

A.P.P.L.E. Seeds Preschool Parent Handbook

WELCOME!

Welcome to A.P.P.L.E. Seeds Preschool (Abiding Presence Play and Learn Experience Seeds)! We are thrilled that your child will be a part of the learning experience at Abiding Presence Lutheran Church (APLC) and A.P.P.L.E. Seeds Preschool (also referred to as “the School”). The many faith-based learning opportunities your child will be exposed to can foster a love of learning that lasts a lifetime.

This handbook is designed as a reference tool for the parents/guardians of our students. The daily policies and procedures are subject to change at the discretion of the administration and School Board. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions. The School can be contacted by phone, email or USPS via the following:

Valerie Jones, Director: director@appleseedspreschool.org

School Office: 919-567-2000

Office Hours: Mon-Fri 8 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Address: 7300 Sunset Lake Road, Fuquay-Varina, NC 27526

The School Board is comprised of parents, faculty, APLC church members, and a representative from APLC’s Church Council. This group of individuals develops reviews and revises the policies and procedures outlined in this handbook. The Board can be contacted through the Director.

OBJECTIVES

A.P.P.L.E. Seeds Preschool strives to be on a spiritual and academic level the best and most rewarding place to learn, work, and grow for children, teachers and parents. Our goals are to have each student excel educationally, spiritually and socially. We provide a safe, loving, nurturing and faith-based environment for all members of this community. Emphasis is always placed on the partnership between parent, teacher and child.

CORE VALUES

SPIRITUALITY AND FAITH IN CHRIST

We respect the different religious beliefs among our children and their families. We desire to teach children about God’s love and grace as shown in the life, death and resurrection of God’s son, Jesus Christ. This is an integral component in all of the other core values.

INTEGRITY, HONESTY, AND ETHICS IN RELATIONSHIPS

We feel that it is always important to be able to tell the truth. We uphold this responsibility to do what is right and we value sincerity and morality. This is an integral component in character development and decision making, not only for us, but for the children as well.

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LOVE AND LOVING OTHERS

We feel that it is important to be able to both give and receive love. God's love is given unconditionally to us; therefore, we need to love others. When we love others we are doing God's Word.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

We work towards ensuring that every child is developing and growing through their interactions with both adults and children. We encourage each individual child to strive for their best and to be a respectful person. Helping a child to feel good about themselves will help them to be successful in all other aspects of life.

SUPPORTIVE AND NURTURING ENVIRONMENT

We are committed to supporting and nurturing each child as they strive for their best. Encouragement and comfort are provided as each child progresses through new challenges.

FAMILY

We value each family and staff member involved in this organization. We come together as a family to provide a safe, comfortable, and open environment. Opinions are welcome and respected.

ADMISSION POLICY

The School will admit all qualified students regardless of race, color, sex, nationality or ethnic origin. Parents are encouraged to make an appointment to tour the school prior to enrollment. Before the first day of school a complete application must be provided to the School. A complete application includes, but is not limited to, a record of immunizations, medical form, signed media release form and signed parent handbook form etc. Students of the School must be 2, 3 or 4 years old, in accordance with the program they are registering for, on or before August 31st of the school year for which they are applying. Students of the Transitional Program must be 5 years old between June 1st and November 30th of the school year for which they are registering.

CURRICULUM

We structure our curriculum to be developmentally appropriate. A loving, enthusiastic and creative environment is available to ensure all children excel. We offer a variety of active and passive activities to integrate the many learning components (gross and fine motor skills, cognitive, emotional, social, and spiritual) throughout the day. Each child will be encouraged to progress at his or her own pace. Our well-trained staff strives to address the needs of each child based on observed behavioral, and general developmental check lists. We offer a variety of atmospheres including academic and play. Studies have shown that when academics are taught through fun and hands-on experiences, children learn faster and retention rates increase. Learning while "playing" promotes positive feelings about school and will instill a love of learning that can be nurtured throughout their lifetime.

