of race, creed, color, sex, national origin, or religion. Children with special needs are accepted at the facility providing we can meet the child's needs.

In accordance with the federal law and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. You may also write to the Oklahoma State Department of Education, Child Nutrition Programs Section, Room 310, 2500 N. Lincoln Blvd., Oklahoma City, OK, 73105-4599.

## HOURS OF OPERATION

Preschool Academic Program – Toddlers, 2 & 3 year old classes are Monday through Friday from 8:30am until 12:00pm. VPK classes are Monday through Friday from 9:00am until 12:00pm.  
 Extended Care Hours – 7:00am – 8:30am, 12:00pm – 6:00pm options.  
 Nap/Rest Time – Extended care children staying after 2:00 will rest daily  
 School Calendar – We follow the Palm Beach County School Calendar. This includes school closures due to Hurricane, inclement weather and any other emergencies..

## ARRIVAL, PICK-UP & SECURITY PROCEDURES

- ❖ All children must be escorted to their classroom by an adult. Please make sure the teacher is aware of the child's presence and that you have checked your child into the system before leaving. When picking up a child, please make sure you have checked them out. Be sure the teacher is aware that the child is leaving. Electronic check in/out will be in the school lobby.
- ❖ In the beginning of the year, adjustments for the children can be difficult. Please do not hesitate to leave a crying child with a teacher. You may call the office to check on your child at any time during the day.
- ❖ Part time students may not arrive 5 minutes before drop off and must be picked up by 12:00pm. No children, other than those in the care of the school during its operating hours (7:00am-6:00pm), may enter classrooms or play on the playground.
- ❖ Instructional time begins promptly and late arrivals interrupt teaching time. **If you are going to be late, please call the school office. Children are not permitted to go to school after 10:00am unless prearranged.** CITG is not licensed as a drop-off center; therefore, we cannot accept children into extended care if they did not attend the academic portion of the day.
- ❖ Children only attending academic programs must be picked up at 12:00pm. If they are not picked up by 12:00pm, they will automatically be taken to Extended Care and charged \$10 per hour until picked up. There are no exceptions.
- ❖ After pickup at 12:00, we have an available yard directly across from the school for students and parents to socialize and play. The yard at the Joshua house is surrounded by a live fence of bushes for your child's safety.
- ❖ At 6:00pm, if your child is not picked up, the school will attempt to call the parent. If the parent is not available, all the emergency numbers will be called and your child may be picked up by one of the emergency contacts. If a child is left after 6:00pm, a fee of \$1 per minute will be calculated and charged to the monthly tuition. There are no exceptions. If your child has not been picked up by 7:00pm and we cannot contact the parents or emergency contacts, PBSO may be called.
- ❖ Issues regarding legal restrictions, charges, or orders affecting a parent or visitor involvement at school will be reviewed by the School Director and handled on an individual basis in compliance with appropriate laws, decrees or written settlements. All court orders should be given to the office and kept in the student file for review if necessary. The safety and well-being of our students is our first consideration and all decisions regarding security measures will be based on this priority.
- ❖ Please drive slowly upon entering the parking lot! Remember there are children walking to school.
- ❖ There is a **NO CELL PHONE** policy when entering and leaving school premises. This includes when dropping off and picking up children from classrooms. Your child needs your full attention, as does our staff.

## ADMISSIONS

Children who are 12 months old through 5 years old are eligible to enroll in Church in the Gardens Preschool.

- Children are required to have begun potty training or to be potty trained to be admitted to the Younger Pre-K2.
- Children are required to be completely potty trained to be admitted to the Older Pre-K2, Pre-K3 and VPK.
- A child must be 4 years old by September 1<sup>st</sup> to be admitted to VPK.
- No child is automatically registered for the following school year. Registration is done on an annual basis. Registration will be available in February for the parents of current students. After the first week of enrollment, registration is open to the community.
- Classes are filled on a first come/first serve basis according to the date of enrollment.

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

In order to ensure that each child completes the age group requirements, regular attendance is imperative. We advise no more than 2 excused absences a month. If the child has been sick, a doctor's note may be required before they can return to school.

