

Introduction

Welcome to Gateway Christian Academy's Early Child Care Center. It is truly a privilege and honor to be able to care for your child(ren) and for you to be a part of our school family. Gateway Early Child Care Center is an equal opportunity provider. Applications for enrollment are accepted without regard to race, religion, sex or national/ethnic origin. Our school is operated under an "Open Door Policy." Parents are encouraged to visit the school at any time, but you must first check in with the school office for a visitor's pass. If there is a problem or you would like to check on your child's progress, please feel free to set up a conference with your child's teacher. Your voice is very important to us. Please keep us informed if there is anything with which we can assist you, whether it is personal or school related.

Hours of Operation

We are open Monday – Friday from 6:00 AM- 6:00 PM, excluding the following days:

- New Years Eve/Day
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- President's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Veteran's Day
- Thanksgiving (Thurs. and Fri)
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day (& day After)
- Staff Training Days in August (Usually the last week in August. Dates are announced in advance for proper preparation)

If a holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, we will adjust it to Friday or Monday.

The exact dates of closings will be listed in your calendar of events and on our school website (www.gatewaycrusaders.com) at the beginning of each school year and may change from year to year. The dates we are closed for holidays are considered full weeks; therefore, no reductions will be applied to your regular tuition rates.

Mission Statement

It is the mission of Gateway Christian Academy, in partnership with Christian parents and strong Bible-believing churches, to help children come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, determining to follow His will for their lives. We believe we can best do this by training them spiritually, academically, socially, and physically to grow in the nurture and admonition of the Lord according to Biblical truth.

Code Compliance Statement

Gateway Christian Academy's Early Child Care Center is "Religiously Exempt" from state licensures. However, safety is of the utmost importance to us, and our facilities have been constructed with the safety of our children as our first priority. We are currently approved to care for 100 children. State inspections are completed each year in compliance with local fire and health regulations and are submitted to Social Services annually. Our staff meets the requirements as set forth by the Commonwealth of Virginia concerning health exams, physicals, background checks (criminal and child protective services) as well as CPR and/or First Aid Certifications.

Eligibility and Enrollment Requirements

Eligibility

Ages 6 weeks – Kindergarten

Babies in our nursery program are moved into the Toddlers Class between the ages of 12 and 15 months, provided they are independently sitting, walking, and somewhat able to feed themselves.

Our preschool classes are structured to coincide with the public school system. Therefore, your preschooler must be age 2, 3, 4, or 5 on or before September 30 of the current year. This determines where your child is placed.

Enrollment Requirements

All families must complete an enrollment application in order for a child to attend Gateway Christian Academy Early Child Care Center. All classroom assignments are made in the order in which the application and registration is received.

The following information must be on file in the school office:

- Child's name, address, home phone, gender, date of birth
- Child's social security number and copy of birth certificate
- Child's Immunization record and physical examination form
- Parents/Guardians Name, home address, home number, cell number, social security, name of employer including address and phone number
- Name and phone number of at least two additional persons to be notified in the event parent/guardian cannot be reached in an emergency
- Name and phone number of primary care physician
- Completed record of allergies (if any) and requirements for health and maintenance
- Documentation of custody/guardianship
- A written plan for child's special requirements must be clearly defined
- Designation of at least two persons other than the parent/guardian to whom the child may be released.

Children are not permitted to attend school until all components of the enrollment application are on file.

Immunizations

The minimum requirements for entry into school and day care per the Virginia Department of Health are

DTP: a minimum of 3 doses with 1 of the 3 administered after the fourth birthday

POLIO VACCINE: A minimum of 3 doses. If a child has had only 3 doses of polio vaccine, 1 dose must have been administered after the 4th birthday.

