

*Saint Anthony of Padua Parish*



**St. Anthony Preschool  
& Child Care**

**260 Forest Avenue Ambler, PA 19002**

*Children Growing In  
God's Love*

***PARENT HANDBOOK***

## **Welcome**

We are delighted you have chosen St. Anthony Preschool and Childcare to fulfill your child's early childhood needs. Caring for your child is a responsibility we take very seriously. It is our goal to provide a loving atmosphere that emphasizes development of the whole child - mind, body, and spirit. We take pride in our teachers and staff who are dedicated to providing quality care and education for our children.

Please take time to read this handbook, as it will answer many of the questions you may have concerning our policies and procedures. Our goal is to supplement your parenting efforts and support you in your role as a working parent. We encourage you to become an active participant in our preschool and child care program. If you have any questions, concerns, or problems, feel free to talk to Mrs. Christy Cincotta, Director. We want the best for you and your child.

## **Mission Statement**

Our goal is to provide children with a safe environment in which they can develop emotionally, physically, intellectually, spiritually and socially within a positive atmosphere where parents, teachers, staff and children interact with mutual respect and caring.

## **Philosophy**

The staff of St. Anthony Preschool and Child Care believes that each child is a precious gift from God with unique and special qualities. We are committed to helping children learn compassion and respect for others and an awareness of the world around them. Religious concepts are woven into our curriculum and the daily activities within each classroom.

We believe that children learn best in a play-oriented, hands-on environment in which each child develops school readiness skills at his or her own developmental level. Through play, children learn to socialize and communicate their thoughts and feelings to others. They also learn to organize, to problem-solve and to use their imaginations. The activities we provide give children many opportunities to develop their cognitive, social, emotional, physical and spiritual growth.

## **Child Abuse**

Per state regulations, all staff are mandated reporters. This means, that in the event any staff person suspects child abuse by a parent, guardian, or another staff member, immediate action will take place. Staff should implement agency procedures, which coincide with state regulations, for reporting child abuse. The health and safety of each child is our priority.

## **Enrollment Policy**

Enrollment at St. Anthony Preschool & Child Care is open to children from 6 weeks to 5 years old. Enrollment shall be granted without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, or disability.

Final enrollment is contingent upon receipt of the completed Registration Form, Options/Rates Form, and signed Agreement Form, Emergency Contact Form, Child Health Report, establishment of FACTS Tuition Management account, and registration fee. Continued enrollment at St. Anthony Preschool & Child Care is contingent upon the parent's and child's adherence to the policies and procedures outlined in this handbook including, but not limited to, timely payment of all fees and tuition.

## **Registration**

At the time of enrollment, a \$100 per child (non-refundable) registration fee is required for 12 month students. A \$200 per child (non-refundable) registration fee is required for 10 month students. The registration fee enrolls each family annually in Tadpoles and FACTS Tuition Management.

## **Required Records**

**Agreement Form:** The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services: The Director will present an Agreement Form from the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services at the time of final enrollment. This agreement will state your child's name, program, start date, hours contracted (maximum 10 hours), rate of tuition, services tuition includes, as well as payment schedule. Both custodial parents are required to sign this form. Adherence to this agreement is a condition of continued enrollment. This form requires by State a periodic review signature every 6 months. The Director will also update this agreement periodically as rates change due to classroom moves or rate increases, which will also require parental signatures.

**Emergency Contact Form:** This form must be filled out completely prior to your child entering St. Anthony Preschool & Child Care program. This information will allow us to provide emergency care, minor first aid, and transport of a child to the hospital in the event of an emergency. Please see the Director to update this form if address or phone numbers change. Custodial parents will review and resign the form every six months. Any person picking up a child from St. Anthony Preschool & Child Care must be named on the Emergency Contact Form.

**Child Health Report:** This form is to be filled out by a licensed physician and returned to St. Anthony Preschool & Child Care within 30 days of enrollment or your child will be suspended from the program until the form is returned. Parents should have the child's physician update this form at each Well Child Visit or whenever a new immunization is received. A doctor's visit is required for children 6 weeks to 24 months every 6 months. For children 24 months and older, this form is required every year. Parents who choose not to have their child immunized based on religious or philosophical beliefs must provide a letter stating this and that letter will be kept in the child's file.