All students must be in their classroom on time. Tardiness interrupts the learning of your child and other children in the classroom. If you are going to be late, please contact the office. Students arriving late must be brought to the school office before signing your child in. Excessive tardiness or absence may result in dismissal.

## CHILD'S DISMISSAL BY THE SCHOOL

It is the policy of Church in the Gardens Preschool to provide the best possible care for all the children enrolled. Therefore, it may become necessary for the school to dismiss a child for one of the following reasons:

- Needs of individual child cannot be met by the school
- Parents are unable to fulfill their responsibilities, such as, but not limited to:
  - Following our Parent Code of Conduct
  - Failure to pay tuition/fees (must be paid each month by the 1st)
  - Failure to submit required child health and immunization forms
  - Failure to observe the guidelines of the school
- Behavior of a child that is very disrespectful, inappropriate or detrimental, either to themselves or to other children (such as having a problem with biting, toileting, and discipline). Please refer to our Guidance Policy and Character Development Plan as well as our Biting Policy.

## WITHDRAWAL

CITG Preschool requires a **two-week written notice** when withdrawing your child. If written notification is not provided, you agree to pay all fees for the program(s), in which your child was scheduled to attend. If you would like to enroll your child again, they will be placed back on the waiting list and a registration and annual enrollment fee will be applied.

**CITG Preschool reserves the right to withdraw a child for reasons of continued discipline confrontations, inability to adjust, lack of cooperation, jeopardizing the safety and well-being of other children and/or staff, or delinquency in payment of fees.**

## SCHOOL PROGRAMS

- Toddlers (12-23 months on or before September 1 and must be walking)
- Young Two Year Old (24-30 months on or before September 1)
- Older Two/Younger Three Year Old (30-36 months on or before September 1)
- Three Year Old (3 years old on or before September 1)
- Four Year Old (4 years old on or before September 1)

## CURRICULUMS

To provide the best learning experience for your child, we use a combination of The Wee Learn Curriculum and ABC Jesus Loves Me.

The Wee Learn Curriculum provides the framework on which teachers can build an early childhood program that allows children to grow and develop as Jesus did – “in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man” (Luke 2:52). The Wee Learn incorporates social and emotional development, early literacy, small and large group opportunities and at-home activities.

A child’s growth and development is viewed as a process, not an event. Development begins when the child is conceived and continues throughout life. Spiritual, physical, mental, emotional, and social developments are equally important.

### **Toddler Curriculum:**

The ABC Jesus Loves Me curriculum introduces the child to learning through play. Along with expanding the child's vocabulary with new words and sign-language, the child is introduced to Bible stories and songs. Academically, a 1-year-old is introduced to poems, colors, shapes, and animals. The child is also taught self-care and obedience. A "Book of the Week" introduces the child to some of the best toddler books in print according to ABCJLM users and families.

### **Pre-K 2 Curriculum**

The ABC Jesus Loves Me Curriculum focuses on themes with corresponding Bible stories. Bible stories are supported with memory verses, songs, and fingerplays, poems or nursery rhymes. Academically, a 2-year-old is introduced to colors, shapes, counting, and recognizing letters and numbers. The child is also taught self-care and manners along with personal information.

### **Pre-K 3 Curriculum**

The 3-Year-Curriculum consists of a chronological study of Bible stories starting in Genesis. Each Bible story is supported with a memory verse, song, and finger play or nursery rhyme. Academically, a 3-year-old learns colors, letter of the week consisting of the uppercase and lowercase letters, numbers, and basic math skills including shapes, sorting, spatial concepts, and patterns. Gross and fine motor skills activities are also included in this curriculum.

## VPK Curriculum

The Houghton Mifflin PRE-K is an Award Winning curriculum based on sound research and aligned with key critical Pre-K learning goals. HM's educational tools allow our teachers to spend less time planning and more time actively engaging with our students.

