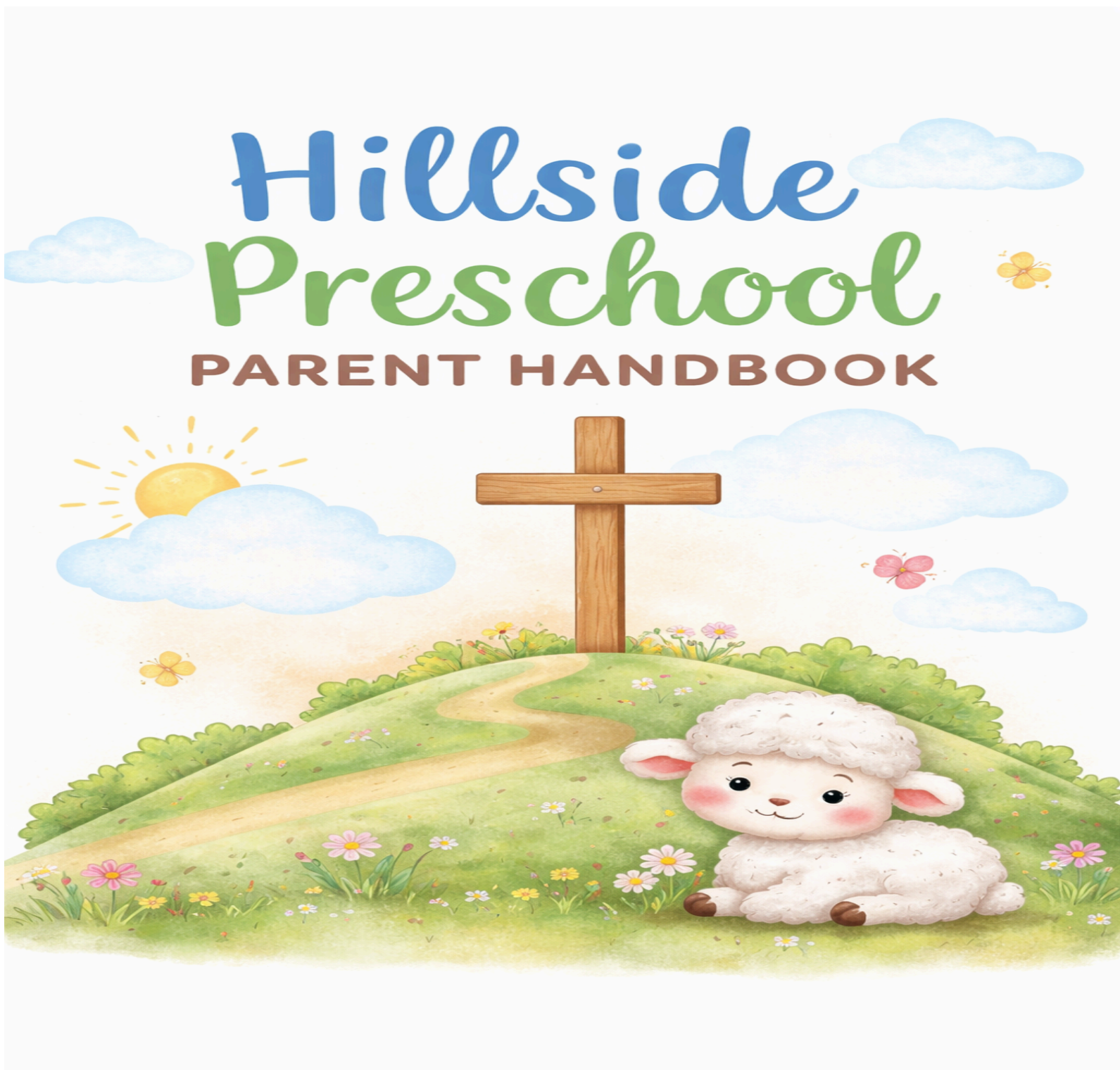


Hillside Preschool

PARENT HANDBOOK



Hillside Preschool Parent Handbook

Table of Contents

- Our Philosophy
- Our Curriculum
- Hours of Operation
- Missouri State Regulations
- Admissions
- Sample Schedule
- School Supplies
- Drop Off and Pick Up
- Financial Policy
- Termination and Withdrawal
- Communication
- Illness
- Inclement Weather
- Discipline
- Behavior Concerns - Biting/Hitting Policy
- Nutrition / Snack
- Lunch
- Daily Water Bottle
- Nap / Rest Time
- Optional Supplies
- Themes
- Conferences
- Special Visitors
- Toys
- Birthdays
- Thank You

Our Philosophy

We provide a loving, Christ-centered environment where children learn through play, exploration, and positive relationships.

Our Curriculum

We use a play-based approach that includes Bible lessons, Circle Time, Early Literacy, (ABC's), Math (123's), Sensory Play, Music, Movement, and Hands-on Learning.

Hours of Operation

Morning Session: 8:30 AM – 11:30 AM

Full-Day Session: 8:30 AM – 3:30 PM

Our school year runs from August through May.

