



Parent Handbook 2020-2021

Prairie Ridge Church
www.ridgelife.org/preschool
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To report an absence we ask that you please call 965-1737 ext. 245 – Main Preschool Phone

Mission Statement

Preschool @ The Ridge will partner with families as we promote the social, emotional, cognitive, physical, and spiritual development of each child.

Curriculum

Our teachers choose themes based around the interest of the preschool age child. We believe learning takes place through play and exploration. Children will explore interest areas such as dramatic play, science & sensory, creative art, building, music, manipulatives, and large motor play. Our classrooms are rich in literacy and language. We provide a variety of experiences to develop small and large motor skills. Our teachers are trained in *Learning Without Tears "Get Set for School"* in writing, literacy and math. This curriculum is presented in small and large group teaching. A recent STEM grant through the Science Center of Iowa has provided Preschool @ The Ridge with a materials and curriculum. We continue to add to and design ways for our students to explore science, technology, engineering, arts, and math.

We believe developing social skills and learning to communicate with others is an equally important skill as children grow. Our social curriculum used to develop communication and cooperation skills is called *2nd Step*. This curriculum uses puppets, pictures, role playing, and music to help children develop relationships, gain problem solving skills, and build confidence in communicating with others. Lessons are presented to each class once a week. Teachers are then able to aid children throughout the day as they learn to use the skills and tools taught through the *2nd Step* curriculum.

Christian education curriculum is also used throughout our programs to encourage / teach faith formation to young children. *Frolic* faith curriculum, combined with preschool wide Bible themes, provide us tools to help each child know God's true love for them.

Preschool @ The Ridge wants to partner with your family to provide your child with the best preschool experience possible!

Classes Offered

3 year old (a.m.)	3 year old (p.m.)	4 year old (a.m.)	4 year old (p.m.)	5 year old (all day)
Must be 3 by Sept. 15	Must be 3 by Sept. 15	Must be 4 by Sept. 15	Must be 4 by Sept. 15	Must be 5 by Sept. 15
\$160/month	\$160/month	\$200/month	\$200/month	\$325/month
3 days / week Mon. Tues. Thurs.	3 days / week Mon. Tues. Thurs.	4 days / week Mon. Tues. Thurs. Fri.	4days / week Mon. Tues. Thurs. Fri.	4 days / week Mon. Tues. Thurs. Fri.
8:45-11:15	12:00-2:30	8:45-11:15	11:30-2:30	8:45-2:30

Registration and Tuition Policies

- **Registration** – Registration fee is \$75. This fee is non-refundable. Preschool t-shirt included. Registration is done online.
 - **Tuition** – Tuition is due by the 5th of each month.
 - **Payment Options** - Tuition may be paid by check, cash, online bill pay through your bank, or online at www.ridgelife.org/preschool through our Push Pay system (transaction fee will be charged)
 - **Late fee** – A \$10 late fee will be applied for all tuition received after the 5th of the month
- At the beginning of the school year, September 2020, your last month (May 2021) payment is due.**
All tuition is non-refundable. You may pay for the whole year or a few months at a time if you wish.

Required Paperwork

- Emergency Medical Consent
- Permission Form
- Child Interest Form
- Physical & Immunization Forms (signed by a health professional) – due by 1st day of school.

School closings

Preschool will be closed if Ankeny schools are **closed or delayed** due to inclement weather. Please check local radio, TV, or www.ankeny.k12.ia.us.com for Ankeny closing information. We will also post on Preschool @ The Ridge Facebook page and/or our text group.

Text Group

To join the preschool text group: Text **ridgelife.Preschool** to (866) 206-2146. This group will keep you informed of events, announcements, weather issues, and emergencies.

Reporting An Absence

We worry about your child when they are not here! **Please call 965-1737 x 245 if your child will be late or absent for any reason.** **Please do not email for last minute absences.**

Drop off and Pick Up Procedures

Detailed 2020 drop off and pick up procedures will be explained in our parent meeting video and sent later.

Children will only be allowed to leave with adults on his/her emergency form. If your child needs to be picked up by someone else, **please call 965-1737 ext 245** with this information. Staff will ID all people they do not know.

Parent involvement

Please note due to COVID 19 – Parents will be asked to not enter the preschool area at this time. We will begin to allow parents into the classrooms as we see the spread of COVID 19 slow down.

What should my child bring to school?

- **Backpack:** For personal belongings and for taking home class projects. Please send a backpack big enough to fit a normal size folder.
- **Extra Clothes:** For spills and bathroom accidents. We have extra clothes, but children often feel more comfortable in their own clothing.

- **Appropriate Play Clothes:** Comfortable, washable clothing for moving around, being on the floor, and exploring messy sensory materials. Please make sure your child also has **appropriate footwear for running, jumping, etc.** Flip flops can be very dangerous on our gym and outside surfaces!!
- **Face Covering / Mask:** Due to COVID 19 – We ask that each child have a mask or face shield to wear at school. **We recommend a mask for each day of the week or the laundering of the mask after each day.** We have purchased a lanyard for each child and will be attaching their mask so when they take it off it will be close at hand.