Houghton Mifflin PRE-K incorporates:

- An integrated curriculum
- Standards-based instruction
- Age appropriateness
- Cultural and linguistic diversity
- A balance of exploration and instruction
- Oral language development
- A focus on literacy
- Early mathematics skills
- Social and emotional development
- Family involvement

## DRESS CODE

Children are encouraged to wear play clothes and sneakers. Rubber soled shoes are safest on the playground for running and climbing. Daily activities include active and sometimes messy play, as well as outdoor play. The children should feel comfortable to enjoy themselves without worrying about their clothes. Please select clothing that children can easily fasten by themselves. The guideline for the safety and protection of the children is as follows:

- NO- Sandals or Heels
- NO- Hats
- NO- Jewelry
- Shorts should be worn under dresses and skirts
- All child's belongings should be labeled with their name

\*CITG Preschool is not responsible for lost jewelry or any other valuable item. Please DO NOT send your child wearing jewelry to school or with any valuable items.

## LUNCHESES & SNACKS

Parents are responsible for providing healthy & nutritious snacks and lunch for their child each day. Snacks are to be provided in brown or zip lock baggies labeled with your child's name. Lunch boxes are encouraged if your child is staying for lunch, labeled and should include an ice pack if needed. Morning and afternoon snacks (if child is staying after 4:00) must be separated from the child's lunch. Any type of food high in sugar is discouraged. No snacks containing nuts will be allowed. **We are a NUT FREE school as we do, periodically, enroll children who are highly allergic to peanuts.** Please add drinks for both snacks and lunch.

## BIRTHDAY PARTIES

If you wish to send home party invitations through the school, we ask that ALL the children in the class be included. If you would like to celebrate your child's birthday with a special treat in the class, please inform the teacher in advance. **Please remember – no candy or nuts and all items MUST be store bought. No large cupcakes; we prefer mini cupcakes or donut holes. Please communicate with your teacher before making any plans.**

## **SCHOOL STAFF**

The Center Staff consists of a Director, an Assistant Director, An Administrative Assistant, Lead Teachers, Assistant Teachers, a Floater and Substitute Teachers. We also have volunteers. All members of our staff are qualified to work with young children and are experienced in child development. Every member of our staff receives the Florida State mandated 45 hours of childcare training with the first year of work. Local and FBI Background checks are conducted by the Department of Children and Families on every member of our staff. We also require a passing physical from a physician stating that the staff is in good health and able to work with children. Most of our staff have earned their Child Development Associate Certificates (CDA), Staff Credentials or a degree in an Education related field. In addition, they participate in various training opportunities to earn in-service hours throughout the year.

## **TUITION AND FEES**

Tuition is an annual figure divided and prorated over a ten (10) month period (August-June). Tuition is due on the first day of each month. There will be a \$25 late charge for payments received after the 3<sup>rd</sup> of each month. Please refer to our Tuition Fees and Policies form. There is no discount for days missed or school closures.

## **TUITION PAYMENTS**

Please refer to our Tuition Fees and Policies form, as well as the Tuition & Enrollment Agreement in the enrollment packet. Families with a past due amount will be denied access to check the child into Procure, and will be unable to drop off the child until balance is paid in full.

## **SCHOOL CLOSURES**

Our school follows the Palm Beach County School District calendar and its closures and holiday breaks. Please refer to the school calendar available at the front desk, or simply download a PBC School District Calendar online. If the center closes due to bad weather conditions or any other emergency, a message will be posted on the school's Facebook Page (please like our page to stay informed) and on our website [www.citgschool.org](http://www.citgschool.org). To obtain information about emergency closures, please call (561)622-3398. Our annual school tuition is divided up equally into 10 monthly payments, therefore, monthly payments must be paid in full regardless of school closures.

## **RECEIVING AND RELEASING CHILDREN**

All parents must sign children in upon arrival and out upon departure daily. Each parent will register their fingerprint to sign their child/children in and out. Each child should be escorted to the appropriate class and dropped off with the teacher. The teacher needs to acknowledge you and the child upon entering the classroom. This ensures the safety of the child in our center.

### **Safety and Courtesy Tips during Arrival and Departure**

- Please drive slowly down the road in front of CITG and in the parking lot.
- Adhere to the correct direction of traffic in the parking lot.

