

Limona Village Chapel Children's Center Parent Handbook 2023-2024



Enabling children to grow in God's love

**408 Limona Road
Brandon, Florida 33510
813-689-8385 ext. 227**

Mission Statement

Limona Village Chapel Children's Center mission is to share the love, joy and peace of Christ with our students and families while providing a safe and nurturing environment. The Children's Center is a place for the development of the total child - spiritually, physically, emotionally, mentally and socially.

Philosophy Statement

The Children's Center provides a developmentally appropriate curriculum for preschool age children in a Christian environment. Activities are planned to enhance a healthy, stimulating, and challenging environment where children can learn through constructive play and social interaction. Our program is geared to the needs and abilities of the young child to prepare him/her more fully for the kindergarten and elementary school years.

Hours of Operation

General Hours	9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Preschool Hours	9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Extended Care	1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Afterschool Hours	2:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Accreditation and Licensing

The State of Florida Department of Children and Families license the Children's Center - License #CHC-078. This agency as well as the Early Learning Coalition of Hillsborough County inspect the school throughout the year and the center must comply with their regulations.

Staff

The staff consists of qualified Christians who demonstrate love and concern for the welfare of young children. All staff members comply with Hillsborough County Childcare Licensing regulations. Our staff consists of the following:

Linda Stafford, Director	Rachel Compas, Assistant Director
Judy Baamonde, VPK Teacher	Janice Kling, VPK Assistant
Jennifer Hernandez, VPK Teacher	Renaee Vernon, VPK Assistant
Deanna Clark, VPK Teacher	
Beth Townley, 3's Teacher	Andrea Philpott, 3's Assistant
Shannon Smith, 3's Teacher	
Lauren Crawford, 3's Teacher	Jane Bell, 3's Assistant
Heather Ward, Music Teacher	

Children's Center Board

The Children's Center is governed by the Children's Center Board, which is appointed and approved by the Leadership Team of the Limona Village Chapel United Methodist Church.

The Children's Center Board approves the overall program and goals of the school and helps set the policies. The Board hires the staff and makes decisions regarding budget and expenses. Problems or concerns not resolved by talking directly with the staff or director may be submitted in writing to the Board.

Curriculum

The Children's Center does not include a formal "workbook". Reading and writing readiness, pre-reading and math concepts are integrated through meaningful activities and individualized "work jobs". The center's curriculum also includes language development, social studies, science, music, art, and physical education integrated through units of study. Our objectives come from the Florida State Early Childhood Standards.

Activities in our classes are interrelated and skills are not taught in isolation, but in a meaningful context using methods and materials appropriate to the needs and interests of children.

Enrollment Policy

Enrollment shall be open to any child, provided the school can meet the needs of that child. Enrollment in the center shall be granted without discrimination regarding sex, race, color, creed, or religious belief.

Adjusting to Preschool

For some children, the transition to preschool is smooth and quick. However, others may need more time to transition to a new environment. Learning to separate is a normal part of growing up and many children go through a period of anxiety when adjusting to this change. All our staff will work with your family to ensure the transition from home and school is as smooth as possible.

Please feel free to call the school at any time to check and see how your child is doing. We will never allow a child to cry uncontrollable for an extended period without calling to notify you. Typically, children stop crying within the first 10 minutes and do fine the rest of the day. However, if a child has a difficult time adjusting we may suggest a shorter day for a week or so, then gradually working your child up to their full schedule.

Clothing for Children

As children learn and play their clothing may become soiled. Because of this please send your children in comfortable, washable clothing.

Close-toed shoes and socks are the most durable and safest for indoor and outdoor play. Sandals, croc, and flip-flops are a safety hazard and are not permitted at school.

Clothing with straps, complicated buttons, zippers, and belts cause frustration for a child who is learning to be self-sufficient, and should be avoided.

An extra set of clothing should be available always at the center, this includes, socks and underwear. The change of clothing should be placed in a Ziploc bag with your child's name written on it. Additionally, each item of clothing should be labeled with your child's name. Children who are newly potty trained may require additional sets of clothing.

Tuition

The Children's Center is a non-profit, self-supporting ministry of the Limona Village Chapel United Methodist Church. Tuition is based on an annual rate and spread out over 10 months of payments. Tuition is due on the tenth of each month and will be considered delinquent after the tenth, unless other special arrangements have been made with the director. A \$20.00 late fee will be assessed if tuition is received after the tenth. Your child's tuition can be paid by cash, check made out to LVC, or credit card. Checks that are returned for insufficient funds will need to include a bank fee of \$25.00.

