



ST. AMANT

Early Learning Center

*Shaping Hearts and Sharpening Minds to be
Conformed to the Image of Jesus Christ*

STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK 2022-2023

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MISSION STATEMENT

The Church Academy Early Learning Center is committed to equipping students academically by shaping hearts and sharpening minds to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ—His Mind, His Life, His Mission, and His Promises.

PURPOSE

Our desire is to see your child grow through academics, character building, and spiritual understanding. The students will gain exposure to the arts as well as learn a foreign language. This will be a hands-on learning environment for your child.

CURRICULUM

TCAELC will use the Abeka curriculum as well as provide hands on learning experiences. Abeka book provides an outstanding curriculum and textbooks built on a foundation of academic excellence and Christian Character training. Your child will benefit from their treasury of textbooks and teaching materials that reflect the very best traditional education, comprehensive curriculum, and eternal truths. The teaching materials provide guided activities in the areas of phonics, reading readiness, math, and writing skills, and teach self-control while allowing children to experience the “fun” in learning (age appropriate for your child.)

The hands-on learning approach will provide experiences for your child to explore his/her classroom environment. Each classroom is setup with learning centers equipped with materials to make learning more tactile.

It is the goal of our program to make school a valuable and rewarding experience for your child as it considers the whole person—body, mind, and spirit.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Bible Lessons	Phonological Awareness
Music	Language Development
Creative Movement	Pre-Writing Skills
Letter Recognition & Formation	Pre-Reading Skills
CPR & First Aid certified staff	Number Recognition & Concepts
Continuing Education for staff	

ENROLLMENT

Application for enrollment of children will be considered without regard to race, color, sex, or national origin. However, we reserve the right to deny admission or continued enrollment to any individual whom we feel will not benefit from our educational program. We also reserve the right to deny admission or continued enrollment of any student whose lifestyle is not in harmony with the stated

philosophy, purpose, or standards of TCAELC. To be admitted, all families must be interviewed. It is desirable for students being admitted to attend the interview. Enrollment will be completed once all registration information has been completed and submitted:

1. Completed Application Form
2. Payment in full of registration fees
3. Payment Preference Form
4. Immunization Record
5. Terms & Policy Agreement Form
6. Consent to Release Information, Recordings or Photographs

Priority for enrollment will be given as follows:

1. Current students and siblings
2. The Church members
3. New families

Enrollment is open to 18months old to Pre-Kindergarten age 3. Children are enrolled in the program on a first come, first served basis. Enrollment is limited, because we are committed to maintaining low child to staff ratios. When needed age groups may combine.

REGISTRATION FEE

A non-refundable registration fee of \$250 per child is assessed prior to enrollment and every year of attendance thereafter upon registering for the upcoming school year. Families will be informed once registration opens to current students and their immediate family members for the upcoming school year. Current students not registered during open enrollment risk the possible loss of their place at TCAELC. A position in the program cannot be reserved without the payment of the registration fee.

HOURS AND DAYS OF OPERATION

Our hours are from 8:00 am through 2:30 pm Tuesday-Friday. Students cannot be dropped off before 7:40am. All students must be picked up no later than 2:45pm. Classes begins in August and continue through May. Beginning/ending dates and holidays are listed on our yearly calendar.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

During the school year the center will close when The Church Academy in Baton Rouge closes due to bad weather conditions. Stay tuned to local radio and television stations for announced closure. If severe weather should occur while school is in session, you will be notified as quickly as possible.

HOLIDAYS/SCHOOL CLOSURES

The ELC will follow The Church Academy in St. Amant calendar.

HOLIDAYS

ELC will have a Christmas and an Easter party. Both parties are centered around celebrating Jesus' birth and resurrection. Details for each party will go home with your child closer to the event.

- ❖ **Halloween** – We do not celebrate Halloween. If students in class discuss Halloween to others, we will divert the conversation. Please also refrain from bringing Halloween candy or treats to share with the class.
- ❖ **Christmas** – We do not promote Santa Clause, Elves, etc. Again, our focus on this time is directed towards Jesus' birth. The teachers will not get into a discussion about Santa Clause being real or not. They will turn the attention and the focus to Christ. We will not outright tell them about Santa Clause, but instead, again, divert the discussion to Jesus. Again, please be mindful with treats and snacks during this time.
- ❖ **Tooth Fairy** – We do not promote the tooth fairy either but will divert the students' discussion to that on the Lord.
- ❖ **Valentine's Day** – We do exchange Valentine cards but only the cards that have scripture or encouraging words. These cards are usually found online or at Lifeway Christian Bookstore. More information will be given to you by your teacher closer to February.
- ❖ **Mardi Gras** – We do not recognize or participate in any Mardi Gras functions. Students are strongly discouraged from participating or attending any functions associated with Mardi Gras. **We do have school during the Mardi Gras holiday.**
- ❖ **Easter** – We do not promote the Easter bunny but will again divert the students' attention to Jesus' resurrection.