CHRISTIAN TEACHING

The School is a Christian program focusing on nurturing the students in their faith development. The School seeks to provide an atmosphere where Christ and His redeeming love are a part of the student's daily life and to instill a love of God, self, others and all of God's creations. The Christian curriculum of

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the School is composed of several aspects, including Chapel Time, bible stories, meal-time prayers, and application of Christian values to daily living. Chapel Time consists of songs, Bible messages, scriptural verse, skits, stories, questions, sharing and a weekly offering. The children get to help make decisions about where the offering is spent in the service of ministry to others and to fulfill God's command to take care of His creation. Parents and families are encouraged to join their children for all of our celebrations throughout the year. Some of these programs include Christmas Chapel programs, the Blessing of the Three Year Olds and the Graduation of the Four and Five Year Olds.

CLASS SIZE

We strive to maintain low child-to-teacher ratios to promote closer friendships and more individualized lessons for the children enrolled in our program.

Ratio for the Two Year Old Program: six children for every 1 teacher

Ratio for the Three Year Old Program: seven children for every 1 teacher

Ratio for the Four Year Old Program: seven students for every 1 teacher

Ratio for the Five Day Four Year Old Program: eight students for every 1 teacher

Ratio for the Five Year Old Program: eight students for every 1 teacher

SCHOOL HOURS

While the School maintains an "Open Door Policy" for parents, allowing them access to the school at any time for any reason during the day, the School operating hours are from 8:30a.m. until 12:30p.m. For security reasons we do keep the preschool entrance door locked except at drop off and pick up times. Should you wish to take advantage of the "Open Door Policy," you will need to enter the building through the main entrance to APLC.

If you are unable to pick your child up from school by 12:30p.m. we ask that you please call the School office to let us know as soon as possible that you will be late. The following is the School's late policy:

1st late pick-up occurrence: verbal reminder of pick-up time and late policy

2nd late pick-up occurrence: written reminder of pick-up time and late policy issued

3rd late pick-up occurrence: a late fee will be assessed at the rate of \$5 for every 5 minutes late

The faculty at the School will only release a child for pick-up to a parent or other person listed on the release form signed by the child's parent and on file in the School's office. In cases of parental separation or divorce, the School will follow all guidelines and restrictions on visitation and custody set up by the court system. All paperwork regarding such cases and situations must be properly signed, notarized, and filed in the School office.

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is crucial for your child's spiritual, academic, and social development. However, in the event that your child is sick or unable to attend school, please call to let us know that he/she will not be attending class that day. The office phone number is 919-567-2000. Please feel free to call anytime and leave a message if the phone goes unanswered.

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INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

The School will **NOT** be following the decisions of the Wake County School System for inclement weather delays and cancellations. The Director of A.P.P.L.E. Seeds Preschool will determine whether the weather permits a delay or cancellation of school. Therefore, there may be days when Wake County Schools are delayed or cancelled and A.P.P.L.E. Seeds Preschool is still in session. Parents will be notified via email, Facebook, and local media outlets.

Make-Up Days

There will be no make-up days instituted for inclement weather. There are several days that are built in to the school year to accommodate for school closings due to inclement weather including the five days in August when school begins. Tuition will not be adjusted for days missed due to inclement weather as no tuition is collected for the first five days of school.

DISASTER AWARENESS

Periodically we have fire, tornado and other disaster drills to practice the skills, routines, and routes we will need to follow in the case of such emergencies. In the event of any emergency, our staff has training and procedures in place to maintain calm and safe standards for the children. Emergency steps include, but are not limited to:

- Securing the best location for the children to be in during the emergency
- Accounting for the children in each classroom and the school as a whole
- Contacting local emergency response resources
- Contacting parents/guardians or other people as listed as emergency contacts
- Maintaining the children's safety and well-being while these contacts are made, and as children are reunited with their loved ones after the emergency

HEALTH

If your child becomes sick during the school day, we will contact you immediately. Your child will be able to await your arrival in the School's office to minimize the potential for illness to spread throughout the classroom. Conditions that will result in the School sending your child home include, but are not limited to: fever, diarrhea, vomiting. If your child is sent home due to one or more of these factors, they will be asked to remain at home until they are **symptom free** for 24 hours. If your child is diagnosed with a contagious illness such as hand, foot and mouth or Fifth's Disease, please contact the School so we can inform the other parents and families of the symptoms they should be on the lookout for at home.