Unless special circumstances warrant and prior arrangements are made, a student who has not paid tuition by the last day of the month will be withdrawn from the program. Notification will be given in the form of a letter from the director. Reinstatement will only be considered after complete payment has been made and if an opening is available. A family with two or more children will receive a \$5.00 monthly discount on tuition as

well as half off the registration fee. There will be no refunds due to absenteeism, withdrawing for the school or the school closing for any reason.

Lunch

Parents are responsible for providing a nutritional lunch, snack, and a drink for the time their child will be attending school. All food must be ready to eat. Cold food items may be kept cold with cold packs and hot food may be kept warm in a thermos. Additionally, you should provide your child with any utensils required to eat lunch.

Florida Department of Children and Families requires us to monitor lunches to ensure that they contain a balanced meal. Meals must have at least four of the following components:

Dairy, Protein, Fruit, Veggies, Fats, and Grains

Food Allergy Precautions

If your child has a food allergy, reasonable accommodations will be made in the classroom to ensure their safety. If your child has a food allergy, please work with your child's teacher and the director to develop a plan for ensuring your child's safety. If your child has a severe allergy that may require use of an epi-pen speak with the director about keeping the medication on hand.

Personal Property

Any item that your child brings to school should be properly labeled with their name. This includes cups, lunchboxes, and clothing. This is imperative as teachers are unable to remember what items belong to every child in class. Adhering to this policy will minimize the loss of your child's items.

Communication

Communication between parents and staff is vital to our day-to-day operations. We encourage open communication between parents and staff. We ask parents to remember that the staff must watch the children always and even a brief conversation can distract the staff member from their duties. For the safety of our children we ask you to schedule a meeting at a time when the staff member can devote their full attention to the parent.

Problems should never be discussed with anyone other than the parties who are directly involved or are a part of the resolution process. Problems should never be discussed in front of the children.

Disciplinary Practices

Our program is designed to encourage self-discipline, responsibility, social, intellectual, and physical growth. We encourage children to learn to "use their words" to work out problems with other children and to express needs and desires. All children will start with their name on the color "green" for good behavior. If a child's behavior is not acceptable, the teacher will move the child's name to the color "yellow" and talk to the child. If the behavior is not corrected, the teacher will remove the child from the group. We refer to this as "time out". Usually, this is all that is necessary.

In a situation involving unacceptable behavior that may be harmful to other children, the teacher, or themselves, the teacher will move the child's name to the color "red", remove the child from the classroom and call the parent to remove the child from the school for the remainder of the school day.

If the problem persists, the director, teacher and parent will work together through a behavior modification program. Spanking or any other form of physical punishment is prohibited.

Parent Involvement

Parents are welcome to come and visit the school at any time. We are very proud of our program and happy to have you observe and share in our activities. We cannot permit children who are not enrolled in the school to visit unless accompanied by a parent who will remain with them for the entire visit. We encourage parent participation in the classrooms, especially with special classroom projects and cooking experiences. Parents will be given an opportunity at the beginning of the school year to express their interest in participating through parent volunteer information sheets.

Special Events

Parents will be notified of parties, special visitors, and field trips by way of newsletters, calendars, and permission slips. We generally do not schedule events early in the school year, as we prefer the children to become familiar with their teachers, classmates, and the school routines. All children must have a signed permission slip to attend any of the special events. Monies paid for special events are non-refundable. Unfortunately, some of the events we schedule cannot accommodate siblings. We apologize in advance for any inconvenience this may cause.

Birthday Parties

If you wish to serve refreshments for your child's birthday, please speak with the teacher in advance. Simple refreshments such as cookies, cupcakes or donut holes are acceptable. Please do not include party hats, favors, gift bags, etc. Do not send invitations to birthday parties to school unless everyone in the class is invited. If your child has a summer birthday and would like to share it with their classmates, a "pretend birthday" date may be scheduled during the school year at a time convenient to you and the teacher.

Health Requirements

The Children's Center conforms to all Hillsborough County Licensing requirements. HRS health form 3040 and HRS form 680, Certificate of Immunization, filled out and signed by your doctor, must be on file within thirty days from your child's first day of school. A Religious Exemption may be given in lieu of the Certificate of Immunization. After thirty days, if not health forms are on record, Hillsborough County Licensing mandates that a child shall not attend school until the required health forms are provided. All other forms required by the county licensing agency will be placed in your child's file.

Medical Policies

Your child's health is extremely important to all of us. A daily health evaluation is conducted when your child arrives at school. Please notify the staff member receiving your child of any unusual behaviors, or symptoms you may have noticed that morning. Also, please let us know of any injuries or accidents that have occurred outside of school.

It is imperative that you report any contagious diseases to the school as soon as the illness has been diagnosed. We feel it is important to notify all families about any exposure their child may have had during school so children can receive any necessary preventative treatment.

