Tips for Success

First day jitters, tears, separation anxiety; these are all very normal and natural tendencies of any young child starting a new school year. Many children fear new experiences and sometimes saying good-bye is difficult.

It is important for children to feel at ease and comfortable at St. Patrick’s Preschool, so we have devised a list of things that parents and teachers can do to make a child’s first morning (and every morning) as easy as possible:

- **Lots of rest** (preschoolers need 11-13 hours of sleep) and a good breakfast in a relaxed atmosphere gives your child the best start for the day. This is a good time to help your child look forward to preschool as a place to have fun, meet new friends and explore new things.

- **We** encourage you to talk cheerfully about the drop off procedure so your child can anticipate what will happen when you arrive at school.

- **Experience shows** it is best to let the teachers come to the car rather than have parents come into the classroom to say good-bye.

- **Be** matter-of-fact and decisive when ready to leave the car line. Being tentative only increases separation difficulties.

- **Both** teacher and parent need to convey their own sense of security, which can be very reassuring to a child.

- **Be** aware that not every child will have a difficult transition. You know your child best and if he or she is content with the situation, you can feel comfortable in allowing your child the opportunity to begin building a sense of autonomy, which is a building block of self-esteem.

The actual developments of a first day are almost always a learning experience for both parent and teacher. The most important things we can do for our children during this time is to be as confident and calm as possible, comfort them without pleading or being overly apologetic and distract them from grief as quickly as possible.

If your child is crying when you leave, know that he or she will likely settle down as soon as he is taken inside. If your child is inconsolable after a period of time, however, we will call you to come for her. We believe it is better to try again the next time than to have a negative experience at school.
Drop Off and Pick Up Policy

St. Patrick’s Preschool begins at 9 a.m. Teachers will be outside between 8:50 and 9:10 a.m. to greet the children and take them from the car to the classrooms. Please pull up with the passenger side of the car toward the sidewalk. Teachers must come into the classrooms promptly at 9:10 a.m., so if you arrive after that time, please park your car and walk your child into the building. Do NOT drop your child at the sidewalk or at the door, you MUST ESCORT YOUR CHILD TO THE OFFICE or CLASSROOM.

For the safety of all of us, our doors are locked except at arrival and dismissal times. If you come to the school at any other time, please ring the bell to be admitted. When you hear the door click, just pull the door handle toward you - do not turn it.

The preschool day ends at 12 noon. Children will generally be dismissed from their classrooms. Please park in the lot in front of the church and come into the school to pick up your child. For security reasons, we ask that you initial the student sign out sheet and wait outside the classroom door for the teacher to dismiss the children. After all children have been dismissed to their parents, you are welcome to come into the classroom to check your child’s cubbie for projects, notices, and personal belongings; or just to give your child an opportunity to share his environment with you. This is also a good time to chat with the teacher about any issues you may have. If you need to have a lengthy discussion, please schedule an appointment so that the teacher can give you undivided attention.

Lunch Bunch ends promptly at 12:45 p.m., and Playdate ends promptly at 2:00 p.m. Please follow the same dismissal procedure as described above.

Please be courteous and pick up your child ON TIME. The staff needs their time after school to prepare for the next day and to attend meetings and conferences.

A $1.00 per minute late fee will be imposed for late pick up. Understanding that emergencies do occur, a late fee will not be imposed the first time you arrive late. If you are frequently late, we encourage you to enroll your child in Lunch Bunch.

No child will be released to anyone other than parents and those designated on the student record form unless prior written permission is provided by that child’s parent. Please note that anyone picking up your child may be asked to show photo identification (including parents, if they are not known to the teacher).

You are welcome to leave a labeled car seat for the person picking up your child.

Safety and Parking Lots

Your child’s safety is our number one concern and our rules are designed to ensure their safety. To that end, it is crucial that no child leave the building without an adult holding their hand. You must continue to hold your child’s hand until you place him or her in your car. Do not park along the sidewalk directly in front of the church as a child darting from between parked cars is impossible to see. Drive slowly when driving through the parking lot and use extreme caution when backing out of your parking space!

