
Parent Handbook

First Kids Preschool

2024-25 Academic Year



to know God and make Him known...

Mission Statement

We strive to know God and make Him known through our love for Christ, our service to others, and by showing honor in all things.

Statement of Purpose

The First Kids Preschool program is a half-day program designed for children ages one through five, which meets on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, & Thursdays. We desire to teach every child that learning is fun. We employ curricula published by *LifeWay*, *Answers in Genesis*, *Horizons*, *Classical Conversations*, *ABeka*, and *Children Desiring God* as our foundational material. We also utilize additional resources to help challenge our students to master the academic standards expected at each age level.

At First Kids, we strive to help each child feel confident in the ways God has created them as they learn to live confidently in the world around them. We want our students to experience God's love for them through loving relationships and happy times in a Christian preschool environment. We meet each child where they are - allowing them to grow in their own way, at their own pace, and according to their individual needs.

We believe that true knowledge is impossible to attain without recognizing that all truth can only come from God. His character is revealed through Scripture and in every facet of His creation. God cannot be rightly separated from history, literature, mathematics, science, or any other academic discipline. Therefore, we seek to integrate the truth of Scripture into every aspect of our academic program.

First Kids is an outreach ministry of Henderson's First Baptist Church. It is our desire to help your family know God and have a real relationship with Him as we raise up future generations to cherish and glorify Him. If your family is not already attending to a local church, we would be honored to have you join with us at Henderson's First Baptist.

Overview of Program

Our teaching staff is dedicated to making the First Kids Preschool program a positive learning experience for every student. Our classroom environments are arranged into learning-based centers. Through play and formal learning, children are able to make choices as they participate in small group activities. Each class has formal large-group instruction time, as well as small-group learning opportunities.

Students participate daily in a variety of age-appropriate, Biblically-related center activities, which include:

- Working with paints, Play-Doh, crayons, blocks and other math manipulatives
- Enjoying stories, role-play, and reading books
- Learning to share, take turns, and work and play together
- Learning to respond rhythmically to music, singing, and exploring various instruments
- Acquiring good health and cleanliness habits
- Educational games, songs, worksheets, learning-based centers, and other activities
- Learning colors, shapes, letters, numbers, left and right, along with rhyming words
- Sharpening fine motor skills including handwriting, phonics, reading, and journaling
- Praying to the God of the Bible, and trusting Him to intercede in our hearts and our lives
- Loving our neighbor and learning to enjoy the diversity of gifts that God gives to each of us
- Daily Bible lessons with real-life application
- Daily large-group "circle-time" with pledges, memory work, and calendaring

Additionally, we also offer weekly Music and PE classes where students learn rhythm and coordination, as well as fun and basic music concepts. We strive to get your child into different learning environments, allowing them to enjoy hands-on experiments with everything from cooking in the kitchen to investigating nature outdoors. Be assured that your child will love to learn as they grow in their knowledge of how the world works around them.

We invite you to worship with your child's class in our monthly chapel services. These services help introduce our students to a large church setting, with a message just for them. It is a wonderful time of worship through singing, prayer, and Bible study that you will not want to miss.

Curriculum Themes

We offer a variety of academic themes to explore throughout the school year. Bible lessons and biblical principles lay the foundation of each theme, and are interwoven in all aspects of learning. Our learning-based centers have additional activities that further explore these thematic concepts:

Names



Friendships

Farming

Senses



Fall

Seeds & Pumpkins

Thanksgiving

Harvest



Careers

Tools & Machines

Traveling

Creation



Geography

The Gift of Jesus

Nativity

Gifts/Giving

Winter

Classification of Animals

Love

Honoring our Presidents

Citizenship

Outer Space

Caring for Pets

Families

Names of God

American and World History



Being Healthy

Weather

Plants

Resurrection/Easter

Around the World

Insects

States & Capitals

Night and Day

Literature

Marine Animals

Babies

Reading

Numerals and Skip Counting



Our 1 year-old class helps students learn basic classroom structure and teamwork. They sing, play, and learn through a variety of activities based on their abilities as they learn to trust others and operate in a structured setting. They even begin mastering early reading skills! Parents may choose 1, 2, or 3 days/wk.