MEDICATION

The School will not be responsible for the dispensation of ANY medication except under specific circumstances. If your child has an ongoing health issue that necessitates the use of prescription or over-the-counter medication, please speak with the Director. The Director will be able to assist you in filling out the proper paperwork and forms required.

CLOTHING

Please dress your child in appropriate play wear for the weather and activities of a typical preschool day.

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We provide the opportunity for your child to paint, play outside, and do various other activities that may stain, smudge or otherwise impact clothing. You assume all responsibility for the clothes you choose to send your child to school in. You are also requested to send in a seasonably appropriate change of clothing that can be stored in your child's cubby. This change of clothing should be sent in Ziploc bag labeled with your child's name.

PREVENTION OF CHILD ABUSE

It is our hope and belief that every parent and child enrolled in our program should enjoy a happy and stable home full of love. In the event we are forced to question whether a child in our care is safe at home, we are mandated and required by the State of North Carolina to report any and all suspected cases of physical, mental, verbal, or sexual abuse; or maltreatment and/or neglect. If any type of abuse, neglect or maltreatment is an issue in your home and you wish to seek help, please feel free to speak with the Director or Pastor regarding solutions and assistance. We are here to help!

DISCIPLINE POLICY

The School encourages, praises and rewards children while respecting children's needs, desires and feelings. We provide redirection for inappropriate behavior through the alteration of activities and the offering of choices. We believe that positive reinforcement is an effective tool to ensure proper behavior and therefore this will be our first choice of discipline. Should positive reinforcement and redirection not prove to be sufficient to modify a child's behavior, a "thinking time" inside the classroom or office will be utilized. The use of these techniques will be used in conjunction with discussions with the parents involved. Incident reports will be written and sent home in the case of injury to another person. In the rare case of three or more incident reports being filed, the child may be asked to withdraw from the School.

The staff of A.P.P.L.E. Seeds Preschool will not use corporal punishment under any circumstances, nor will we tolerate any kind of corporal punishment being administered within the preschool or church setting.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

STUDENT DIRECTORY

A Student Directory is distributed at the beginning of each school year which lists contact information for the students in the school, organized by classroom. The information included in the directory is: Name/s of parents/guardians, name of enrolled child, address, phone number and email contact. Please complete the "opt out" form, available from the Director, if you would not like some or all of your family's information included.

The Student Directory should not be used for any reason other than personal contact from one family to another. It is not appropriate to use email addresses or phone numbers to create a mailing list or phone tree. Please refrain from using the directory to create a distribution list. This includes using the contact information to solicit volunteers, for fundraising, product promotion or other services etc. If you have questions about appropriate mass contact use, please seek permission from the Director.

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PHOTOGRAPHS & SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

Many of our teachers take photographs and/or video throughout the school year for use in the classroom, to give to parents, or to display around the school as commemoration of an activity. Please complete the Photograph and Video Permission Form, as available from the Director, if you would like to “opt out” of some or all of the options for use of your child’s image.

Further, please receive permission from any other student’s parent or guardian if you would like to use your personal photos or videos of other children taken at the school, or on APLC premises, for display on public websites or public publishing mediums. This includes sites such as Face book and the School website.

The following is the School’s policy given to faculty and staff regarding the use of your children’s image on the Internet: “Information regarding specific events or behavior that could identify an individual child or classroom from the School should not be displayed, emailed or posted on the Internet, including sites such as Face Book. Any information that exposes the individual identity of a child or class is not appropriate for communication in these types of environments. This includes photographs and video.”