Additionally, there is no parking in the lot directly in front of the preschool wing or in the lot on the side of the church facing the hospital. Those lots are owned by the medical buildings and we are prohibited from parking there except in the evening and on weekends. Please help us to be good neighbors and park as directed in the church-owned lot directly in front of the Sanctuary side of the building. We appreciate your cooperation with both of these items.
General Classroom Policy

Candy, gum, toys or other personal possessions that might be misplaced, damaged or represent a safety hazard to the children are not allowed at St. Patrick’s Preschool unless specifically requested by the teacher for Show’n’Tell or other special occasions.

Comfortable play clothes should be worn, easily on/off for those potty training, and soft-soled shoes are recommended for playing outside. Open toe shoes, sandals, and ‘crocs’ are not safe on the playground. Please leave a complete change of clothing (all items labeled with your child’s name) in your child’s backpack at all times. Please be sure to label all jackets and other outer wear.

Visitors are always welcome at St. Patrick’s Preschool. Visitors are required to sign in and out at the office and are asked to respect the daily schedule and rules and to defer to the teachers during visits to the classroom. Preschool is designed for children 2 – 5 years old so please make alternate arrangements for younger siblings. All siblings are welcome on special event days.

On special event days, preschool will proceed normally until the time of the event. Parents are asked to wait outside the classroom or at a specified area until invited in by the teacher or the children are brought to the specified site. Parents then assume responsibility for the supervision of their child.

Children must be accompanied by an adult at all times when outside the church building, including on the playground.

Discipline Policy

With commitment to the ideal that all children can succeed at St. Patrick’s Preschool, the following discipline policy shall be set forth to guide teachers, assistants and volunteers in the discipline of children under their care. Staff will:

- provide a safe and positive environment in which social, intellectual and physical competencies can be developed, and where there is minimal opportunity for unacceptable behavior.
- provide an environment which encourages self-respect, respect for others and for property.
- set limits and rules which reflect realistic expectations for the age and development of the children.
- be fair and consistent in their guidance of the behavior of children.
- use positive reinforcement of acceptable behavior.

The teachers, with input from the director, shall be allowed to establish appropriate discipline strategies for dealing with the following unacceptable behaviors:

- Throwing toys, equipment, etc.; hitting, biting or hurting others; climbing indoors; running indoors

If “time-out” is used, it shall last between one and three minutes in an area of quiet, supervised isolation. Conflicts will be avoided by offering the child a choice of acceptable behaviors. If “time-out” is not effective, the teacher will refer the child to the director for discussion and redirection.

Children who are having an unsuccessful day at preschool may, as a last resort, have parents called to remove the child for the rest of the school day and have the child start fresh the next day.

Should your child be involved in an altercation with another student, whether as the aggressor or recipient, you will be advised by the teacher at dismissal.
Health and Illness Policy

In striving for a healthy preschool, we ask that you keep your child at home if they have any of the following:

- Any contagious disease (flu, chicken pox, strep throat, etc.)
- Green or yellow nasal discharge
- Conjunctivitis (Pinkeye)
- Impetigo
- Diarrhea or vomiting in the past 24 hours
- Fever within the past 24 hours

We ask that you keep your child home while awaiting confirmation of any contagious illness (i.e., strep throat, pinworm, chicken pox) or upon detection of head lice. Please inform your child’s teacher of any diagnosis of contagious illness.

If a child becomes ill during school hours, he/she will be separated from other students and parents will be called to pick up their child immediately.

Please remember that frequent hand washing is the key to controlling contagious illness. We promote it at school and encourage you to do the same at home.

Potty Training Policy

Children other than 2-year-olds must be fully potty trained. This means that children must wear appropriate clothing and be self-sufficient in their toileting needs. No diapers or pull-ups are allowed in age groups other than 2s.

Children will be considered not potty trained if they have three accidents in one week or if they have accidents on a regular basis. While teachers understand that there may be accidents the first week of school, they should subside by the second week. If there are continual accidents, the director and teacher will evaluate the situation and discuss it with the parents. The director may then ask that the child remain at home until fully potty trained.