Our 2 year-old class meets 3 days/wk and covers a new thematic unit every two weeks. Units are presented and explored through daily lessons, circle time, and learning-based centers. We also focus heavily on prayer, foundational Bible history, Scripture memory, geography, phonics, and language skills.

Our 3 year-old classes meet 3 days/wk as they utilize thematic units incorporated into a yearly study of the different names and attributes of God. Students learn how God's character is revealed through Scripture, and can be observed in nature and in our relationships - while continuing to see further development in their basic reading and writing skills. The memorization of Scripture, geography, and history is a large part of the 3's curricula. A heavy focus on reading development has many of our students reading by the end this level.

Our 4 and 5 year-old classes meet 3 days/wk and cover an in-depth Biblical study of Creation and have the daily subjects of Bible, social studies, language arts, math, reading, science, health & safety, music, and art. They also integrate thematic units into each subject as appropriate, and quickly progress to more independent reading and writing. Historical, mathematical, and geographical fact memorization is also a key component of this rigorous program.

We make it a high priority in our 3- and 4-year old classes to teach the fundamental skills of reading. To aide in teaching these skills, those classes use the Heggerty Phonemic Awareness curriculum. Phonemic awareness is the ability to understand that spoken words are made up of individual sounds called phonemes, and it's one of the best early predictors for reading success (heggerty.com).

Our overall academic plan is aligned to fully prepare our students to meet, and then exceed, the Kentucky Department of Education Kindergarten standards. Our process is to partner with parents to introduce concepts early and practice them daily in order to build the child's confidence in problem-solving and critical thinking. Every subject we teach is intentional in building and nurturing a biblical worldview, with the hopes that this will be the foundation our students will use throughout their lives. The feedback we receive from elementary educators is that our students are advanced when they enter Kindergarten, and typically stand out as leaders among their peers.

General Policies

1. HEALTH:

As a preschool, it is possible that our young children may be exposed to certain illnesses for the very first time. Therefore, we have chosen to adhere to a more strict sick policy than that of public schools and daycares in an attempt to better protect the health of our young preschool students. We need each family to subscribe to this policy in order for it to be effective. We ask that students not be sent to school if they exhibit any symptoms of illness which can include coughing, runny nose, flushed skin, fever, earache, red eyes, chills, headache, skin eruptions/rash, sore throat, head cold, vomiting, or diarrhea. Before a child is allowed to return to school following an illness, they **must be without fever, vomiting, or diarrhea without the aid of medication for a full 24-hour period.** If your child has not been free of symptoms for a complete 24 hours *without the aid of medication*, please do not attempt to bring them to school. If a child is officially diagnosed with the flu, we ask they wait at least 6 full days from the diagnosis before returning to school, and be at least 48 hours fever-free free without meds. If a child exhibits symptoms or becomes ill during the day, we will immediately notify parents to pick them up. If the potential administration of medication such as Epi-Pens for non-contagious condition is necessary, the proper form must be filled out with the Director in advance. In case of emergency or severe illness, or if parents cannot be reached, the Director may contact the child's pediatrician at the parent's expense. (There are no tuition credits for absences due to illness or vacations.)

2. ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE:

Students should be in their classrooms by 9:00 a.m. and should be picked up by 12:00 noon. Teachers will be ready to receive children at their classroom at 8:50. It is to your child's advantage to be on time, as they miss out on planned activities when they are late. If your child arrives after 9:15, the portico doors will be locked, and you must use the call-button to gain entry. **Parents must sign in their child every day** to ensure the safety of students during an emergency evacuation and for attendance records.

Early Room is available between 7:50 and 8:50 for students age 2 through 5. Early Room is located directly across from the elevator on the top floor. When using Early Room, please sign your child in at their classroom **and** in Early Room. There is an additional charge of ***\$5.00 per day for Early Room*** for families who pay tuition monthly. (NOTE: ONLY children of our teachers are allowed to sign in to Early Room prior to 7:50.)

