

Saint Anthony of Padua Parish



**St. Anthony Preschool
& Child Care**

260 Forest Avenue Ambler, PA 19002

*Children Growing In
God's Love*

2024 FAMILY HANDBOOK

Welcome

We are delighted you have chosen St. Anthony Preschool and Childcare to fulfill your child's early childhood needs. Caring for your child is a responsibility we take very seriously. It is our goal to provide a loving atmosphere that emphasizes the development of the whole child - mind, body, and spirit. We take pride in our teachers and staff who are dedicated to providing quality care and education for our children.

Please take time to read this handbook, as it will answer many of the questions you may have concerning our policies and procedures. Our goal is to supplement your parenting efforts and support you as a working parent. We encourage you to become an active participant in our preschool and child care program. If you have any questions, concerns, or problems, please contact Christy Cincotta, Director. We want the best for you and your child.

Mission Statement

Our goal is to provide children with a safe environment in which they can develop emotionally, physically, intellectually, spiritually, and socially within a positive atmosphere where parents, teachers, staff, and children interact with mutual respect and caring.

Philosophy

The staff of St. Anthony Preschool and Child Care believes that each child is a precious gift from God with unique and special qualities. We are committed to helping children learn compassion and respect for others and an awareness of the world around them. Every child and family is welcomed and supported through collaboration with families and our community. All children are valued, welcomed, respected, included, and heard. Religious concepts are woven into our curriculum and the daily activities within each classroom.

We believe that children learn best in a play-oriented, first hand environment in which each child develops school-readiness skills at his or her developmental level. Children learn to socialize through play and communicate their thoughts and feelings to others. They also learn to organize, problem-solve, and use their imaginations. The activities we provide give children many opportunities to develop their cognitive, social, emotional, physical, and spiritual growth.

Child Abuse

Per state regulations, all staff are mandated reporters. This means, that in the event any staff person suspects child abuse by a parent, guardian, or another staff member, immediate action will take place. Staff should implement agency procedures, which coincide with state regulations, for reporting child abuse. The health and safety of each child is our priority. The toll-free hotline phone number is 1-800-932-0313

Enrollment Policy

Enrollment at St. Anthony Preschool & Child Care is open to children from 6 weeks to 5 years old. Enrollment shall be granted without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, or disability.

Final enrollment is contingent upon receipt of the completed Registration Form, Options/Rates Form, signed Agreement Form, Emergency Contact Form, Child Health Report, the establishment of FACTS Tuition Management account, and registration fee. Continued enrollment at St. Anthony Preschool & Child Care is contingent upon the parent's and child's adherence to the policies and procedures outlined in this handbook including, but not limited to, timely payment of all fees and tuition.

Registration

At the time of enrollment, a \$150 per child (non-refundable) registration fee is required for 12-month students. A \$250 per child (non-refundable) registration fee is required for 10-month students. The registration fee enrolls each family annually in Tadpoles and FACTS Tuition Management.

Required Records

Agreement Form: The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services: The Director will present an Agreement Form from the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services at the time of final enrollment. This agreement will state your child's name, program, start date, hours contracted (maximum 9 hours), rate of tuition, services tuition includes, as well as the payment schedule. Both custodial parents are required to sign this form. Adherence to this agreement is a condition of continued enrollment. This form requires, by the State, a periodic review signature every 6 months. The Director will also update this agreement periodically as rates change due to classroom moves or rate increases, which will also require parental signatures.

Emergency Contact Form: This form must be filled out completely prior to your child entering St. Anthony Preschool & Child Care program. This information will allow us to provide emergency care, minor first aid, and transport of a child to the hospital in the event of an emergency. Please see the Director to update this form if address or phone numbers change. Custodial parents will review and resign the form every six months. Any person picking up a child from St. Anthony Preschool & Child Care must be named on the Emergency Contact Form.

Child Health Report: This form is to be filled out by a licensed physician and returned to St. Anthony Preschool & Child Care within 30 days of enrollment or your child will be suspended from the program until the form is returned. Parents should have the child's physician update this form at each Well Child Visit or whenever a new immunization is received. A doctor's visit is required for children 6 weeks to 24 months every 6 months. For children 24 months and older, this form is required every year. Annual flu vaccine records are also required by the PA state and your child's updated vaccine record needs to be sent to the office. As determined by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, your child must be immunized with immunizations up to date to attend school.

Photo Release: The photo release parent/guardian signature is found in the signature section of the Emergency Contact Form. This signature gives St. Anthony Preschool & Child Care permission to reproduce, copyright, publish, circulate, or otherwise use a picture of a child, not identified by name.