TUITION – MONTHLY

Tuition is to be paid monthly on the 1st or 15th of each month, August through May. All payments are to be made through our FACTS/RenWeb system.

If the payment comes back NSF, you will be charged a NSF fee of \$35 for every failed attempt. Your child will not be allowed to attend ELC until your payment is current.

Tuition reserves your child's space in the program and cannot be reduced due to absences, since salaries and overhead expenses of the program remain the same whether your child attends or not. Tuition rates have been calculated and divided into 10 payments of the same amount.

ELC COST

- **2 Days: \$250 a month**
Tuesday and Thursday 8:30am-2:30pm **OR** Wednesday and Friday 8:00am-2:30pm
- **4 days: \$415 a month** – Tuesday thru Friday 8:00am-2:30pm

Registration fee is \$250 per child.

NOTE: An additional child or children in the same family will receive a tuition discount of 10%.

WITHDRAWALS OR SCHEDULE CHANGES

During the school year, a two-week notice is required for withdrawals from the program. This allows us time to find a replacement for your child's spot. Payment is required for the 2-week notice (1/2 the monthly tuition), and your child may attend school during that time. Withdrawal and schedule change forms are available at the office.

DISMISSAL FROM THE PROGRAM

We sincerely strive to meet the individual needs of each child in our program. However, there are some reasons for which a child may be dismissed:

1. The ELC administration believes that the program is not able to adequately meet the needs of the child.
2. A problem continues which negatively affects other children.
3. Tuition Payments are delinquent.
4. There has been a failure to meet TCAELC policies and procedures.

HEALTH, ILLNESS AND MEDICATION

We make every effort to prevent the spread of illness and ask each family to cooperate with our policies for the good of all. Due to our short hours of operation, ELC staff will not administer medications.

Our policy states if your child has shown signs of any of the following within the last 24 hours, he/she must stay home:

- Fever (100.0 or higher) measured axillary
- Heavy nasal discharge (green)
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea (not contained with/without medication or 3 loose stools)
- Sore Throat
- Earache
- Eye Discharge (white or yellow), pink eye
- Head lice
- Unexplained rash or skin infection
- Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease – a common viral illness that tends to cause fever and rashes in infants and children, most often in summer or early autumn.
- Symptoms of any communicable disease (NOTE: Please notify the Director of any communicable disease your child has, such as chicken pox, measles, mumps, etc. Following any such disease, a **doctor's note** must be brought in order for your child to return to school.)

HEALTH POLICY/EXCLUSIONS

Immunization records must be up-to-date and on file at the center at all times. If the universal certificate of immunization record is expired, the child will not be allowed to return to care until updated. A letter from a physician stating that the procedure is contraindicated for medical reasons, or a letter of dissent from the student or his/her parent/guardian must be kept on file for each student enrolled.

The ELC staff has the right to exclude any child that may display symptoms of illness. Any child that has a 100-degree temperature or above will be excluded from care for 24 hours. The child must be free of fever for 24 hours without medication before returning to the center.

If a child is sent home for any unknown illness or rash a physician's written release must be presented upon the child's return. The physician's note must state the child is free from contagious disease and may return. The physician's note must also contain the physician's signature and date the child can return to the ELC.

If a child becomes ill at school or displays any of the above symptoms: Staff will contact the parent to pick up their child promptly within the hour. If parents cannot be reached, alternate names from the Registration Form will be called. While we realize that this is an inconvenience, we ask that parents respect the judgment of the staff as they endeavor to help sick children recover and avoid the spread of sickness. Any of the above symptoms require the child to be symptom-free for **24 hours**, which effectively means the child may not attend the **next school day**.

INJURY

ELC staff will administer minor first aid when necessary. Parents will be notified of any accident or injury that occurs at ELC.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Drop-off will begin at 7:40am and will end at 8:30am. You will park and walk your child to the morning arrival location each day. Each child must be signed-In/Out daily. Departure/Pick up begins at 2:30pm and ends at 2:45pm. A teacher will bring your child to the car when you arrive, or you may park and come inside. You must have carpool numbers visible to the carpool teacher, so we can get your child to your car as quickly as possible. Each family will receive two carpool number tags. Additional carpool number tags are available for purchase at the office. Only individuals listed on the release agreement form may check out a child. Staff members will not buckle any child in a safety restraint.

CUSTODY ORDERS

Certified custody orders must be provided to the Director any time a limitation is put on a parent or legal guardian of a child.