- Do not leave your purse or laptop bag in your car.
- Always make sure that the doors are closed once you enter the building. This helps prevent other children from running out the door.
- Never leave your child/children unattended. They need to be with you at all times, not running ahead of you or lagging behind you.
- Do not let your child walk to their classroom by themselves. The teacher needs to see that you have entered with your child and you personally drop them off in the classroom.

For the protection of your child, no information will be given over the phone unless the staff person on the phone can verify the identity of the caller. This can be done through a code word submitted to the office in advance. This includes verification of enrollment and attendance. Parents or legal guardians must alert the office in advance when anyone, such as a doctor, counselor, therapist, lawyer, etc., will need information over the phone regarding their child.

CITG Preschool is required to follow the current laws regarding adult access to children in our care. The enrolling parent is required to identify on the enrollment form any adults with access privileges to their child/children in our facility. In addition, it is the parent's responsibility to identify any adults who legally should not have access to their child/children in our facility. The parent must provide legal documentation to substantiate those exceptions. CITG cannot deny a legal parent to have access to their child unless we are provided with a court order prohibiting the legal parent to do so.

If a parent or authorized individual is suspected of being under the influence of alcohol or drugs we legally have the right and responsibility to not release the child and to call PBSO.

## **BEHAVIOR AND GUIDANCE**

As parents, you want the best for your children and we share that desire. One of our roles as teachers is to model and teach your child how to become self-disciplined and to assist in guiding your child toward making good choices and decisions. Through clear expectations, positive example, and appropriate, consistent consequences, children learn respect for themselves and others. The goal of our corrective discipline process is that through loving guidance and mutual respect, self-discipline and godly character will develop in your child.

Our Guidance Policy and Character Development Plan are attached to this Handbook as an addendum form for you to sign. Please review it carefully and return your signed copy to administration.

## **SCREENING AND ASSESSMENT POLICIES**

CITG offers an assessment tool to all of our children. This assessment allows us to identify areas of developmental concern. Children are observed on a daily basis, throughout the day, by the teachers in their classroom. Assessments are conducted three times per year, or as needed. Once the assessment is completed, the parents will have the opportunity to schedule a conference with the teacher to discuss the assessment's results.

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY INTERVENTION**

Early intervention is a support system of coordinated services for children with disabilities, developmental delays or emotional stress. It is considered a partnership between family, caregivers and professionals. Research shows that a child's first five years of life are key when it comes to developing and learning. The sooner your child starts receiving early intervention, the more opportunities your child will have to fully develop his or her abilities.

## **BITING POLICY**

We want to ensure that every child is safe while in our care. Our center provides an environment that encourages and promotes cooperative interaction, respect and love for others, and non-aggressive problem solving between the children. Biting is a normal stage of development for young children who are teething and are still developing their language skills. It is usually a temporary condition that is most common between thirteen and twenty-four months of age.

The Health Department, Child Care licensing Division, requires that our center maintains a safe and healthy environment for all children in our care. Therefore, we take biting seriously. When it happens, it's very scary, frustrating, and stressful for children, parents, and teachers. It is also not something to blame on children, parents, or teachers, and there are no quick and easy solutions to it. Children bite for a variety of reasons: simple sensory exploration, lack of language, teething, seeking to be noticed, or intense desire for a toy. Repeated biting becomes a pattern of learned behavior that is often hard to extinguish because it does achieve results: the desired toy, excitement, attention. Knowing that the effect of their biting will hurt another person is not yet a part of a child of this ages' mindset, so the "cause-effect" relationship is not internalized. Our teachers plan activities and supervise carefully in order for biting not to happen. There are times, however, when everyone cannot be within immediate reach to prevent a bite.

Our policy for handling a biting incident is attached to this Handbook as an addendum form for you to sign. Please review it carefully and return your signed copy to administration.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### **Health**

Parents must submit a statement certifying the date of the last physical examination of the child, an immunization record, and a list of any special health needs and details of any medications. The Center will also maintain an information file with the name, address and telephone number of the child's physician.