Arrival & Departure Procedures

Hours

We are in operation from 7:00 AM to 5:30 PM

Notification of Absences

Parents are required to call St. Anthony Preschool & Child Care by their contracted time if their child will not be in attendance on a scheduled day. This will enable the classroom teachers to effectively plan for the day. If your child is ill, we request that you notify the Director not only of absence but also of the nature of the illness. We request advanced notice of early dismissal or late arrivals.

Arrival Procedure

7:00-8:30 AM Arrivals

There is limited parking available at the entrance behind the school. Please be considerate of other families and free parking space as quickly as possible. We have arranged for free play activities between 7:00 AM and 8:30 AM.

If your child is bringing breakfast, they should arrive no later than 7:45 AM so they can comfortably transition into their morning classroom routine. **If your child will be arriving after 7:45 AM, you must provide them with breakfast at home.**

7:45-8:30 AM Arrivals

Parents/Guardians will pull into the Preschool & Child Care Rear Entrance Driveway single file on the thru lane and proceed to a parking spot where staff will be available to escort their child to the classroom. If for any reason you need to enter the facility during this time you are required to park in the Church lot and walk to the Preschool & Child Care Entrance. There is no parking in the school lot during this time.

More structured activities begin by 9:00 AM and late arrivals may cause disruptions in the classroom. Please make every effort to have 2, 3, and 4-year-old children in school no later than 8:30 AM. This will allow time for children to settle into the classroom environment and begin their daily routines.

Dismissal Procedures

Extended Day (1:00 PM Dismissal)

& Full Day Dismissal (3:00-5:30 PM dependent on agreement contract time)

Parents/Guardians will pull into the Preschool & Child Care Rear Entrance Driveway single file in the thru lane and proceed to a parking spot. Staff will escort the children to the door. Drivers will then proceed to the end of the driveway where only right-hand turns onto Hendricks Street is allowed.

Full Day Dismissal

There is limited parking at the Preschool & Child Care Rear Entrance. Please be considerate of other families and free your parking space as quickly as possible.

Dismissal Notes:

On a trial basis, between 3:45 PM and 4:30 PM, parents have the option to pick up their child in the classroom. Please park in the church parking lot and come to the front door of the Education Center. A staff member will let you into the building. This is to allow parents the opportunity to see their child's classroom, art projects, and brief check-ins with the teacher and staff. This is offered to parents only. No siblings, grandparents, or babysitters. This does not eliminate the current parking lot pick-up at the dismissal door.

For the safety of the children, the staff is required to ask for a government-issued photo ID from any person not recognized at the time of pick up. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause, but please realize that this is for the best protection of your child. All changes and/or additions to the Emergency Contact Form must be made in writing, dated, and signed.

Early Arrival/Late Pick-Up Fee

Parents may be assessed an additional fee, determined by the Director for failure to drop off or pick up between contracted agreement times.

Early Childhood Learning Programs

Staff

All our teachers and staff have been carefully interviewed and selected based on educational background, experience, attitude, and most importantly, love of children. Caregivers supervise all children attending our program by sight and hearing at all times, even when children are sleeping. All required staff members are First Aid and CPR certified. Staff members must also have a Criminal Record Check Clearance by the State Police, a Child Abuse History Clearance by the State Department of Human Services, and a Federal Criminal History Background Check (Fingerprinting) before beginning work. Professional training for all staff is ongoing.

Curriculum

St. Anthony Preschool and Child Care utilizes a thematic approach to curriculum. The infant and toddler curriculum is developmentally appropriate based on the individual child. The Preschool Frog Street Curriculum addresses the cognitive, language, literacy, physical, and social-emotional developmental domains of each child. We have incorporated content from Conscious Discipline® strategies for social-emotional development. In addition, we help prepare a child for kindergarten and beyond with STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math). In addition, music, movement, and outdoor activities will be a part of daily programs. The classroom teachers prepare weekly lesson plans, which are submitted to the Director for review and input.

St. Anthony Preschool & Child Care meets the needs of children who function according to their age level in terms of physical and mental health. Each child is afforded a two-week adjustment period to determine if the child is adapting to the program. We will also complete the CDC Child Development Milestone Checklist to assist in evaluating meeting age-level growth milestones. St. Anthony Preschool & Child Care will refer parents to the appropriate agencies for assistance in obtaining services if appropriate to assist a child with developmental needs.

The Director and Staff will make every effort to assist the child/parent in a smooth transition to the program. St. Anthony Preschool & Child Care reserves the right to withdraw your child if staff determines your child is of harm or disruptive to other students and/or staff. You will be contacted to attend a conference with the teacher and Director before any action is taken and at the time written records will be presented to support the cause of dismissal.