Now is the time to establish good attendance habits. Help your child realize that school is an important part of his/her life and that it is important to be at school everyday on time. **If your child needs to miss school, please email Mary Clutts (maryc@fbchenderson.org) or call the church office between 8-10am with the reason the student is absent.**

The portico doors will be opened at 12pm sharp to allow adults to pick up their children. Please wait outside the classroom doors for teachers to dismiss students to you. All students must be signed out with the signature of the adult picking up and the time. (A late fee of \$15/day may be charged if a child is continuously picked up after 12:00.) Students are only released to adults on the pick-up list. To add to the list, a written note should be sent in the student's folder with that adult's full name. If someone attempts to pick up your child without prior consent from you, your child will not be released to them. A photo ID will be required from those picking up at dismissal until our teachers become familiar with the person picking-up.

3. VISITS:

To limit distractions, we ask that parents not enter the preschool rooms during the school day unless prior arrangements have been made with the teacher. There will be scheduled times throughout the year when parents are asked to volunteer for an event. If you would like to help out with a special activity, please sign up with your child's teacher, or call them and let them know. If you need to schedule an evaluation/observation of your child by an outside organization, arrangements must be made at least one week in advance with the Director.

4. FOOD:

A mid-morning snack will be served each day. **You should never send food or drinks to preschool unless specifically requested by the teacher. This is extremely important due to the serious food allergies of some of our students.**

5. RECORDS:

First Kids Preschool keeps records of student attendance, progress, health and identification. All registration information and health forms are required prior to enrollment. **A current “Commonwealth of Kentucky Immunization Certificate” is required to be on file to be enrolled in our program. All immunization records must be on an official certificate, with a current expiration date.** Your doctor or Health Department can fax this to First Kids at 270-826-9415.

6. CLOTHING:

Washable, play clothing is most suitable for preschool. **A spare change of clothing is required for each child everyday - which should include pants, shirt, socks, and underwear/diapers.** Be sure your child has a coat or jacket if necessary (labeled with their full name), as we will go outside as often as weather permits.

7. TOYS:

Please, do not allow your child to bring toys or items from home. At certain times throughout the year, we will invite children to share special items from home. In this case, please label your child’s belongings so that every effort may be made to see it safely home. No toy guns, weapons, or war toys are allowed at any time. We cannot be responsible for the loss or damage of any personal toys.

8. CELEBRATIONS:

We host parties to celebrate several special holidays throughout the year and parents are invited to participate. (Grandparents Day, Christmas, Valentine’s Day, End of School, etc.) If you would like to send something special for a birthday, please check with your child’s teacher at least one week prior to the day. This allows the teacher time to plan the day appropriately, and for precautions to be taken for any food allergies.

9. MONTHLY CALENDARS and NEWSLETTERS:

Calendars are provided each month to highlight important dates and events. Please keep these posted visibly in your home. Your child’s teacher will also send newsletters summarizing class activities so you know what is happening in the classroom. This will be helpful as you to talk with your child about what they are learning in school and work with them at home.

10. FOLDERS:

Children are given a folder and required to bring it in their backpack everyday. This serves as a “mailbox” between the parent and teacher. The teacher will check folders daily for notes from home, tuition payments, permission slips, etc. It is very important that you **check your child’s folder at the end of each day for any information you may need for your child’s next school day.**

11. PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES/ PROGRESS REPORTS:

Progress Reports for all students will go home in December and again at the end of the school year. These reports are designed to help you understand how your child is progressing in his/her cognitive, spiritual, motor, and social development. These reports are not “grades.”

Parent/teacher conferences are highly recommended for all PreK students, and for parents of younger children who may want additional information/clarification about their child’s progress. Conferences may be scheduled directly with your child’s teacher. The conferences will consist of a meeting to go over your child’s progress through the year and an evaluation of his/her readiness to begin Kindergarten, if applicable.