### **Immunizations**

Children admitted to the Center must be up to date on their immunization schedule. Parents must submit the required form that stipulates that their child's shot records are current. Periodic checks are made to ensure that all children's records are current.

**CITG will not provide care for those who are not in compliance with the health forms and regulations.**

### **Medications**

No medication shall be given by child care personnel without the signed permission of the parent or legal guardian. A medication permission form must be fully completed and signed prior to any medication being dispensed. Medications may be administered at the school for the length of time indicated by the physician. All medication must be in the original container with the child's name, the name of the physician, medication name, and medication directions written on the label.

CITG's staff is not allowed to give non-prescription medication brought in by the parent or legal guardian. Medication which has expired or is no longer being administered shall be returned to the parent or legal guardian. All medications will be placed in the designated medication cabinet. For medications that require refrigeration, the medicine will be placed in a separate container in the director's refrigerator.

**Daily rest periods**

Provisions will be made each day for each child to rest. A minimum of 2 hours per day and a maximum of 2 ½ hours rest time will be available for each child. Please provide a standard size crib sheet and a small blanket to cover mats at nap-time. The linen will be sent home every Friday to be laundered and brought back to the center on Monday mornings. Naps are very important for brain development and it provides much needed rest for the children. All children staying past 2pm will be required to lay down on their mats and will be encouraged to take naps, no exceptions.

**Injuries and Illness**

It is our goal to provide a clean, healthy and safe environment for your child. You play a vital role in helping us accomplish this goal. Please inform us of any illness or injury your child may have sustained prior to arriving at the center. If your child has a communicable disease, please notify us at once. A doctor's note clearing the child from being contagious is required in order to accept him/her back to school.

Please keep your child at home if they:

- run a fever of 100°F or above
- have any discharge from the nose, eyes or ears
- have one diarrhea/vomiting
- have symptoms of possible communicable disease

While at school, if the child becomes ill with one of the following he/she will be isolated and the parent will be contacted to pick up the child immediately:

- fever of 100°F or above
- two diarrheas within the day
- rash
- vomiting – one time
- suspected pink eye\*
- lice\*
- discharge from the nose, eyes or ears
- any other sign or symptoms of illness
- Two or more symptoms of illness (examples: a runny nose plus a cough, a tummy ache plus diarrhea, etc.)

If your child is sent home due to one of the above symptoms, a doctor's note is required to come back to school.

**Children must be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school. No exceptions!**

**No discounts are given for days missed due to illness.**

In the case of medical emergencies, where medical symptoms indicate that emergency care is needed, 911 will be called. For bumps, scratches, scrapes, bruises, etc., the parent/guardian will be notified through a written form that will be signed by a staff member and a parent/guardian. In the case of a head injury, parents will be contacted by phone immediately and asked to come visually check the child and make the decision concerning medical treatment. Due to the possibility of an allergic reaction, only soap and water will be used for cleaning minor wounds.

Most Staff members are certified in CPR and First Aid.

*CITG Preschool is professionally cleaned each night to ensure a safe and healthy environment for your children.*

**CHILDREN'S PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

All children are given a special place for their belongings. Preschool children are encouraged to be responsible for their personal belongings. If, however, your child does bring personal belongings, CITG cannot take responsibility

for loss of, or damage to, any personal items. We encourage children not to bring personal belongings, such as toys, to the center unless directed to do so by their teacher.

All parents are asked to bring an extra set of seasonal clothing for your child to be left in the cubby. The extra clothes should include a shirt, pants or shorts, socks, and underwear. (Note: When a child is being potty trained, several pairs of training pants should be brought to the center on a daily basis. Please be considerate of the type of bottoms your child wears during training. Clothes should be easy to remove by the child & the teacher.)