**Photo Release:** Photo release parent/guardian signature is found on the signature section of the Emergency Contact Form. This signature gives St. Anthony Preschool & Child Care permission to reproduce, copyright, publish, circulate or otherwise use picture of a child, not identified by name.

## **Arrival & Departure Procedures**

### **Hours**

We are in operation from 6:30 AM to 6:00 PM. In order to effectively provide for the end of day communication between parent & teachers, as well as, completing closing procedures, children in the infant rooms need to be picked up by 5:30 PM. Pick-up time for all other children is by 5:45 PM.

### **Notification of Absences**

Parents are required to call St. Anthony Preschool & Child Care by their contracted time, if their child will not be in attendance on a scheduled day. This will enable the classroom teachers to effectively plan for the day. If your child is ill, we request that you notify the Director not only of absence, but also of the nature of the illness. We request advanced notice of early dismissal or late arrivals.

### **Arrival Procedure**

#### **6:30-7:45 AM Arrivals**

There is limited parking available at the Entrance. Please be considerate of other families and free parking space as quickly as possible. We have arranged for free play activities between 6:30 AM and 8:00 AM.

If your child is bringing breakfast, they should arrive no later than 7:30 AM so they can comfortably transition into their morning classroom routine. **If your child will be arriving after 7:30 AM, you must provide them with breakfast at home.**

### **7:45-8:30 AM Arrivals**

Parents/Guardians will pull into the Preschool & Child Care Rear Entrance Driveway single file on the thru lane and proceed to a parking spot where staff will be available to escort their child to the classroom. If for any reason you need to enter the facility during this time you are required to park in the Church lot and walk to the Preschool & Child Care Entrance. There is no parking in the school lot during this time.

More structured activities begin by 8:30 AM and late arrivals may cause disruptions in the classroom. Please make every effort to have 2, 3, & 4 year old children in school no later than 8:30 AM. This will allow time for children to settle into the classroom environment and begin their daily routine.

**Before 7:45 AM and after 8:30 AM, it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to supervise and escort all children in their care to the designated area or classroom.**

### **Dismissal Procedures**

#### **Extended Day (1:30 PM Dismissal)**

Parents/Guardians will pull into the Preschool & Child Care Rear Entrance Driveway single file in the thru lane and proceed to a parking spot. Staff will escort the children to the car. Drivers will then proceed to the end of the driveway where only right hand turns onto Hendricks Street is allowed.

#### **Full Day Dismissal**

There is limited parking at the Preschool & Child Care Rear Entrance. Please be considerate of other families and free your parking space as quickly as possible.

#### **Dismissal Notes:**

Once a parent enters his/her child's classroom, the parent is then solely responsible for supervising their child while on child care center premises. The parent may not allow a child to wander through the hallways, bathrooms, other classrooms and/or playground.

For the safety of the children, the staff is required to ask for government issued photo ID from any person not recognized at the time of pick up. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause, but please realize that this is for the best protection of your child. All changes and/or additions to the Emergency Contact Form must be made in writing and be dated and signed.

#### **Early Arrival/Late Pick-Up Fee**

Parents may be assessed an additional fee, determined by the Director for failure to drop off or pick up at contracted agreement times.

## **Early Childhood Learning Programs**

### **Staff**

All our teachers and staff have been carefully interviewed and selected on the basis of educational background, experience, attitude, and most importantly, love of children. Caregivers supervise all children attending our program by sight and hearing at all times, even when children are sleeping. All required staff members are First Aid and CPR certified. Staff members must also have a Criminal Record Check Clearance by the State Police, Child Abuse History Clearance by the State Department of Human Services and Federal Criminal History Background Check (Fingerprinting) before beginning work. Professional training for all staff is ongoing.

### **Curriculum**

St. Anthony Preschool and Child Care utilizes a thematic approach to curriculum. The infants and toddlers' curriculum is developmentally appropriate based on the individual child. The Preschool curriculum includes Math and Reading Readiness, Learning Centers and Kindergarten preparedness. Music, movement, and outdoor activities will be a part of daily programs. The classroom teachers prepare weekly lesson plans, which are submitted to the Director for review and input.