12. **DISCIPLINE:**

First Kids believes that the most effective way to build exemplary character and commendable behavior in our students is to lovingly and consistently deal with the motives of their hearts. Jesus taught that personal holiness should not be measured by actions of the individual. Rather, He said that holiness must be weighed by the motives of the heart. Therefore, our focus will be on the motives of the student's heart in order to attain significant and lasting change. This involves directing the child's life so that he will desire to function in a Godly way. Love is the core element of discipline, and is a constant part of how we guide each child to grow a heart for Christ.

Our "Heart Change" discipline process begins by following three classroom values at all times:

1. *Obey my teachers.*
2. *Be kind to others.*
3. *Show respect.*

This process takes time for the students to learn, and thus apply. Our teachers will spend time each day reviewing these values and helping our students understand how to apply them. Then, when children disobey, the correction process is as follows:

- a. *They are asked to identify what they did wrong. (Such as, which classroom value was broken...)*
- b. *They are asked why it was wrong. (Identify where their "heart" needs work...)*
- c. *They are counseled to identify a better reaction the next time they are in that situation.*
- d. *They are encouraged to go ahead and try again!*

If students are defiant or unwilling to address their negative behavior, they are required to **take a break**. This is different than a "time out." A "break" has repentance as the goal, rather than punishment. The length of the break is determined by the child, and it ends when he/she is willing to listen/talk about what they did wrong. It focuses on the heart and *why* the behavior occurred, rather than the behavior itself. A break also emphasizes the teacher's desire for the child to return to the group, rather than distancing the child from their teacher.

We always try to work closely with the child and parent if serious problems arise, but we also must consider what is best for the classroom as a whole. If seriously negative behavior should occur, the following steps will be taken:

1. The "Heart Change" process is followed (as described above in steps **a** through **d**.)
2. If the child is unwilling to take a break or modify their behavior, a teacher will sit with the child to guide them through the break until the child is ready to talk about why/what they did wrong.
3. If the child refuses to take a break or show a change of heart after several attempts, the child will be brought to the Director to discuss the issue. Once the child seems to understand how to correct the situation, they will be sent back to the class and encouraged to try again.
4. **Should the child continue to have the same problem without noticeable improvement in their behavior, the Director will call the parent to pick up the child.**

For more information on the "Heart Change" program, including free email parenting tips, visit www.biblicalpharenting.org *Shepherding a Child's Heart* by Dr. Tedd Tripp, or www.shepherdpress.com. Also visit www.visionaryfam.com for great parenting advice.

13. **DISMISSAL OF A CHILD:**

First Kids Preschool reserves the right to dismiss any child if he/she seems unable to function safely in a group setting, exhibits behavior that consistently prevents the rest of the class from learning, or if tuition has not been paid. At the same time, a parent has the privilege to withdraw a child when deemed in the best interest of the child. If a child's enrollment is terminated, a tuition refund will be given for any monthly installments paid in advance, however tuition will not be reimbursed for the current month's installment. All Registration and Supply Fees are non-refundable.

14. **PARENT VOLUNTEERS:**

Many volunteers are needed to organize and assist with classroom celebrations and activities. If you are interested in helping, please let the teachers know. The teachers will also be able to discuss other opportunities to be involved or ways you can help out their class. In general, it is usually counter-productive for parents to hang out in their child's classroom, or observe from a position visible by the child. Children at this age are just learning how to be away from their parents for short periods of time and may become unruly when parents are in the classroom to observe, or upset when the parent leaves. There are alternative ways to observe classes. If you desire an observation, please contact the Director.

15. **FIELD TRIPS:**

Scheduled field trips may coincide with the thematic units being taught. We try to plan trips that are meaningful to the children and families. Field trips are a great way to get to know your child's classmates and teachers. Off-site field trips usually require all students to have a guardian to accompany them and provide their transportation to and from the site unless otherwise stated. For safety purposes, guests with children that are not siblings of a current First Kids student **are not allowed** to join us on a field trip.

16. **INCLEMENT WEATHER:**

In case of severe weather or snow, we follow the closing plans of the Henderson County Schools.