**Please label all clothing and personal belongings.**

### **ITEMS SUPPLIED BY PARENTS TO ENSURE QUALITY CARE**

We want to assure your child is properly cared for while in our center. Parents are responsible for providing the following items:

#### **Toddlers and Young Two's**

- Diapers (pull-ups when potty training)
- Wipes
- 2 complete changes of clothes– at all times (please check the sizes frequently to make sure it's the correct size as your baby grows)
- Small Blanket and Crib Size Sheet if staying for extended care
- Sippy cups- sent home and cleaned at home daily
- A Healthy Snack
- A Healthy Lunch if staying for extended care
- Plenty of drinks

\*No bottles or pacifiers are allowed per Health Department guidelines.

#### **Older Two's and Three's**

- Change of clothes – at all times
- Small Blanket and Crib Sheet if staying for extended care
- No Sippy cups
- A Healthy Snack
- A Healthy Lunch if staying for extended care
- Plenty of drinks

**Note:** When potty training begins, please dress children in clothes that will help increase independence in this new skill.

#### **VPK**

- Change of clothes – at all times
- One standard size crib sheet for the mat your child will rest on (if staying for extended care)
- Small Blanket (if staying for extended care)
- A Healthy Snack
- A Healthy Lunch if staying for extended care
- Plenty of drinks

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Student records are open only to the child's teacher; the Administrator and other authorized staff members, as well as licensing agency or the child's parents or legal guardians.

If records are to be forwarded to another school, a signed parental release should accompany the request. When filling out forms requested by another school, a stamped addressed envelope will be required. All such forms will be sent directly to the requesting school.

## **MANDATORY REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT**

It is state law that childcare staff report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect. If your child has had an accident away from our program, please report this to your child's teacher upon arrival at CITG Preschool.

## **COMMUNICATION AND PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

### **An Open Invitation**

We encourage you to stop by CITG Preschool anytime. Our doors and phone lines are open to you. We welcome your questions and comments.

### **Toddlers – VPK**

A weekly newsletter is posted on the Parent Information Board to keep you informed of the current curriculum themes and lessons. A daily schedule is posted in each room.

We encourage communication between parents and teachers. Each morning, please give your child's teacher any information she needs to provide for your child's needs. If you enter the classroom after 8:30am or during a learning time, please be respectful and do not engage the teacher in a conversation. If you have a comment or a concern, please write it down and leave it on the counter. If the teacher has questions, she will be able to call you at an appropriate time in the schedule.

### **Conferences**

You will have the opportunity to schedule a conference after each assessment period. These conferences help the parents and teacher work together and go over your child's progress. If you would like an individual conference with your child's teacher, please speak with the teacher, who will schedule a convenient time. At least one conference per year is required.

### **Room Parent**

If you are interested in being a room parent please see your teacher. One of the best ways you can support your child's class is to volunteer to be the room parent. The room parent serves as a liaison between the teacher and the students' parents. Common responsibilities of a room parent include planning holiday celebrations and seeking volunteers to help with different events or provide support to the teacher in other areas.

**\*Note: Parents volunteering over 10 hours per month will be required to obtain a Local and FBI Background check with DCF and a physical giving clearance to work with small children.**

## **Parent Code of Conduct**

Church in the Gardens Preschool has established the Parent Code of Conduct to ensure that you, your child, our staff and all that enter our facility have a safe, welcoming and respectful environment. Actions that demonstrate respect for others are expected in our facility. Behavior that is inappropriate, illegal, threatening or disrespectful in nature or language that is abusive or instigative is not acceptable.

CITG reserves the right to refuse service, without warning, to anyone who violates the Parent Code of Conduct, including refusing access to our facility.

## **Parent Complaint and Grievance Procedure**

Parents have the right to:

- Be treated with respect by teachers, staff, and administration,
- Have personal records kept private and made available only to authorized users
- Have questions and/or concerns addressed promptly.

Should a parent have a complaint, grievance, or question, the parent should first bring the complaint, grievance, or question to the teacher's attention. If the teacher is not able to provide a solution, or if the parent is dissatisfied with the teacher's solution, the parent may contact the Director.