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent-Teacher conferences will be scheduled at least once a year unless otherwise requested. We use age appropriate progress evaluations based on the latest child development studies and research. It is difficult to provide feedback concerning your child during arrival, dismissal, or special events. Therefore, we ask you to refrain from conferencing during these times. If you have concerns or questions regarding your child and their progress or development, please feel free to request a private conference time that we can schedule throughout the year at the convenience of your child’s teacher.

FEES AND TUITION

Tuition is due on the 1st of each month. **A late fee of \$10 will be assessed if tuition is not paid by the 5th of the month.** Notices will be sent to parents who have not paid by this time. Failure to pay tuition by the end of the month could result in the child being un-enrolled from the program unless special arrangements have been made.

Tuition for September and May (first and last months of the school year) is due as one payment by the first day of school each September. If you are unable to make this double payment, the amount will be divided into eight equal parts and added to each month’s regular tuition payment (September through April). Accounts remaining overdue at the close of the school year will be referred to a collection agency. The party who is responsible for the outstanding tuition account will also be responsible to pay for any charges and/or fees billed by the collection agency to A.P.P.L.E. Seeds. Tuition is based upon yearly costs, which are divided into nine equal payments. There is no reduction in tuition for holidays, vacations or illness. Tuition can be paid by check, money order or cash only.

Tuition discounts are offered to siblings attending school in the same school year. The sibling discount is 15% for the second child enrolled.

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Below is a summary of the fees and tuition rates:

Non-refundable Registration Fee: \$150

PMO: \$900 per year	\$100 per month
2 Year Old Program: \$1845 per year	\$205 per month
3 Year Old Program: \$1845 per year	\$205 per month
4 Year Old Program: \$2205 per year	\$245 per month
5 day a week Programs: \$2925 per year	\$325 per month

Late Payment Fee: \$10

Non -Refundable (no exceptions) Registration fee : \$150

Returned Check Fee: \$25. Two returned checks will result in the need to pay tuition by money order or cashier's check for the remainder of the school year.

WITHDRAWALS

In the event that it becomes necessary to withdraw a child from the School, the following policy applies:

Parent Initiated Withdrawal: If you choose to withdraw your child you must provide written notice to the preschool office one month prior to the withdrawal date. Tuition payments will be assessed based on withdrawal date. Tuition is to be paid during the one month of notice.

School Initiated Withdrawal: A.P.P.L.E. Seeds Preschool retains the right to ask for the immediate withdrawal of any student when such withdrawal affects the safety of the program, staff, and/or children enrolled in the School. No tuition will be refunded.

GRIEVANCE POLICY

It is our goal to maintain open relationships with parents and families of children attending the preschool. We strive to have open communication lines between home and school minimizing the potential for problems or grievances. However, if a parent or guardian has a concern regarding anything related to the School, the following recourse is available:

1. Speak with the teacher available
2. Speak with the Director
3. Speak with the School Board

FOOD

You are responsible for providing a nutritious lunch and snack for your child. All dietary and health restrictions on food should be noted on all appropriate paperwork turned into the office and you should verbally notify your child's teacher and the School Director. Occasionally birthday parties and other celebrations occur in the classrooms where food and drink may be distributed. It is crucial for the staff to know and be aware of any possible food allergies or other food restrictions in these situations. It is your responsibility to inform us and it is our responsibility to enforce your wishes regarding the foods your child may or may not partake. Any food brought in to be distributed to the entire class must be packaged with the ingredients visible.

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TOYS

The School strives to make each classroom an exciting and stimulating environment full of items to explore and enjoy. We therefore ask that you do not allow your child to bring toys or other play items from home. Items that are sent from home can lead to disputes between children and could possibly result in the toy being lost or broken at the preschool.