Party Invites/Solicitations

- **Birthday Party Invites** – We ask that you do not distribute party invites at school. Please use your class list to mail or email all invites.
- **Solicitations/Private Business** – Please do not use school to distribute materials or advertise for private business purposes. We also ask that you do not use class list for private business. Please keep these lists private and for school or playdate communication only.

Transportation

Preschool @ The Ridge does not transport children to and from school, field trips, or for emergency reasons.

Security

Preschool doors will remain locked during preschool hours. **Please ring the doorbell if you are arriving late or picking up early.** Staff has authority to allow or restrict entrance to those outside preschool & church staff. Our area is equipped with security cameras in hallway areas.

Field Trips

3 year olds: Our three year old classes will not be taking off property field trips. Teachers will schedule “in house” visitors as it fits into the curriculum such as the fire department, zoo, or other “expert” in a learning theme. They will take walks within the church property.

4/5 year olds: Field trips may be planned by the teachers/director when it is safe to do so due to COVID 19. Parents will be asked to meet at the destination. All field trips will be learning experiences where the children/parents participate in hands on experiences. Preschool @ The Ridge will not be responsible for transporting children. **Siblings will not be allowed on most field trips for safety purposes.**

3, 4, and 5 year old classes may take walks around the Prairie Ridge church property. Parents/guardians will sign permission for both “in house” and off premises field trips. This form is included in the paperwork packet.

Medical Liability

Prairie Ridge Church and Preschool @ The Ridge is not liable for any injuries or sickness the child sustains during his/her time at the preschool. Any medical costs will be taken care of through the parent’s health insurance. Our staff is concerned about safety and will take this into account when planning activities and supervising children during their time here at school. Parents must sign a waiver included on the medical consent form due by the first day of school.

Staff Training

All lead teachers are required to have degrees in early childhood education. All staff will be trained in and not limited to:

- Mandatory Child Abuse Reporting
- Universal Precautions and Infectious Disease Control
- CPR/First Aid
- 10 hours of Essentials Preservice training in areas of early childhood development topics
- 6 hours per year of trainings within the field of Early Childhood
- Safety trainings for fire, tornado, flood, blizzards, earthquakes, power failures, bomb threats, chemical spills, nuclear evacuation, intruders, intoxicated visitors, missing children, program activities, special accommodations, and food policies.
- All staff are subject to a Back Ground check and FBI fingerprinting.

Substitute Teachers/Associates

Preschool @ The Ridge has a substitute teacher list. Those on our list are qualified and participate in staff trainings. They will be paid for their time.

Bathrooms

Private bathrooms located in each classroom as well as in the Square (gym area). If a large group bathroom break is needed, we will use bathrooms located in the main hallway.

Hand washing

Children, staff, and visitors are required to wash their hands when they enter the classroom, before or after using the restroom, before and after eating, after coming in contact with bodily fluids, and before and after messy play.

HAND SANITIZER WILL BE USED AT CERTAIN TIMES TO HELP STOP THE SPREAD OF COVID 19.

Hand washing procedures are posted by each sink.

1. Apply soap and scrub hands for 20 seconds, scrub tops and bottoms of hands and between fingers
2. Rinse for 10 seconds
3. Dry with paper towel
4. Turn off water faucet with paper towel
5. Staff will monitor hand washing procedures

Inclement Weather Policy:

NOAA weather radios are placed throughout the Church and will notify us of severe weather.

If a Tornado Warning is Announced:

Children will be moved to the basement via stairwell immediately. Everyone will stay in the identified "safe areas" until the all clear from the director or other church staff.

Fire/Smoke Policy: All staff will know the emergency evacuation routes and procedures for the building. Emergency evacuation maps are posted in each classroom.

If The Fire Alarm Sounds: All children will be evacuated through the nearest exit. No one will return to the building until the "all clear" has been given by the fire department. If we cannot return to the building the children will be taken to Heartland Assembly church on 36th Street. Parents will receive information via phone on pick up procedures.

Snacks

We do our best to keep our classrooms peanut free. Peanut products are the most common causes of fatal food reactions. Exposure can occur by swallowing, touching, and/or inhaling airborne particles or absorbing residues from other surfaces. We take food allergies seriously and use precautions to assure the safety of all children.

Due to COVID: Preschool @ The Ridge will be providing ALL snacks for the 2020-2021 school year. We follow healthy snack guidelines from CACFP. **Parents are asked to pay a snack fee instead of providing snacks from home for the 2020-2021 school year.** More information on the costs and how to pay will be available soon.

Preschool @ The Ridge participates in the State of Iowa milk program and will provide water and 1% milk.