Please leave a complete set of extra (labeled) clothing including underwear, pants, shirt, and socks, in your child's backpack for use in case of accidents.

Inclement Weather Policy

There may be times when St. Patrick’s Preschool must close for the day or delay the start of school due to inclement weather. The safety of our families and staff is always our primary concern. If we delay, preschool will start at 10:00 a.m.

Please be mindful of the weather during winter and tune to your local television station for closing or delay information. If your preferred stations offers text message notification, be sure to sign up for it.

Days missed for inclement weather will not be made up.
Financial Policy

Tuition for St. Patrick’s Preschool is divided into equal monthly installments. Payment is due by the 5th of each month. Direct debit (ACH) of your checking or savings account is the preferred payment method. Cash and checks are accepted. Checks can be mailed to the school at P.O. Box 1491, Mooresville, NC 28115, or they can be brought to the office. Please DO NOT put payments in backpacks. A fee of $25 will be charged for returned checks.

Tuition unpaid 10 days after the due date may result in the student not being allowed to attend classes until the account is current. Please contact the Administrator immediately if there are extenuating circumstances. Do not wait. The Administrator can be reached at (704) 663-5659 x203.

In the event that a child must be removed from the preschool for any reason, the family is responsible to provide one month’s written notice to the Administrator. The family is responsible for paying tuition for the month of notice whether or not the student attends. Registration fees are non-refundable. Families who choose to take extended vacation during the regular school year are required to pay tuition in advance for the time they will be away. A student withdrawn for vacation will not be re-enrolled until vacation time is paid.

Please refer to the Fees tab on the school web site for a schedule of tuition fees.

Curriculum

St. Patrick’s Preschool promotes physical, social, emotional and cognitive development with age-appropriate activities.

The school uses a theme-based curriculum. Each week has a different theme on which lessons are built. Daily lessons include shape, color, letter, and number recognition; weather; calendar; etc. Math and science concepts are incorporated in class activities and projects.

Kindergarten readiness is a primary focus in the 4-year-old classrooms. Our goal is for the children to be able to recognize numbers to 20, and all the letters of the alphabet. We will help them learn to write their name, know their address, to understand classroom etiquette, and to be independent.

Research shows that children who are actively involved in music (who play it or sing it regularly) do better in reading and math when they start school, are better able to focus and control their bodies, play better with others and have higher self-esteem. To foster this development, our program incorporates music daily and lessons monthly.

Weekly chapel brings the children together to give thanks, pray for others, share their accomplishments, and recognize each other’s birthday. Chapel will be held each Wednesday at 11:40, just prior to dismissal. Parents are always welcome and encouraged to attend.

Overall our program:

- Teaches educational fundamentals
- Creates self-confidence
- Develops interpersonal skills
- Teaches following directions
- Develops fine and gross motor skills
- Uses music to enhance learning
- Teaches love of neighbor
Field Trips

Field trips can be a great social outing for the children with families and friends. They give the children an opportunity to interact with teachers and classmates outside of the classroom environment, have educational value and are just plain fun. Field trips can either involve traveling to a special venue or having a special program brought to the school.

These may be scheduled in the fall and/or spring. If we opt to travel to a venue, we are not equipped to transport children so families are asked to provide transportation for their children. Entrance fees to the venue may be collected prior to the event for those attending as directed by the venue. There is generally no limit to the number of family members who may attend and we encourage your participation. If we opt to have a special program visit us, a small fee may be charged to offset any cost and all family members are invited to participate on site.

Information on date, time, place, and fee will be communicated to families approximately four weeks before the event. Be sure to check backpacks when they come home.

Snack Information

Parents have the option of signing up to provide snacks for their child’s class on a weekly basis. These snacks replace and/or supplement the basic snack provided by the school (Goldfish, pretzels, crackers, water, etc.). Parents are encouraged to be as creative as you would like, while being healthy too. It is fun for the kids if the snack incorporates the theme for the week (which is shown on the sign-up sheets), but it is not necessary. Any kind of fruit or vegetable is always a good choice. Snack suggestions can be found on the website under the Parent Community tab.

This program is voluntary; no parent is required to participate.