STUDENT INFORMATION FOR OUR RECORDS

Parents/Guardians are to keep the office informed as to any change of address, telephone numbers, place of employment of both mother and father, and the current name, phone number, and address of the person to be called in case of an emergency so that your child's records may be accurate. All records are kept confidential.

GUIDANCE AND BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

We believe that discipline is an integral part of the educational process. We understand discipline to be an environment in which students can learn and follow the Lord and respect authority. Discipline is a total environment with growth maximized by drawing proper boundaries and enforcing the necessary policies for personal development. The ELC philosophy regarding student behavior is based upon the merits of discipleship. A disciple of Jesus Christ seeks to follow rules and regulations because of the heartfelt response to honoring God. Therefore, teachers will strive to encourage discipleship and student growth when handling discipline issues.

1. We will guide indirectly through effective room arrangement and activities, consistent routines, clearly stating behavior expectations, and offering choices when appropriate.
2. We will set limits and expect actions from children that are appropriate for each child's level of understanding.
3. We will encourage and model appropriate behavior.
4. We will state suggestions, directions, and rules positively.
5. We will use a kind voice when guiding children. Our words and tones will help the child to feel confident and reassured.
6. Behaviors that put the safety of a child or another child in jeopardy may warrant further steps such as:
 - Removing a child from a play area
 - Removal from the group for a short period of time. (Time-out is brief in duration, generally one minute per year of age, and appropriate to the circumstances.
 - Visit to the Director's office
 - Parent phone call or conference to discuss how parents and staff can work together to reach the desired behavior goal that will lead to a student behavior contract.
 - If a child displays persistent uncontrollable behaviors and all above approaches are to no avail, parents may be asked to remove their child from our program. This is an absolute last resort.
 - No physical discipline of any form is used in our program, and discipline will not be associated with nap time, food or bathroom procedures.

LUNCH AND SNACKS

Parents are responsible for either buying a lunch through the lunch program at TCA or providing a healthy lunch for their child. **PLEASE NOTE:** Children may not bring carbonated drinks or dark-colored juices that may stain carpets and clothing. Please label all lunch containers to avoid meal-time

frustration. As a reminder, we are a nut free facility. Please do not send any food items that contain nuts. If you are purchasing lunch, the cost will be \$4.00 a day.

ALLERGIES

If a child in a classroom has a severe allergic reaction to a particular food, the entire classroom will be asked to refrain from sending that particular food for the well-being of all children.

TOILET TRAINING

Many two-year-old children begin to show an interest in using the 'potty' instead of staying in diapers. During the transition from diapering to toileting, it is helpful for families and teachers to work together. Our teachers will make every effort to coordinate with a parent's style of training. Your child will need to arrive in a pull-up with Velcro straps. Please be sure to supply us with plenty of clothing changes to adequately care for your child, including socks and shoes as well as underwear and clothing. Three-year old's must be fully potty trained. Toilet trained children must wear clothes that they can easily handle by themselves.

BITING

Biting is a natural developmental stage that many children go through. It is usually a temporary condition that is most common between thirteen and twenty-four months of age, when children are in the beginning process of learning what is socially acceptable and what is not. Toddlers bite other toddlers for many different reasons (teething, fatigue, frustration, experimentation, trying to get someone's attention, etc.) and sometimes for no apparent reason. They have poor verbal skills and are often impulsive with little self-control. However, when biting occurs we do take it seriously and try to ascertain why the child bit and work to extinguish the behavior as quickly as possible and assist in developing positive social skills. Our program's biting policy addresses the actions the staff will take if a biting incident occurs. Confidentiality of all children involved will be maintained.

For the child who is bitten:

1. The bitten child will be separated from the child who bit and comforted.
2. Appropriate first aid will be administered.
3. A written incident report will be completed.

For the child who bites:

1. Staff will stay calm and will not overreact.
2. Staff will remove the child who bit from the situation, telling the child firmly that biting hurts, and that we do not bite people.
3. The child will be guided with words on an appropriate level ("I see you wanted _____. You may not bite. Let's find another toy.") and redirected to another object or play area.
4. Parents will be notified that their child has bitten at school.
5. If a child bites 2 times on any one day, he/she will be sent home for the remainder of that day.

6. If a child is sent home due to biting or if biting is occurring frequently, a conference with the teacher, parents, and director will be called to assess the concern and work together in developing a strategy for change.

To minimize biting, our staff will:

1. Maintain a close and constant supervision of the children at all times.
2. Shadow the child who is biting so that he/she is near caregivers, attempting to head off biting before it occurs.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Each room is supplied with age-appropriate materials. Please leave your child's toys at home or in your car. Lost or broken toys may cause conflict and hurt feelings in a classroom, disrupting the day for children and teachers. We ask that parents help children to differentiate between "home toys" and toys that are provided at school. Of course, guns, knives, and other play weapons are never allowed.