4's PM and 5's Lunch Guidelines

If your child eats lunch at school, they will need to bring a lunch each day. A microwave is available.

Please limit microwave time to 1 minute or less. All microwave items need to be in a microwavable container. We ask that you make it simple for our lunch staff to quickly microwave these items.

We ask that you keep your child's lunch as healthy as possible. 1% milk and water provided. Guidelines below will help you and your child to make healthy choices. Your child's lunch should include:

- **Protein** – Meat or Meat alternative, Lean meat, eggs, cheese, legume, or yogurt.
- **Vegetable**- Canned, fresh, or frozen
- **Fruit** – Canned, fresh or **100%** fruit juice
- **Whole grain** – Bread, noodles, rice, quinoa, etc.

Preschool @ The Ridge will have items on hand each day to supplement any lunches not meeting state requirements. There are many ideas online for simple children's lunch ideas. **Please DO NOT bring microwave mac n cheese cups, Nacho or Pizza Lunchables. These items take too long or are too difficult to prepare.**

Health policies

Physical Form: According to state of Iowa health policies, preschool age children five years of age and younger, need to have a current physical form signed by a health professional. The physical exam shall be no more than 12 months old. Parents will be asked to bring a new physical form when the one on file expires during the school year.

Immunization Form: Preschool students are also required to have an up to date immunization form signed by a health professional. Religious exemptions are accepted when signed or notarized by a physician.

Medical/Dental Emergency: A medical emergency form must be completed and signed by parent/guardian by the first day of child's attendance.

Medication Policy and Procedures: Staff will administer medications as directed by parent. Medications need to be brought in original packaging/pharmacy bottles with dispensing instructions. If at all possible, we prefer medications are given at home, but realize that's not always possible. All medications will be stored in a locked box or cabinet. **First Aid kits are located in all preschool areas.**

Smoke Free Environment: Preschool @ The Ridge and Prairie Ridge Church are smoke free environments. Please refrain from smoking near the building and in the parking lots.

Health Notifications: Staff will post health notices for communicable diseases your child may come in contact with at preschool. Staff will have direct contact with each child upon arrival to check for illness.

Sick Children: Staff will provide a supervised quiet area away from the group should a child become ill. Parents/Guardians will be contacted to take child home. It is important to let staff know if something might affect

your child's day (lack of sleep, different eating habits). Do not send your child to preschool if you suspect an illness. **Children who exhibit the following symptoms will not be allowed to remain at preschool: swollen glands, unexplained rashes, severe coughing, fever (over 100 degrees), lice, diarrhea, pink eye, vomiting. Please DO NOT bring your child to school with any of these symptoms.** Children must be 24 hours fever free without fever reducing medication.

Discipline Policy

Preschool age children are in the process of learning how to control their emotions and manage the relationships around them. To guide children through this developmental stage, our teachers will model appropriate behavior, maintain realistic expectations, create a positive classroom environment, plan age appropriate activities, and teach/encourage all children to use problem solving strategies.

When inappropriate behavior occurs, our staff will use positive discipline strategies to change unwanted behavior such as redirecting the child to an activity to help him/her feel less frustrated and helping the child work through his/her difficulties as they encourage them to find an appropriate solution to their problem. Second Step social curriculum is implemented in each classroom on a weekly basis.

Preschool @ The Ridge staff will not spank children as a disciplinary measure. It is against our policy for staff to humiliate or embarrass a child. No child will be deprived of basic needs such as food, rest room privileges, or attention as a punishment. We will not tolerate mental, physical, or sexual abuse.

If a child's behavior becomes a concern in the classroom, staff will consult with the child's parent to develop a behavior plan. In the event the behavior is a danger to other children the child may be asked to leave the program.

Biting Policy

Preschool @ The Ridge staff desires that every child feels safe at school. We strive to provide an environment which encourages and promotes cooperative play, respect for others, and non-aggressive problem solving among students. Biting can be a normal stage in development in children three and under. For health and safety reasons, we take biting seriously. Children bite for a variety of reasons: sensory exploration, panic, seeking attention, or an intense desire for a toy.

Our policy for handling a biting incident is the following:

1. The biter* is immediately removed from the group with a firm NO. The bitten child is consoled and the bitten area is washed with soap and water. If necessary, ice is applied to reduce any swelling or bruising. The biter is redirected to another activity and supervised. Staff will talk to the child on a level that he/she can understand about the incident.
2. A written incident report is given to the parents of all children involved when they are picked up that day. The name of a biting child is not released because it serves no useful purpose and can make an already difficult situation more difficult.
3. Teachers will look at the context of each biting incident for a pattern, in an effort to prevent further biting behavior.
4. Teachers will work with each child who bites about resolving conflict or frustration in an appropriate manner.
5. Teachers will try to adapt the environment and work with parents to reduce any child stress and protect potential victims. *No child will be publicly labeled in the classroom.