HEPATITUS B: A complete series of 3 doses is required for all children born on and after January 1, 1994 (with at least 4 months spacing between the 1st and 3rd doses)

MEASLES, MUMPS, RUBELLA (MMR): A minimum of 2 measles, 1 mumps, and 1 rubella (Most children receive 2 doses of each because the vaccine usually administered is the combination vaccine MMR) First dose must be administered at age 12 months or older. If first dose is administered before 12 months of age, the dose doesn't count and must be repeated. Second dose of measles vaccine doesn't have to be administered until age 4-6 years (usually at entry to Kindergarten), but can be administered at any time after the minimum interval between dose 1 and dose 2. The minimum interval is 4 weeks (28 days).

VARICELLA: (CHICKEN POX) : 1 dose for all children born on and after January 1, 1997.

Toilet Training

Please encourage your child to become independent in bathroom habits. Your help & support within this area of development are appreciated. Toilet training is introduced in the Toddler classes with continued encouragement through the K-2 class. ALL CHILDREN MUST BE FULLY POTTY TRAINED BEFORE ENTERING THE K3 CLASS. Pull-ups are not allowed in the K-3 – Kindergarten classes.

Tuition and Fees

Tuition

The collecting and processing of tuition payments is done by the school office secretaries.

Gateway Christian Academy Early Child Care Center payments are made in the school office and can be paid on a weekly basis. Please feel free to pay ahead how ever many weeks is convenient for you. When your child starts in the K3 program, you will then be put on a monthly tuition payment plan and your payments will be deducted from your bank account with our FACTS tuition management program.

You will receive all of this information upon registering your child into our school. A family discount will be given on tuition only for families with two or more children enrolled in our school.

Registration Fees

- Due Annually
- Non-Refundable
- Re-enrollment is NOT automatic (classes are filled on a first come, first serve basis)
- Includes cost of curriculum books & supplies

Late/Penalty Fees

A \$25 fee will be applied to your account for any returned checks. Late pick up will result in a \$1.00 per minute, per child fee after 6:05 PM. (If prior notice has not been given, consistent late pick-up could result in termination of day school services.)

Policies & Procedures

Attendance Policy

Regular and prompt attendance is necessary and critical for all children. Your child will thrive in our program if he/she is dropped off and picked up on a normal, consistent schedule. Because we don't want your child to miss out on any thing that is being done in our class rooms, please try to be on time each day.

Absences

Parents must notify the school office if their child is going to be absent due to a vacation or illness. This is especially important if a child is absent the morning of a field trip, so the class is not waiting for a child who is not coming.

Vacation

Two weeks' vacation may be taken annually from September to August of the current enrollment year. Tuition will be FREE for the week that vacation is being used. A one-week written notice MUST be given to the director in order to use vacation time.

Vacation must be for a full week (Monday – Friday). Any partial week at all is considered a full tuition week.

Illness

This Day School is a well-child facility. In order to protect all the children, we have very stringent rules about sick children.

Please do not bring your child to school if he/she has a contagious illness or exhibits any of the following symptoms:

- Fever of 100 degrees or above – within the past 24 hours without medication
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea – within the past 24 hours
- Conjunctivitis
- Consistent complaints of ear or stomach pain
- Bleeding other than minor cuts and scrapes
- Sore throat
- Thrush
- Croup
- Undiagnosed general rash
- Blister on lips
- Greenish nasal discharge, indicative of possible infection
- Head lice
- Chicken pox, measles, mumps or other childhood diseases

Any child requiring prescription medication will need to be kept home for a period of 24 hours until he/she is no longer contagious, unless accompanied by a doctor's note. Children who exhibit any sign of illness that could be contagious WILL NOT be accepted into our facility. The staff on duty will have the final decision. In general, if your child is too sick to go outside and play, then your child is too sick to attend school. If your child becomes ill at school, we will call you and you must pick up your child immediately or make arrangements for someone else to pick up your child within 60 minutes.

Illness policy states that a child must be fever-free without medication for at least 24 hours before returning to school. ANY head injury that should occur, even if minor, will be reported to you immediately. Even if we feel certain that it is not serious, we will leave the final decision up to you and we welcome you to come to the facility to check on him/her.