### **CHURCH IN THE GARDENS PRESCHOOL ADMINISTRATION AND ADVISORY BOARD**

#### **School Administrator Interim /Director**

Ms. Vania Mendez

#### **Assistant Director**

Ms. Sophia Francis

#### **Church Senior Pastor**

John Carosiello

#### **School Advisory Board**

Lou Cullen

Brad Seidensticker

Babs Rhyne

## Tuition Policy

### 2021—2022

**Non-refundable Fees:** \$350 Annual Enrollment for each school year

### **Tuition Schedule**

#### **Academic Program 8:30am-12:00pm**

Toddlers 5 days	\$5,800/yr (10 monthly payments \$580)
Toddlers 3 days	\$4,000 /yr (10 monthly payments \$400)
Toddlers 2 days	\$3,400/yr ( 10 monthly payments \$340)
Pre-K 2 5 days	\$5,700/yr (10 monthly payments \$570)
Pre-K 3 5 days	\$5,600/yr (10 monthly payments \$560)
VPK 5 days	FREE <b>9:00am - 12:00pm</b>

#### **Extended Care Options (Academic program included)**

Toddlers	7:00am-2:00pm	\$8,700/yr (10 monthly payments \$870)
Pre-K 2	7:00am-2:00pm	\$8,400/yr (10 monthly payments \$840)
Pre-K 3	7:00am-2:00pm	\$8,400/yr (10 monthly payment \$840)
VPK	7:00am-2:00pm	\$4,500/yr (10 monthly payments \$450)
Toddlers	7:00am-6:00pm	\$10,000/yr (10 monthly payments \$1,000)
Pre-K 2	7:00am-6:00pm	\$10,000/yr (10 monthly payments \$1,000)
Pre-K 3	7:00am-6:00pm	\$10,000/yr (10 monthly payments \$1,000)
VPK	7:00am-6:00pm	\$7,500/yr (10 monthly payments \$750)

## **CITG Guidance Policy and Character Development Plan**

As parents, you want the best for your children and we share that desire. One of our roles as teachers is to model and teach your child how to become self-disciplined and assist in guiding your child toward making good choices and decisions. Through clear expectations, positive example, and appropriate, consistent consequences, children learn respect for themselves and others. The goal of our corrective discipline process is that through loving guidance and mutual respect, self-discipline and godly character will develop in your child. With that in mind, teachers' responses to negative or inappropriate behaviors may include the following elements as necessary and appropriate: positive reinforcement, redirection, conflict resolution, limit setting and time-outs (only used in case of aggression). We strive to provide a quality care environment for all children. We know how important it is to have a loving and structured environment that is optimal for all students. Children who exhibit explosive or noncompliant behavior at school on a regular basis need an intervention. As a school we will address the concerns and work together as a team to improve the child's behavior, the process will go as follows:

### **Step 1:**

Parents, teachers (involved directly with this child), administration meet and develop a behavior plan to modify the behavior. The plan is put in place for the following four weeks.

### **Step 2:**

The team meets again with the documented results. At this time the team will discuss any changes that need to be made to the original behavior plan and if there has been any progress. If necessary the changes will be made and the revised plan will be put in place for the next four weeks.

### **Step 3:**

The team will meet for a final time and discuss the documented results. At this time the administration will make a decision based on the child's progress and the child's needs whether or not the child can remain at CITG Preschool.

## When Children Bite!

There are a number of possible reasons that children under age 3 bite, almost none of them the fault of a bad home, bad parents, or bad caregivers. Sometimes we think we have a good idea what is causing the biting, but most of the time it is hard to guess.

### **Some of the most common reasons and suggested ways for handling the biting:**

**Teething:** When teeth are coming through, applying pressure to the gums is comforting, and infants will use anything available to bite. Obviously, if this is a likely cause, then a teething ring or objects to bite will lessen the infant's need to bite other people.

**Excitement and over-stimulation:** When some very young children are very excited, even happily so, they may behave in an out-of-control fashion. For instance, a little 16-month-old girl loved moving to music. After a session with music and scarves and everyone twirling and enjoying themselves, it was very predictable that she would bite someone if an adult did not help her calm down.

**Impulsiveness and lack of self-control:** Infants sometimes bite because there is something there to bite. This biting is not intentional in any way, but just a way of exploring the world.