St. Anthony Preschool & Child Care meets the needs of children who function according to their age level in terms of physical and mental health. Each child is afforded a two-week adjustment period to determine if the child is able to adapt to the program. St. Anthony Preschool & Child Care will refer parents to the appropriate agencies for assistance in obtaining services that may assist a child with developmental needs.

Every effort will be made by the Director and Staff to assist the child/parent in a smooth transition to the program. St. Anthony Preschool & Child Care reserves the right to withdraw your child if staff determines your child is of harm or disruptive to other students and/or staff. You will be contacted to attend a conference with the teacher and Director before any action is taken and at the time written records will be presented to support the cause of dismissal.

### **Individual Education Program (IEP)/Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP):**

If your child has an IEP/IFSP, a copy must be provided during the enrollment process. If you do not wish to share the IEP/IFSP you must provide a written letter stating so.

### **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

A parent-teacher conference must be requested by the parent(s) or teacher if there are questions concerning a child's progress or a specific problem. Conferences must be scheduled through the Director.

## **Communication through Tadpoles**

Tadpoles utilizes mobile technology to provide real-time visibility and improve communication within preschools. The mobile solution is built to provide a first-hand look at activities, important information, critical notifications, special memories, and documentation for the teaching teams. The company considers all information captured using Tadpoles to be private communication between school and parents. No personal information is shared with any external parties or through social media.

## **Parent Code of Conduct**

The expectation of St. Anthony Preschool & Child Care is that the parents of enrolled children will behave in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy, and respect when interacting with other parents, children, and staff.

## **Discipline and Behavior Management Policy**

St. Anthony Preschool & Child Care believes that keeping children busy and actively engaged decreases the frequency of behavior problems in the classroom. Transitional activities help the children move smoothly from one activity to another. Our caregivers are instructed to use only positive guidance and redirection. Setting consistent, clear, understandable limits fosters the child's ability to become self-disciplined, which is our ultimate goal. By teaching the child that each choice they make has a direct consequence, they will begin to learn to be responsible for their own actions. If the behavioral problem presents itself, every attempt will be made to remedy the situation. If persistent inappropriate behavior is displayed by a child, the Director will discuss alternative options with the parents. The Director reserves the right to dismiss any child at any time.

## **Transition Policy**

As children grow and develop, we continually assess their preparedness for the next room or grade. With the exception of Preschool 3, 4, and 5 year olds, the children will typically move to the next room when both their age and development allow for the move. When a transition will occur your child's teacher and/or the Director will discuss the plans with you. If everyone is in agreement with the transition, the children will be given the opportunity to spend some time in the new room which allows them to adjust to the new setting. After monitoring the child's interactions and comfort level in the new room, parents will be given an update.

## **Toilet Training Policy**

St. Anthony Preschool & Child Care is prepared to work with the parents in preparing our older toddlers for this important milestone in their lives. The older toddler, 2 year old program, teachers are aware that no two children are alike and as such children train differently. All children entering the three year old program are expected to be toilet trained.

## Health Policy

We require that families with enrolled children comply with the PA Department of Human Services Health Requirements as outlined on the forms provided by St. Anthony Preschool & Child Care. Exemption from immunization shall be documented by a written, signed/dated statement from enrolled child's parent(s) or guardian or if applicable from the attending physician as well.

### **All ill children who exhibits one of the following symptoms may not attend this program:**

- A temperature of 100.5 degrees Fahrenheit or greater. A child must be fever-free without medication for 24 hours before returning to our care.
- Any contagious or undiagnosed rash, until a physician in writing determines that the child may return to child care.
- Diarrhea (stool runs out of the diaper or the child can't get to the toilet in time). will be excluded from child care for at least 24 hours
- Vomiting: will be excluded from child care for at least 24 hours
- Contagious childhood illness/conditions such as but not limited to Measles, Mumps, Rubella (German measles), Chicken Pox, Whooping Cough, Pink Eye, Head Lice (Child

Doctor's notes must be handed to the Director when your child returns for care or they will not be admitted. If any of the aforementioned symptoms occur while your child is in our care, we will call you and require that you make arrangements to have your child picked up within an hour.