Two weeks sick time may be taken annually (September-August). A child must be absent a full week (Mon. – Fri.) to utilize a week of FREE tuition.

Allergies

If your child(ren) has any allergies, please provide a list of what they are to the school staff.

Procedures outlined in the “Medications” section must be followed for the administration of any medication.

Medications

If your child requires medication while at school, we follow the state guidelines below:

Before medication can be dispensed, it is necessary to have the completed and signed Written Medication Consent Form turned into the office with medication name, dosage, time to be administered, and the physician’s signature (if required).

MAT-Certified staff will administer only medications in the original, currently dated containers, which are authorized in writing by a physician. It is your responsibility to ask for your child’s medication upon leaving the facility. Because of the possibility of adverse reactions, we will not administer the FIRST dose of a new medication. Parents must give the first dose and allow plenty of time to see if there is an allergic reaction. Also, if your child happens to be on any medication that would prevent them from being out in the sun, you need to let us know.

Accidents & Incidents

Parents are immediately called in the event of a significant accident or health concern. Parents are also called if a child appears to be feeling or behaving differently from usual.

An incident report is always filled out and sent home with your child in the event that he/she experiences an accident or incident (i.e. a fall on the playground, a bump with a friend, etc.) This incident report outlines the nature of the incident, the time and location, and the action that was taken by staff.

Child Abuse Reporting Procedures

Our goal is to protect children, not to judge families. In accordance with State Law as outlined in the Code of Virginia, section 63.1- 248.3, all school staff is obligated under penalty of fine and jail term to report the reasonable suspicion of physical abuse, sexual abuse, or child neglect.

First Day of School

The first day of school is exciting for everyone, but separation time is sometimes a little stressful. If this is the first time that your child has been away from you, it is natural for the child to be anxious or uncertain. The first few weeks your child is here, it is easier if the drop off is done as quickly as possible. The more a parent tries to comfort, the harder it is for him/her to adjust.

TIPS: Parents are encouraged to walk into the class, help their child hang up their book bag, give them a great big hug, a cheerful goodbye kiss, a smile and a reassuring word that you will be back after work. If you're enthusiastic, chances are your child will be also. That's all you have to do. Our staff will take it from there.

(NOTE: If you arrive after your child's class has started (K3-K5), please leave their items outside the classroom door and just let your child walk in. This will help in minimizing classroom distractions.)

Usually, the child settles down shortly after the parents leave, but please feel free to call back when you arrive at home or work to see how your child is doing.

Nursery

For the babies in our nursery, daily records are kept of their schedules and they are available to you at pick- up. This report will keep you updated on feedings, diaper changes, supplies needed, incidents or illnesses, etc.

Please respond quickly to supply requests. We will not borrow from other students. If we have to purchase diapers, wipes or formula for your child, there will be an extra charge of \$5 added to the cost of items purchased. Item checklist: (Please make sure your baby's name is clearly written on each item.)

- Information sheet about your baby (schedule, habits, needs, likes, dislikes)
- Bottles
- Pacifier
- Baby Food
- Formula/Breast Milk
- Diapers
- Baby wipes
- Extra clothing
- Crib Sheet (Toddlers-K5), blanket, and favorite soft item to sleep with if needed.

Dress Code

There is no “Dress Code” for all children in the Infant and Toddler rooms. Please dress your child according to the weather and season. We also ask that you provide any needed sweaters, jackets and shoes (for those that can walk) as we will make an attempt every day to go outside.

All students K3 and up must wear school uniforms. Uniform dress codes and purchase information can be found in the school office. We currently use the “Flynn and O’Hare” Uniform Company.

Children need to wear closed toed shoes in which they can run and play easily. Flip-flops, backless shoes or sandals are prohibited as they may cause injuries on the playground.

NOTE: An extra change of clothing and shoes should be brought and will be kept in your child’s cubbie. If the extra set of clothing or shoes are used, parents should send a fresh set of clothing/shoes the next day.