Individual Education Program (IEP)/Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP):

If your child has an IEP/IFSP, a copy must be provided during the enrollment process and/or at the time initiated or updated. If a parent declines to share the IEP/IFSP with the school, a parent or legal guardian decline signoff is required.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Pre-K 4 conferences are scheduled. Any parent(s) or teacher of other program ages may request a parent-teacher conference. If there are questions concerning a child's progress or a specific problem, a conference may be scheduled through the Director.

Communication through Tadpoles and Other Communication

Tadpoles utilizes mobile technology to provide real-time visibility and improve communication within preschools. The mobile solution is built to provide a first-hand look at activities, essential information, critical notifications, special memories, and documentation for the teaching teams. The company considers all information captured using Tadpoles to be private communication between schools and parents. No personal information is shared with external parties or through social media. To communicate outside of tadpoles, please call the main number 215-646-6150 x1, or email the director or classroom email. Please, do not call or text staff's personal cell phones.

Parent Code of Conduct

The expectation of St. Anthony Preschool & Child Care is that the parents of enrolled children will behave in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy, and respect when interacting with other parents, children, and staff.

Discipline and Behavior Management Policy

St. Anthony Preschool & Child Care believes that keeping children busy and actively engaged decreases the frequency of behavior problems in the classroom. Transitional activities help the children move smoothly from one activity to another. Our caregivers are instructed to use only positive guidance and redirection. Setting consistent, clear, understandable limits fosters the child's ability to become self-disciplined, which is our ultimate goal. By teaching the child that each choice they make has a direct consequence, they will begin to learn to be responsible for their actions. If a behavioral problem presents itself, for example biting, spitting, or aggression toward another child or staff, every attempt will be made to remedy the situation.

Suspension/Permanent Dismissal

If persistent inappropriate behavior is displayed by a child, the Director will discuss alternative options with the parents. We will collaborate with you, the parent, the teachers, and the Director to develop a plan to manage the behaviors and provide positive growth opportunities for the child. We will make every effort to accommodate the needs of the child. These efforts may include applying new teaching strategies and techniques, working with the parent to reinforce plans at home, and/or referrals and recommendations for outside evaluations. The Director reserves the right to dismiss any child at any time.

Transition Policy

As children grow and develop, we continually assess their preparedness for the next room or grade. With the exception of Preschool 3, 4, and 5-year-olds, the children will typically move to the next room when both their age and development allow for the move. When a transition occurs your child's teacher and/or the Director will discuss the plans with you. If everyone agrees with the transition, the children will be given the opportunity to spend time in the new room which allows them to adjust to the new setting. After monitoring the child's interactions and comfort level in the new room, parents will be given an update.

Toilet Training Policy

St. Anthony Preschool & Child Care is prepared to collaborate with the parents in preparing our older toddlers for this important milestone in their lives. In the older toddler, 2-year-old program, teachers are aware that no two children are alike, and as such children train differently. All children entering the three-year-old program must be toilet trained or will not be admitted.

Health Policy

We require that families with enrolled children comply with the PA Department of Human Services Health Requirements as outlined on the forms provided by St. Anthony Preschool & Child Care. As determined by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, your child must be immunized with immunizations up to date to attend school.

Medical exemptions to immunizations must be requested at the time of registration to our school. The request is submitted to the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, Office of Catholic Education, for review. Medical exemption approval must be obtained prior to your child attending St. Anthony's Preschool & Child Care.

All ill children who exhibit one of the following symptoms may not attend this program:

- A temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or greater. A child must be fever-free without medication for 24 hours before returning to our care.
- Any contagious or undiagnosed rash, until a physician in writing determines that the child may return to child care.
- Diarrhea (stool runs out of the diaper or the child cannot get to the toilet in time). will be excluded from childcare for at least 24 hours
- Vomiting: will be excluded from child care for at least 24 hours
- Contagious childhood illnesses/conditions such as but not limited to Measles, Mumps, Rubella (German measles), Chicken Pox, Whooping Cough, Pink Eye, Head Lice (Child

Doctor's notes must be provided to the Director when your child returns for care or they will not be admitted. If any of the aforementioned symptoms occur while your child is in our care, we will call you and require that you make arrangements to have your child picked up within an hour.