We also offer an eight-week summer program during the months of June and July.

See the Hillside Important Dates sheet for details on dates we are closed.

Missouri State Regulations

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services regulates childcare facilities. Hillside Preschool operates as a license-exempt facility and meets or exceeds required standards. All staff are background checked through the Family Care Safety Registry and Safe Gatherings. Staff are mandated reporters. State licensing requires that each child have a file on-site while actively enrolled. Files are kept for five years after a child leaves the program and remains on-site. Files are updated yearly while a child is actively enrolled.

Admissions

Enrollment is based on availability. A pre-enrollment tour may be scheduled. The purpose of the tour is to determine the needs of the parents and child and the suitability of the program to meet those needs.

Before attending, all forms must be completed and returned along with the required **NON-REFUNDABLE** registration fee and first month's tuition.

Sample Schedule

Arrival and Table Activities
Circle Time
Learning Centers/Crafts
Bible Time
Snack
Outdoor Play / Gym
Half-Day Dismissal
Lunch
Nap/Rest Time
Centers
Full-Day Dismissal

School Supplies

A school supply list will be provided at the beginning of the school year. Please label all items with your child's name.

Drop Off and Pick Up

Please bring your child to the church lobby and sign them in each morning. You will need to wait until the teacher opens the doors and invites the children into the classroom.

During drop-off, it is common for children to experience separation anxiety. Teachers will comfort, redirect, and support children as they adjust. We encourage parents to say a quick, positive goodbye to help children transition smoothly into the school day.

When picking up your child, please come to the church lobby. Teachers will bring the children to wait there until parents arrive.

Staff will verify that the person picking up the child is on the approved pickup list before releasing the child. This ensures each child leaves safely with the correct adult.

Anyone picking up your child must be listed on the enrollment form. If someone not listed needs to pick up your child, a written note or phone call is required, and they must bring a photo ID.

Pick-up times:

- Morning: 11:30 AM
- Full Day: 3:30 PM

If a parent is late more than twice in a month, a late fee may be charged.

Financial Policy

Tuition is due on the 1st day of each month. If the due date falls on a weekend, payment will be due the following Monday.

A five-day grace period will be given to receive payment without penalty. If payment is not received by the end of the grace period, a **\$20 late fee** will be assessed. If payment and the penalty are not received after two weeks, the student may not return until payment is made along with the following month's tuition. If still unpaid by the following month, the student may be withdrawn. A \$15 fee will be charged for returned checks. Tuition remains the same regardless of absences, holidays, or closures. Payments must be made to Fenton United Methodist Church (FUMC) with "Hillside" in the memo. Payments can be made in the church office, or mailed.

Termination and Withdrawal

Occasionally, we find that our program may not be the best fit for every child. If the Director determines that a child is not adjusting well, families may be asked to withdraw near the end of the week.

If you decide to withdraw your child from Hillside Preschool, a minimum of two weeks' written notice is required. Notice should be provided to the preschool director in writing. Because tuition is paid monthly it remains due for the full month in which your child is withdrawn regardless of attendance. Tuition will not be prorated or refunded based on days missed during the notice period.

We understand that circumstances can change, and we appreciate families giving us as much notice as possible so we can plan accordingly and offer the available spot to another child. Parents may request a prorated tuition reimbursement for full weeks not attended. No reimbursement will be given for days the child was in attendance.

Communication

We communicate through daily conversations, newsletters, and the ClassDojo app. Teachers use ClassDojo to share daily photos and updates about classroom activities and what the children have done throughout the day.

We strive to respond to messages as quickly as possible; however, responses may be delayed while teachers are actively supervising and working with children.

Illness

Please keep your child home if they have a fever, diarrhea, vomiting, bacterial infection, virus, pink eye, or head lice. If your child is ill, please notify the church office or contact your child's teacher through ClassDojo.

Please inform us if your child has a contagious illness. A child will be sent home if they have a fever of **100.0°F** or higher, experience diarrhea two or more times during the school day, or vomit one to two times (depending on the situation).

Parents will be notified promptly and must make arrangements to pick up their child as soon as possible. Children may not remain at school for more than one hour after notification. Please note that we do not have a school nurse or a designated area for ill children to wait to be picked up.

Children must be symptom-free for **24 hours without medication** before returning.

Inclement Weather

Closures will be announced on ClassDojo and our Facebook page. Snow make-up days may be added at the end of the school year.

Discipline

Part of our curriculum includes teaching children how to function in a group setting. We emphasize sharing, listening, respecting others, and following directions.

We use the following methods for discipline:

- Positive guidance and redirection
- Clear expectations and explanations
- Removal from a situation if behavior becomes aggressive
- Parent communication when needed

Behavior Concerns-Biting/Hitting Policy

If behavior concerns persist, teachers will communicate with parents and work collaboratively to develop a plan to support the child. If necessary, a determination may be made regarding whether the program is an appropriate fit for the child, which could result in withdrawal from the school.