Book Bags/Cubbies

Each child in K3-K5 should bring a book bag with his/her name on it to and from school every day. The book bag holds your child’s schoolwork, artwork, parent letters and important class announcements, etc. Please be sure to check your child’s book bag every day.

Nap Time

Napping for all children is from 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. every day. Visiting during these hours is strongly discouraged

You will need to provide items such as a crib sheet, blanket, and pillow for this time (Toddlers-K5). Nap items will be sent home each Friday so that you may properly wash and return them to school the following Monday with your child. Please make sure that these items are clearly marked with your child's name.

*All children from Toddlers- K5 will be provided a cot on which to sleep.

Grievance Procedures

It is our goal to offer a quality Christian education and care in a loving environment. We do, however, acknowledge there may be times when concerns or questions may arise regarding policies and procedures. If your child's teacher is unable to answer your questions or address your concerns to your satisfaction, please take these matters to the Director, who will then consider the stated concerns and handle them to the best of her ability or take them to the school's Principal for consideration.

Grounds Safety

The speed limit in the church parking lot is 5mph. Drivers need to be alert for children getting in and out of cars. Babies and children must be with an adult at all times. They may not be left alone in cars in the parking lot or be left unattended on any part of the church grounds. Cars may not be left running with no one in them. Purses and other valuables should not be left in cars, locked or unlocked. Handicapped parking spaces are to be utilized by only handicapped persons (with a proper decal, sticker, or license plate). The school parking lot can be used any time of day except for the following times, as these are the drop off and pick up times for our school carpool system: 8:00-8:30 AM and 3:00-3:30 PM.

Inclement Weather

In the event of inclement weather, you will be notified by our school's TYCO alert system (via your home phone, cell phone, and email) of what the changes (if any) are to our school's schedule. If it is announced that the Virginia Beach public schools are closing due to snow, ice, etc., then more than likely Gateway Christian Academy and Early Childcare Center will be closing, too. We will announce delays and closings on the local

weather stations and our school's website (www.gatewaycrusaders.com) as well.

Please be patient and have backup childcare in the event we are closed. If a "2 hour delayed opening" is announced for Gateway Christian Academy, our facility will open at 8:00 AM instead of 6:00 AM.

Sunscreen Policy

During the warmer weather seasons, your child will have more opportunities to spend time outside. Children have sensitive skin that can be easily damaged by the sun's UV rays and at this young age they are unable to take responsibility for their own skin protection. The health of your child is important to us. To ensure that your son or daughter is appropriately protected, we ask that you provide them with sunscreen, hat, and lip balm.

Please make sure to sign the form (available in the school office) giving us permission to apply the sunscreen to your child before going outside. Each child must have their own bottle of sunscreen or tube of lip balm with their name boldly written on the container.

Separation/Divorce Policy

If a custody or court order exists, a copy of that order must be placed in the child's file. The parent/guardian is responsible for providing accurate and up-to-date information concerning access to or legal guardianship of the child. Without a custody or court-order on file, we cannot deny access to the non-enrolling parent.

Sign-In/Sign-Out Procedures

If your child is in the Infant or Toddler Classrooms, you may take him/her straight to the classroom between the hours of 6:00 AM and 8:00 AM. Anyone dropping off or picking up a child after 8:00 AM must first go through the school office to sign in and receive a Visitor's Pass for walking down the hallway. Children are only released to their parents and/or adults (18 years or older) who are approved in advance in writing by their parents. All adults, other than the parents, picking up children must present a picture ID. In order to ensure the safety of all children, there are no exceptions to this rule.

Field Trips

Field trips will not begin until your child is in our K4 program. Any fees charged for these trips are not included in the monthly tuition.

If you choose for your child NOT to attend a school-sponsored trip away from the school, you will need to keep your child home during the trip and may bring him/her back to school after the class returns.