## Medication Policy

St. Anthony Preschool & Child Care will administer both prescription and non-prescription medications when the following conditions are met:

- Medication Packet Form filled out and signed by the Child's Physician.
- Medicine must be in the original container with prescription label
- Labeled with the child's name and the doctor's name
- Name of medication, dosage, and when to be taken.
- Action Plan for any allergy that requires rescue medication (Benadryl), Epi Pen, Inhaler, or Nebulizer

You will be required to present the Medication Packet Form signed by your Child's Doctor giving us permission to give the medication to your child. Medication will be kept in the Director's Office in a locked cabinet or refrigerator and administered at the prescribed time. If your child has an allergy that requires rescue medication (i.e. Benadryl), Epi Pen, Inhaler, or Nebulizer, they will be kept in their classroom Emergency Bag. This also requires a written Action Plan from the Child's Physician. A written log will be kept of all dispensed medication. All medication must be given to the Director and in her absence, the Staff on Duty. **Do not give the medication to the classroom teacher or leave it in your child's bag.**

## **Meals/Snacks**

Meals and snacks are provided by the family. Each day your child will break for a morning snack, lunch and afternoon snack. Please provide a well-balanced, nutritional diet for your child. Please notify the Director of any food allergies immediately. Proper precautions will be taken as necessary.

Infants: Bottles must be premixed No glass bottles

Young Toddlers: Sippy cups must go home daily for washing

## **Cell Phones**

The time you spend in the center dropping off and picking up your child are the primary windows of time we have to communicate with one another about your child. In order to make the best use of these opportunities, as well as to be attentive to your child, other children and adults who may wish to communicate with you, we ask that you NOT use your cell phone at any time while visiting the facility.

## **Holidays**

A yearly holiday schedule is posted on the website. St. Anthony Preschool & Child Care will be closed for these dates. Parents are required to honor their agreements and pay their regular tuition for these scheduled holidays. This policy applies to full-time and part-time enrollment

## **Inclement Weather**

St. Anthony Preschool & Child Care will stay open during inclement weather unless conditions may jeopardize the safety of the children and staff.

The following protocols will be followed:

- Our facility will automatically be closed if the Governor of PA declares a weather related State of Emergency.
- Notification of closures or early dismissal will be sent to each family via Tadpoles. Early morning cancellations will also be announced on 6ABC Action News #72336.

**Smoking is prohibited** anywhere on the property of the St. Anthony Preschool & Child Care Facility.

## **Incident Reports**

Incident Reports are sent home if your child incurs an injury while in our care. Parents will be called if an injury is moderate to serious in nature. This would include but is not limited to a cut that bleeds, a contusion, a bite from another child that leaves a mark, a fall from any classroom or outdoor play equipment. Minor scratches and scraps will be reported daily. Should a serious injury or illness occur and hospital emergency treatment is necessary, your child will be accompanied by the Director or staff person in charge, to the nearest hospital. Parents will be notified immediately.

## **Complaint Procedures**

Should you have a complaint concerning your child, employees, or procedures speak to the Director.

## **Withdrawals**

Each parent/guardian has the responsibility to inform the Director in writing that your child will not be continuing at St. Anthony Preschool & Child Care as stated on your **Agreement Form**. The exact last day of attendance is needed in your letter. WE REQUIRE 2 WEEKS NOTICE. If you withdraw your child without 2 weeks' notice, you will be billed for two week's tuition.

## **Facility Closures/Vacation Policy**

St. Anthony Preschool & Child Care will be closed on the days as indicated on the Holiday Calendar. The facility will also close for building maintenance the week prior to Labor Day Weekend. Families will not be charged for this week.

Should you take your child/children for a vacation during the regular school year, you are expected to pay the regular tuition for that period of time.

## PARENT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

**Please read, sign and return this statement to the Office**

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***To: Parents/Guardian of Child***

- I have received my copy of St. Anthony Preschool & Child Care Parent Handbook, which outlines the policies, procedures, and rules that are required of parents.
- I will familiarize myself with the contents of this handbook.
- I understand that it constitutes the policies of the Center.
- I understand that the information in this Handbook is to maintain a healthy learning environment for the children.
- I also understand that St. Anthony Preschool & Child Care reserves the right to make changes at any time to its policies.

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<b>Parent/Guardian Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
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<b>Parent/Guardian Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
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