SPECIAL EVENTS, VOLUNTEERING AND FUNDRAISING

EVENTS & ACTIVITIES FOR ENROLLED STUDENTS

From time to time the School organizes events and activities and/or visits from outside parties (such as story readers, petting zoo, etc.) during school hours. While we understand that these are exciting and fun-filled opportunities for our students, they remain educational experiences for enrolled students only. For this reason, and due to safety and insurance liability, siblings may not attend. If you as a parent are volunteering to assist with any events not intended for the entire family (such as Field Day or Dr. Seuss' Day, etc.) please find alternate child-care for siblings of any age.

EVENTS & ACTIVITIES FOR THE FAMILY

From time to time the School organizes events and activities both during school hours and after regular school hours that are intended for the entire family. Such events include, but are not limited to: eat, meet & greets after Chapel programs, Halloween parade, Spring Fling etc. These are enjoyable and entertaining activities where all family members are welcome, including siblings of any age. If you as a parent are volunteering to assist with any of these events intended for the entire family, you are welcome to bring siblings with you.

VOLUNTEERING

We LOVE volunteers and we really appreciate your willingness to be one!!! Please check the first bulletin board on the left, as you enter the School, for volunteer opportunities. Sign-up sheets are often posted for upcoming events which require help/contributions from volunteers. From time-to-time the event organizing committee will utilize an online version of volunteer sign-ups, such as Signup Genius, etc. More information will be given to you for instructions for use if this medium is used.

If you would like to volunteer in the classroom, for things such as reading time during lunch etc., you will be required to complete paperwork and a background check will be conducted before you can work in the classrooms. Please see the Director if you're interested in this type of opportunity.

FUNDRAISING

We rely heavily on our parent volunteers to help make APPLE Seeds fun and exciting for the children. Since we are a nonprofit, we need to do fundraising to ensure our future. We operate with the help of our **Parent Volunteer Organization (PVO)**. PVO is made up of all of our parents whose children attend APPLE Seeds. However, we ask that one parent be our Committee Chair person for the school year. This person will organize monthly meetings and be responsible for facilitating planning events throughout the year. The chair person will also have a group of parent who will serve along with him or her to help coordinate these events. The PVO will need to get approval from the APPLE Seeds Board of Directors for any fundraising ideas planned.

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DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

Morning Arrival

- The doors will open at 8:25 and the children will be dropped off outside. The time prior to this is for teacher preparation and morning prayer.
- Parking is available in front of the church building. Please follow the arrows and park in a space. Please DO NOT park against the curb at any time. Please do not use the handicapped spaces unless you or someone in your vehicle has a valid handicap placard.
- It is important that your child arrive on time each day. This will help your child adjust more quickly to the routine and develop a habit that will carry into the formal school years. The teachers do many things in the morning including circle time and special activities with their class.
- Goodbyes are sometimes difficult for both parents and children. Our teachers try to make this a smooth transition for everyone involved. Children usually adjust to the morning separation with a cheerful kiss and confident assurance that you will see them in a little while, followed by a purposeful exit. Prolonged goodbyes or accompanying a child into the classroom may only make it more difficult and cause difficulty for children other than your own. If your child is still having a difficult time adjusting after 30 minutes, we will let you know or you may call to check on your child. Parents who linger in the classroom or hallway may be asked to leave.

Afternoon Dismissal

- The exterior door will be unlocked at 12:20 p.m. to allow your entry for picking up your children. Should you arrive prior to 12:20, please wait until the door becomes unlocked. For the children's safety, teachers and assistants are unable to leave the classroom to answer the doorbell.
- Dismissal will begin promptly at 12:30 pm. Parents are expected to pick up children immediately at the end of the school day. When the first child is picked up, the other children anticipate his/her parents' arrival. When a child is regularly the last child to leave, he/she can be affected negatively, feeling less important than the other children. Caregivers will sign out their child on the provided sign out sheet each day.