Discipline

We believe that when the curriculum is exciting, the environment stimulating, and the structure organized; there is usually little need for disciplinary action. However, every now and then some intervention is needed. We practice three methods of discipline:

- Re-direction: diverting the child's attention to a more appropriate activity.
- Time-out: the child may sit in a chair for several minutes (one minute for each year of their age) to have time away from the activity. After sitting for a short time-out, the teacher kneels down to talk to the child about why he/she is in time-out and what he/she would like to do now. If a situation involves offending or hurting someone else, the child has the opportunity to say, "I'm Sorry. Will you forgive me?"
- If a child is not responding to classroom time-out, the child may be brought to the Director's Office.

Each child is an individual and worthy of respect. Our goal is to discipline your child with love and tenderness. We will never use physical discipline, derogatory remarks or threats. No cruel or unnecessary punishment will be inflicted on children attending our facility.

Gateway Christian Academy Early Childcare Center strongly supports building a child's self-esteem and respect for self and others. All behavior management actions are toward that end.

Should it become necessary, Gateway Christian Academy Early Childcare Center reserves the right to terminate your child's enrollment if their behavior continues to be detrimental to others and the program.

Inappropriate and/or Aggressive Behavior

Inappropriate and/or aggressive behavior WILL NOT be tolerated such as biting, fighting, hitting, pushing, kicking, profanity/inappropriate language, etc.

Parents will be given a behavior/discipline report notifying them of any incidence of inappropriate/aggressive behavior that occurred.

- First offense: Warning accompanied by a note sent home to the parent/guardian.
- Second offense: A call is made to parents and the child is sent home.
- Third offense: A child is sent home and prohibited from returning to school for an additional day.

In the event that Gateway Christian Academy Early Child Care Center and the parents working together cannot resolve the problem, Gateway Christian Academy Early Child Care Center reserves the right to remove that child from the program.

Checking Things Out!

Preschoolers love to explore their environment and sometimes that includes each other! If a child uncovers his/her private body part(s) for others to see, the child visits the Director's office, where they will talk to the child about appropriate vs. inappropriate times to raise, lower, or remove clothing (i.e. at home for a bath or when changing clothes, at the doctor's office with Mommy or Daddy helping, etc.). A note is then sent home describing the child's visit to the office. If an exposure situation occurs again, the parent is called and the child sent home for the day. The intent is to make a strong statement to the child about protecting himself/herself and others by keeping private body parts appropriately covered.

Progress Reports

Teachers complete report cards at the end of each grading period for children in the K3-K5. The report cards are sent home to parents, where they can be reviewed, signed and then returned the next school day.

Snacks & Meals

All formula, breast milk, and meals must be provided for all children until they enter into the K3 classroom. Upon entering the K3 classroom, your child will be permitted to buy hot lunches from the school cafeteria.

You may bring in a breakfast for your child each day IF he/she arrives between 6:00 AM and 7:30 AM. If your child arrives after 7:30 AM, please make sure that he/she has had breakfast and is ready for class. Various assortments of snacks are provided to all children for their morning and afternoon snack time.

Parents with children who have food allergies are asked to provide alternative snacks/meals for their child.

Heating of food, up until K3, is permitted. Any food not eaten by your child will be thrown away, for reasons of food safety. We cannot wrap and/or save food for later in the day.

If children forget their lunches, a parent will be called to bring a lunch to the school.

NOTE: Candy, soda, and sports drinks (Gatorade, Powerade, etc.) are not allowed. Please do not send these items in with your child's lunch or snack.

Parties

The children enjoy holiday classroom parties such as Harvest Party, Christmas Party, Valentine's Day Party, etc. Parents are encouraged to bring in special snacks/treats to help celebrate. Sign-up sheets are posted in advance.

Gateway Christian Academy Early Child Care Center does not celebrate Halloween. However, we respect each family's right to make other choices. We do ask that children not bring to school such things as witches, ghosts, villains, Santa, leprechauns, scary or violent movie characters, mystical or magical characters, etc.

Each child's birthday is celebrated in the classroom. Parents are invited to bring in cupcakes, cookies or donuts for snack on their child's birthday, if they wish. Please let the teacher know several days in advance, if possible.