Biting/Hitting Policy

Biting and hitting is unfortunately not unexpected behavior for toddlers. Some children and many toddlers communicate through this behavior. However, biting/hitting can be harmful to other children and to staff. This biting/hitting policy has been developed with both of these ideas in mind. As a preschool, we understand that biting/hitting, unfortunately, is a part of a preschool setting. Our goal is to help identify what is causing the biting/hitting and resolve these issues. If the issue cannot be resolved, this policy serves to protect the children that are bitten/hit. If a biting/hitting incident occurs, state regulations require that the parent of the child biting/hitting and the parent of the child who was bitten/hit be contacted. Names of the children are not shared with either parent.

When Biting/Hitting Does Occur:

Our staff strongly disapproves of biting/pushing. The staff's job is to keep the children safe and help a child that bites learn different, more appropriate behavior. We do not use techniques to alarm, hurt, or frighten children.

For the child that was bitten/hit:

1. First aid is given to the bite. It is cleaned with soap and water. If the skin is broken, the bite is covered with a bandage.
2. Parents are notified.
3. The "Incident Report" form is filled out documenting the incident.

For the child that bit/hit:

1. The teacher will firmly tell the child, We do not bite/hit. And ask them to check in with the child who was hurt.
2. The teacher will discuss how the other child may feel and what other ways there are to deal with their frustration.
3. The parents are notified. The "Incident Report" is filled out documenting the incident.

Moving forward:

The child will be shadowed to help prevent any biting/hitting incidents. The child will be observed by the teachers to determine what is causing the child to bite (teething, communication, frustration, etc.) The child will be given positive attention and approval for positive behavior.

When biting/hitting continues:

1. If a child inflicts 2 bites/hits in a one week period (5 days of school attendance) in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken or bruised or the bite leaves a significant mark, a conference will be held with the parents to discuss the child's behavior and how the behavior may be modified.
2. If the child again inflicts 2 bites/hits in a one week period (5 weekdays) in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken or bruised or the bite leaves a significant mark, the child will be asked to take a one week break from the school.
3. If the child again inflicts 2 bites/hits in a one week period (5 days of school attendance) in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken or bruised or the bite leaves a significant mark, the parents will be asked to make other day care arrangements.

If a child, who has been through step 1 and 2 and then goes 3 weeks (15 days of school attendance) without biting/hitting, we will go back to step one if the child bites/pushes again. If a child bites/hits twice in a 1 hour period, the child will be required to be picked up from preschool for the remainder of the day.

Nutrition / Snack

Each child is required to bring an individual snack from home each day. If a child in the class has a food allergy, parents will be notified. Depending on the severity of the allergy, certain food items may be restricted. All situations will be addressed on a case-by-case basis to ensure the safety of all children.

Lunch

Full-day students should bring their lunch in a lunchbox with an ice pack. We recommend that lunches follow USDA child nutrition guidelines, including a balanced selection of fruits, vegetables, grains, protein, and dairy.

Examples of well-balanced lunches include:

- Sandwich or wrap (turkey, ham, cheese, or peanut-free alternative) + fruit + veggie + milk or yogurt
- Pasta or rice + protein (chicken/beans) + fruit + cheese
- Bento-style: crackers + cheese + deli meat + fruit + cucumbers/carrots
- Sunflower butter & jelly + applesauce + cheese stick

Please pack foods your child can open and eat independently. For safety, avoid items that require reheating unless previously approved.

These examples are suggestions only. Parents know their child's food preferences best and may adjust accordingly.

Daily Water Bottle

Each child is required to bring a labeled water bottle daily to support proper hydration throughout the school day. Water bottles will be made available to children at appropriate times during the day and refilled as needed.

Nap / Rest Time

Full-day students will have a designated rest time each day.

Children may be asked to bring a small blanket and pillow for rest time. All items will be sent home on a weekly basis for cleaning.

Children who do not sleep will still be expected to rest quietly during this time.

Optional Supplies

Throughout the year, teachers may request optional supplies such as classroom items, snacks, or materials for activities. These donations are appreciated but not required.

Themes

We have weekly classroom themes that guide our learning activities. These themes may include seasonal topics, Bible lessons, and holiday-based activities to keep learning engaging and meaningful for the children.

Conferences

We offer parent-teacher conferences at the end of the school year to discuss your child's growth, development, and progress. If a concern is noticed before then you will be notified. Feel free to approach us if you have any concerns. You may opt for a virtual or phone conference if preferred.

Special Visitors

At times, we may have special visitors come to the classroom to enhance learning experiences. These may include community helpers or themed visitors such as firefighters, police officers, nurses, artists, or other professionals. If a parent or family member has a special talent, occupation, or enjoys storytelling and would like to visit the classroom, please speak with the Director to make arrangements. We also partner with the St. Louis County Library, and a librarian visits periodically to provide story time for the children.

Toys

Toys from home should remain at home unless requested for special activities.

Birthdays

Birthdays may be celebrated. Please check with your child's teacher before bringing treats.

Thank You

Thank you for trusting us with your child and allowing us to be a part of their early learning journey. We look forward to a wonderful year of growth, learning, and fun!