Medication Policy

St. Anthony Preschool & Child Care will administer both prescription and non-prescription medications when the following conditions are met:

- Medication Packet Form filled out and signed by the Child's Physician.
- Medicine must be in the original container with the prescription label
- Labeled with the child's name and the doctor's name
- Name of medication, dosage, and when to be taken.
- Action Plan for Allergies requiring rescue medication (Benadryl), EpiPen, Inhaler, or Nebulizer

You will be required to present the Medication Packet Form signed by your Child's Doctor giving us permission to give the medication to your child. Medication will be kept in the Director's Office in a locked cabinet or refrigerator and administered at the prescribed time. If your child has an allergy that requires rescue medication (i.e., Benadryl), Epi-Pen, Inhaler, or Nebulizer, they will be kept in their classroom Emergency Bag. This also requires a written Action Plan from the child's Physician. A written log will be kept of all dispensed medication. All medication must be given to the Director and in her absence, the Staff on Duty. **Do not give the medication to the classroom teacher or leave it in your child's bag.**

Meals/Snacks

The family provides meals and snacks. Each day your child will break for a morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack. Please provide a well-balanced, nutritional diet for your child. Please notify the Director of any food allergies immediately. Proper precautions will be taken, as necessary.

Infants: Bottles must be premixed No glass bottles

Young Toddlers: Sippy cups must go home daily for washing

St. Anthony Preschool & Child Care is a completely PEANUT-FREE facility. This means that any item containing peanuts or has been processed in a facility with peanuts will not be served to your child. These items will be sent home with your child unopened, and a peanut-free substitute will be given if needed. Fast food lunches/snacks are not permitted in compliance with the peanut-free policy.

Cell Phones

The time you spend in the center dropping off and picking up your child are the primary windows of time we have to communicate with one another about your child. To make the best use of these opportunities, as well as to be attentive to your child, other children, and adults who may wish to communicate with you, we ask that you NOT use your cell phone at any time while visiting the facility.

Holidays

A yearly holiday schedule is posted on the website. St. Anthony Preschool & Child Care will be closed for these dates. Parents are required to honor their agreements and pay their regular tuition for these scheduled holidays. This policy applies to full-time and part-time enrollment

Inclement Weather

St. Anthony Preschool & Child Care will stay open during inclement weather unless conditions may jeopardize the safety of the children and staff.

The following protocols will be followed:

- Our facility will automatically be closed if the Governor of PA declares a weather-related State of Emergency.
- Notification of closures or early dismissal will be sent to each family via Tadpoles. Early morning cancellations will also be announced on 6ABC Action News #72336.

Incident Reports

Incident Reports are sent home if your child incurs an injury while in our care. Parents will be called if an injury is moderate to serious in nature. This would include but is not limited to a cut that bleeds, a contusion, a bite from another child that leaves a mark, or a fall from any classroom or outdoor play equipment. Minor scratches and scraps will be reported daily. Should a serious injury or illness occur, and hospital emergency treatment is necessary, your child will be accompanied by the Director or staff person in charge, to the nearest hospital. Parents will be notified immediately.

Complaint Procedures

Should you have a complaint concerning your child, employees, or procedures speak to the Director.

Withdrawals

Each parent/guardian has the responsibility to inform the Director in writing that your child will not be continuing at St. Anthony Preschool & Child Care as stated on your **Agreement Form**. The exact last day of attendance is needed in your letter. WE REQUIRE 2 WEEKS' NOTICE. If you withdraw your child without 2 weeks' notice, you will be billed for two weeks' tuition.

Facility Closures/Vacation Policy

St. Anthony Preschool & Child Care will be closed on the days indicated on the Holiday Calendar. The facility will also close for building maintenance the week before Labor Day Weekend. Families will not be charged for this week.

Should you take your child/children for a vacation during the regular school year, you are expected to pay the regular tuition for that period.

Facility Asbestos Management

St. Anthony Preschool & Child Care has developed and maintains an Asbestos Inspection and Management Plan as required by the Asbestos Emergency Response Act of 1986 (AHERA). A copy of the plan is available for your inspection at the school office during regular office hours. Inquiries regarding the plan should be directed to Acer Associates (856-809-1202), the school's asbestos consultant.

FAMILY HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Please read, sign, and return this statement to the Office

To: Parents/Guardian of Child

- I have received my copy of the St. Anthony Preschool & Child Care Family Handbook, which outlines the policies, procedures, and rules that are required of parents.
- I will familiarize myself with the contents of this handbook.
- I understand that it constitutes the policies of the Center.
- I understand that the information in this Handbook is to maintain a healthy learning environment for the children.
- I also understand that St. Anthony Preschool & Child Care reserves the right to make changes at any time to its policies.

PRINT CHILD(REN) LAST NAME: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date