If county schools are:

First Kids:

Closed

Will be closed

On a 1-hour delay

Will start at 9:00, **with no Early Room**

On 2-hour delay

Will be closed

Please refer to your local television or radio station for closing information. You may also sign up for text alerts that notify you of delays or cancelations. Our calendar has six built-in snow-days. First Kids does not add days to the school calendar to make up missed days.

17. **OUTDOOR PLAY:**

Students at First Kids will frequently go outside for recess and for nature walks when weather permits. Please dress your child appropriately to enjoy God's beautiful world by sending a coat/jacket on cooler days. Please be sure to label jackets, hats, gloves with the student's first & last name.

18. **FEES/TUITION:**

Registration Fees are due at the time of registration. The yearly Supply Fee is due July 10th, and the first tuition payment is due August 10. Tuition statements are billed up-front and will be emailed to the address on file at the beginning of each month. Tuition is due no later than the 10th day of the month. **If payment is received after the 10th, a late fee of \$15 will be assessed.** If tuition is not paid for two consecutive months, a child's enrollment may be terminated. Early Room charges will be billed the month *after* they are incurred. Payments may be mailed in, sent in the child's folder, or turned in at the church office. If an account is not current by April 10th, the student will not be allowed to participate in the preschool graduation ceremony. Accounts must also be current to receive Progress Reports and to enroll children for an upcoming school year. If enrolling more than one child, there is a 15% discount on the younger child's tuition rate. Rates are as follows:

Registration Fee: \$50.00 (Non-refundable and due at time of registration for each child.)

Supply Fee: \$120.00 (Non-refundable and due by July 10th)

Tuition: Ones: \$564/year for 1 day/wk, \$1128/year for 2 days/wk, \$1692 for 3 days/wk

Twos & Threes: \$1692/year for 3 days/wk

Fours & Fives: \$1872/year for 3 days/wk

Tuition is payable in one yearly payment, two semester payments, or nine monthly installments - August through April.

19. CHAIN OF COMMAND:

The teachers of First Kids Preschool are under the direct supervision of the Director. The Preschool Director serves as the on-site administrator for the day-to-day operation of the program. The Director is accountable to the Preschool and Children's Ministry Committee. If a consultation is requested with attorneys, children's service representatives, or pediatricians, a Committee member will also be present. Any questions, comments, or suggestions should be addressed to the Director.

2024-25 Preschool and Children's Ministry Committee:

Mary Clutts, Director, First Kids Preschool

Jill Meadows, Administrative Assistant for Children's Ministry, HFBC

Ellie Coursey, Director of Children's Ministry, HFBC

Kristen Moore, Director of Preschool Ministry, HFBC

Rev. Chuck Henderson, Executive Pastor, HFBC

2024-25 Preschool Staff Members (subject to change):

Lauren Luttrell Lead Teacher, 1's Class

April Hibbs Assistant Teacher, 1's Class

Megan Septer Lead Teacher, 2A Class

Lyndi Mauk Assistant Teacher, 2A Class

Kris Jerrels Lead Teacher, 2B Class

Sandy Williams Assistant Teacher, 2B Class

Christy Stone Lead Teacher, 3A Class

Amber Clayton Assistant Teacher, 3A Class

Trish Priest Lead Teacher, 3B Class

Hayley Mortis Assistant Teacher, 3B Class

Donna Stinson Lead Teacher, 4A Class

Kensey Willoughby Assistant Teacher, 4A Class

Kristen Moore Lead Teacher, 4B Class

Bekah Meggos Assistant Teacher, 4B Class

Julie Lynn Lead Teacher, 4C Class

Emily Guier Assistant Teacher, 4C Class

Caitlyn Blaine Early Room Lead Teacher, Support staff, one-to-one specialist

Kathy Noblett Music and P.E. Lead Teacher

Jill Meadows Administrative Assistant for Children's Ministry, HFBC

Ellie Coursey Director of Children's Ministry, HFBC

Mary Clutts First Kids Preschool Director