Common conditions in which children should not attend school and will be sent home for include:

Fever (100 degrees orally) - within the past 24 hours

Severe coughing - croupy or whooping sounds after coughs

Yellow or green discharge from nose
Conjunctivitis - Pinkeye
Unusual spots - rashes - infected skin patches
Sore throat or trouble swallowing
Headache - stiff neck
Vomiting - within the past 24 hours

Severe itching of body or scalp - Head Lice - If a child is identified as having head lice or nits, he or she will be excluded from school and will not be permitted to return to school until he or she has received treatment. Nits are the white eggs that lice lay that adhere to strands of hair. Parents are responsible to provide the appropriate treatment to eliminate head lice and nits.

Return Policy

Children may return to school when they have been fever free without fever suppressants, vomiting and diarrhea for 24 hours. Have been treated with antibiotics for a full 24 hours. If your child has a skin injury they must be covered without seepage through the bandage. Children with head lice must have their hair treated and all nits removed.

Accidents

Every effort is made to avoid injuries and keep your child safe. However, occasionally accidents do occur. In the event of an injury during school hours we will immediately contact the parent or guardian. If a parent or guardian is not available a call will be placed to the designated emergency contact person. If the accident is an emergency requiring medical attention, our staff will call emergency services and if necessary an ambulance to transport your child to the hospital.

In the event of minor injury, a staff member will administer first aid and you will be notified upon pick up and asked to sign an accident report.

Emergency Information

Please be certain that the preschool always has a working phone number where you or your designated person may be reached. Information on the registration form (address, phone numbers, emergency contacts, etc.) must be kept up to date.

Attendance Policy for VPK Students

Our goal is to provide a high-quality prekindergarten learning experience that will prepare your child to be successful in kindergarten. A large part of this preparation is developing a consistent daily schedule. Children need to learn the importance of attendance and punctuality. Our attendance policy was implemented from the Florida Voluntary Prekindergarten requirements.

-VPK starts at 9:00 a.m. It is important that parents adhere to the start time. Late arrivals are disruptive to the group and awkward for the arriving child.

-Absences cannot exceed more than 20% of the instructional days each month. This means the child can only miss 3 days out of each month. The 20% does not apply to scheduled holidays or other school closings.

-A child with excessive absences (more than 20% each month) may jeopardize his/her continued enrollment in the VPK program.

-Parents are required to sign a monthly child attendance certificate verifying their child's daily attendance in the program. This is usually done during the morning or afternoon carline.

-If termination from the VPK program results due to the inability to follow the above requirements, you will be given the option of keeping your child enrolled but paying the regular tuition rate.

Transportation

Parents are responsible for transportation. Please notify the school of car pool arrangements. Children will not be released to persons other than those named by the parents. If someone else will pick up your child, please call with his or her name and description. In these instances, photo ID will be required. We will not allow the child to leave with an unauthorized person. Call the school if you will be delayed in picking up your child.

Dropping Off and Picking Up

If your child is attending our program in the Jungle, Rainforest, and Owl classrooms enter the parking lot off Victoria Road and drive up the entranceway in front of the Mook Building. All other classes enter the parking lot off Limona Road and drive up the covered entranceway at the front of the Seymour Building.

Place the prepared car sign with your child's name inside the windshield during drop off and pick up. A staff member will open the car door and help the child out of or into the appropriate car. It is the responsibility of the parent or vehicle driver to assure that the child is properly secured car seat as required by Florida Law. For the safety of everyone, please do not walk across the parking lot during car line.

Extended Care

Extended Care is available, Monday through Friday, on an as needed basis. The hours for this program are 1:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. The cost is \$8.50 an hour or \$250.00 a month. Reservations are required and accepted up until 12:00 daily pending availability of space.

Emergency Closing

In the event of severe weather or any other unsafe condition arise; including power or water outages, the Center may be closed. We will follow the same instructions as the Hillsborough County School System regarding severe weather. Should it become necessary to close the center early it will be the parent's responsibility to arrange for the child to be picked up.

School Calendar 2023-2024

First Day of School	August 10, 2023
Labor Day/Non-Student Day	September 4, 2023
Non-Student Day	October 16, 2023
Veteran's Day/Non-Student Day	November 10, 2023
Fall Break/Non-Student Days	November 20- 24, 2023
Return to school	November 27, 2023
Winter Break/Non-Student Days	December 25, 2023 - Jan 5, 2024
Return to School	January 8, 20234
MLK Day/Non-Student Day	January 15, 2024
Non-Student Day	February 16, 2024
Non-Student Day	March 4, 2024
Spring Break/Non-Student Days	March 11 – 15, 2024
Return to School	March 18, 2024
Non-Student Day	March 29, 2024
Last Day of School	May 24, 2024