Teachers may occasionally request that children bring items from home to reinforce current learning concepts. Please make every effort to encourage your child to participate in these activities by helping him/her to select an appropriate item to bring to school. Please do not send any irreplaceable treasures, as we cannot be responsible for broken or misplaced items.

CLOTHING AND BEDDING

A developmentally appropriate curriculum is based upon hands-on learning principles. Therefore, your child will be active both indoors and out. It is important that your child be dressed in comfortable, washable clothes, because they will be subject to food and paint spills. Younger children and children who are potty-learning need to bring multiple changes of clothing. All children must have at least one complete change of clothing on hand at the center at all times. Girls must wear bloomers or shorts under dresses. Shoes are required for all children. NOTE: Flip-flops, open toed shoes, backless sandals, and Crocs are not allowed at ELC, because of their tendency to cause falling and tripping on the playground.

A quiet time for rest is provided each day. All classes will rest on center-provided cots on the floor of their classrooms. Please bring your child a fitted sheet and blanket to go with the cots. We will send them home each week on Friday to be washed and returned to us on Tuesday.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Our center has an open-door policy. Custodial parents/ guardians and non-custodial parents, with written authorization by the custodial parent, are welcome to visit the center unannounced anytime during regular hours of operation as long as the child is enrolled. We request that classroom visits be brief in order for the children's and teachers' interactions and routines to be as consistent as possible. Please remember that some children have difficulty when parents are nearby.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

It is our lead teacher responsibility to communicate with parents regarding their child's progress. Our primary method of communication is daily information shared between the staff and parents and through email. Each child will have a daily folder that will be sent home with work done for that day and any important paperwork or reminders for the parents. This will need to be returned each day with the student and his/her backpack. It is best not to discuss a child at length during departure time, because each child deserves a sense of privacy and confidentiality, and we need to be able to return quickly to the classroom to get the next student to his/her car. If you would like to discuss your child's development further at any time with the teachers or the Director, please let us know, and a convenient time for all will be scheduled. Special problems or occurrences affecting your child will be brought to your attention as needed.

BIRTHDAYS AND SPECIAL OCCASIONS

We will be happy to celebrate your child's birthday at school. When your child has a birthday, you are welcome to provide a special 'treat' for each child in the class. Please check with your child's teacher to arrange a time and to discuss an appropriate snack and any food allergies in the class.

OUTDOOR PLAY

Fresh air and exercise are an important part of your child's health development. We will play outdoors every day, weather permitting, so please dress your child in clothes suitable for enjoying God's beautiful world. Any outer-wear garments such as coats, hats, and gloves must be labeled with your child's name. During inclement weather the children will play in the rooms with fun activities saved for just those days.

HANDBOOK DISCLAIMER

The regulations contained in this handbook are a material condition of the contractual agreement between The Church Academy Early Learning Center, its students and their parents/ guardian. The school has the authority to make decisions regarding things not specifically covered in the handbook and the right to change contents or policy at the discretion of the administration.

TERMS & POLICIES AGREEMENT FORM

Signing below states, I have read this entire handbook. I understand and agree to adhere to all the terms and policies for The Church Academy Early Learning Center.

Parent's Signature

Date

Parent's Printed Name

Please return to The Church Academy Early Learning Center's Office.

Things to bring to ELC:

SEMESTER SUPPLIES:

- ❖ 2 Big rolls of paper towels
- 2 Boxes of Kleenex
- 2 Bags of unscented refill baby wipes
- 1 Boxes of latex free gloves
- 2 Containers of Lysol Disinfecting Wipes
- 2 Boxes of gallon sized Ziploc bags
- Backpack
- 2 Outfits (all items labeled: shirts, bottoms and socks)
- *Your child's teacher will let you know when your child needs more diapers (1 yr. old)/pull-ups (2 yr. old) and wipes.

Current immunization record (*must have prior to start date*)

Donation supplies: EXTRA Paper Towels, unscented baby wipes, Hand/face wipes, Lysol Disinfecting Wipes, Disinfectant spray, Air Fresheners, Ziploc bags and latex free gloves!!!!

THINGS TO BRING DAILY:

- ❖ Food items as described above
- ❖ Teachers will communicate with families by placing any paperwork in your child's ELC folder and backpack daily. Parents are responsible for checking their child's backpack and folder daily and returning them to school. These items need to be in your child's backpack at all times: 4+ diapers/pull-ups labeled with child's name, wipes, diaper cream, extra clothes, sippy cups, lunch box and ELC folder.
- ❖ Carpool tag number attached to backpack