**Making an impact:** Young children like to make things happen, and the reaction when someone is bitten is usually pretty dramatic.

**Frustration:** Too many challenges, too many demands, too many wants, too little space, and too many obstacles may lead a child to bite, especially before they have the capability to express frustration through using language.

Our teachers are trained to do the following to try to minimize the biting behavior:

- Let the child know in words and manner that biting is unacceptable. Adults' most stern manner and words should be reserved for acts such as biting.
- Remove the biting child from the situation and focus caring attention on the victim.
- Examine the context in which the biting occurred and look for patterns. Was it crowded? Too few toys? Too little to do? Too much waiting? Is the biting child getting the attention and care he/she deserves at all times?
- Change the environment, routines, or activities if necessary.
- Work with the biting child on resolving conflict or frustration in a more appropriate manner, including using words if the child is capable.
- Observe a child who is a short-term chronic biter to get an idea about when he or she is likely to bite. Some children, for example, may bite not when they are angry or frustrated, but when they are very excited.
- Identify children likely to be bitten and make special efforts to reduce their chance of becoming victims.
- Don't casually attribute willfulness or maliciousness. Infants explore anything that interests them with the mouth, and that includes other bodies.
- If biting continues, continue to observe the group closely. Apply additional resources as necessary to shadow the child.

### **What can a parent do if their child begins to bite?**

Possibly removing significant stresses on the child at home, such as a too demanding a schedule or difficult transitions, will make it easier for a child to handle times of stress that do arise. If the child bites other children in your presence, take the same steps suggested above for teachers, immediately after the biting occurs and look for ways to adapt the environment to prevent biting in the future. If the child is biting at the center, there is very little you can do other than keep in close communication with the child's teachers. Fortunately, biting is a stage that passes.

### **What if your child is bitten?**

There's not much worse than seeing a bite mark on your child, and worse, infant and toddler bites are often on the face. All of our parental primal instincts as our child's protector come into play. It is natural to be upset. But try and keep in mind that it is a consequence of the group situation and not really the fault of the child, the family, or the program. Your child might as easily have been the biter. We don't release the name of the biting child for that reason.

### **How long should the program stick with a biting child?**

Good childcare centers work very hard to make the program work for every child, and take extraordinary measures to help a child overcome the "biting habit." Sometimes it feels to parents (and occasionally staff) that too much time passes before a child is asked to leave the center. It can be emotionally stressful to everyone involved and the center needs to address everyone's needs and safety. This is why we have decided to add an addendum to our biting policy.

## **THE 3 STEP BITING POLICY**

**STEP 1** – The child bit for the *first* time. The teacher will remove the biter and comfort the victim. The teacher will use a stern voice to let the biter know that this is not ok. The teacher will assess the reason why biting happened and follow necessary steps to prevent any future incident. Both parents will be notified. If biting happens a *second* time, teachers will follow step one again.

**STEP 2-** The child bit for the *third* time. The teacher will follow step one and inform administration about this being the third time that it has happened. Parents, teachers and administration will have a conference to assess possible reasons why the child may be biting. A plan will be put in place addressing actions that will be followed at school and at home to help the child and to avoid future incidents. Another conference will be scheduled to review progress.

**STEP 3-** Parents, administration and teacher will meet again after 2 weeks to assess improvement. If improvement has been documented, school and home will continue helping the child using the same actions. If there have been no improvements the parents will be asked to withdraw their child from the center.

We make every effort to help the child who is biting. If after these 3 steps we have not succeeded we ask the parents to seek alternative care.

### Receipt of CITG Preschool Handbook

I have received the Church in the Gardens Preschool 2021/2022 Handbook. I have read and understand the policies and procedures of the CITG Preschool and agree to comply with the rules set forth in this handbook. I have read and received information pertaining to Section 65C-22.006(3) (c) 2.F.A.C. regarding the school disciplinary practices, I agree to abide by the policies set forth by Church in the Gardens Preschool.

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent' Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

By signing this form I agree with the CITG Guidance Policy and Character Development Policy.

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

By signing this form I agree with the CITG's Biting Policy.

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_