If you want to bring in a special treat during a week that you have not signed up for (to celebrate a birthday, etc.), please coordinate directly with the person who did sign up for that week, or through the teacher.

If your child has any food allergies or special dietary needs, please notify the school so that accommodations can be made as necessary.

Early Morning Care

For your convenience, early morning care is available Monday — Friday, beginning at 8:30, for a small additional fee. You are asked to sign up for your child’s entire schedule. You are also asked to park your car and bring your child into the building. The form to register for this program is available under the Enrollment tab on the school web site. Note that the form is entitled Playdate-Lunch Bunch-Early Morning Enrollment Form. Fees are listed on the form.
Lunch Bunch

St. Patrick’s Preschool offers Lunch Bunch as an option. It provides time for your child to enjoy having lunch with friends. Lunch Bunch helps rising Kindergarten students develop good manners and confidence in handling their own food. It also helps them adjust to the longer school day. Lunch Bunch is available Monday through Friday from 12 noon to 12:45 p.m.

Parents should pack a healthy lunch, including a drink that does not need refrigeration. Children will be instructed to bring home any food they do not eat (unless it would spill) so that parents can monitor their child’s food intake. We also ask that children not share their food with others.

Lunch Bunch will be directed by a teacher. Sign up can be done at any time and you may sign up for as many days per week as you choose. The first month’s fee is due at sign-up. Thereafter, fees are due monthly with the regular program tuition. Fees are listed on the registration form for this program which is available within the Enrollment tab on the school web site. No refunds will be made for days not attended except in the event of extended illness, for which a doctor’s statement may be required.

Pick up is **promptly** at 12:45 p.m. Please follow the normal pick-up procedure. Lunch Bunch will generally not be held if a field trip is scheduled for that day.

Playdate

Bring your lunch and join our afternoon Playdate with friends. Your child will enjoy supervised free play, primarily on the playground, while you run errands, keep appointments, shop, etc. Playdate is available Monday through Friday from 12 noon to 2:00 p.m.

Parents should pack a healthy lunch (including a drink) that does not need refrigeration. Children will be instructed to bring home any food they do not eat (unless it would spill) so that parents can monitor their child’s food intake. We also ask that children not share their food with others.

Playdate will be directed by the teaching staff. Sign up can be done at any time and you may sign up for as many days per week as you choose. The first month’s fee is due at sign-up. Thereafter, fees are due monthly with the regular program tuition. Fees are listed on the registration form for this program which is available within the Enrollment tab on the school web site. No refunds will be made for days not attended except in the event of extended illness, for which a doctor’s statement may be required. Please note that a minimum of eight children must be enrolled in the Playdate program for it to be held.

Pick up is **promptly** at 2:00 p.m. Please follow the normal pick-up procedure.
Ideas for Parents

Parents often ask how they can help or how they can be involved at school. Let us count the ways!

You may have a profession, hobby or special interest to share with the children. A doctor might let the children listen through a stethoscope. A race team member might have a helmet and ear protection for the children to try on. A gardener might like to supply fresh vegetables for snack. You might just enjoy coming into the classroom at circle time and reading a story. There is no end to the possibilities.

Maybe you have some unused clothing, jewelry, hats or costumes to donate. Boys and girls alike enjoy playing dress-up. Or, perhaps your preschooler has a set of blocks or other toys they no longer play with that would have new life in our classrooms. Again, there is no end to the possibilities.

If you have something to share, donate, or would just like to be part of our day, let your child’s teacher know and we will be happy to arrange it.

Fund Raising Programs

St. Patrick’s Preschool is a not-for-profit program and, as such, from time to time we may supplement our revenue with fundraisers to purchase needed equipment, provide scholarship funds, and help keep our tuition rates affordable. Your participation in fundraisers is always voluntary but greatly appreciated.

We participate in the Harris Teeter Together in Education, which helps our school raise funds without asking you to contribute any money! All you do is link your VIC cards to St. Patrick’s Preschool (our ID is #5340). We earn a percentage of your purchases at Harris Teeter to spend however we choose. It’s an easy way to support your school!