The Learning Ladder

Christian Preschool

Parent/Student Handbook 2018

Dear Parents,

Welcome to The Learning Ladder Christian Preschool. Thank you for entrusting your child's care to us. As you read this handbook, you will see that we have implemented the rules necessary for the operation of a safe and healthy learning environment.

We strive to teach the love of God and the wonders of His creation at your child's level of understanding. We want the children to feel compassion for one another and for all that God created. We hope to lead them in developing to their maximum potential. We operate as a fully licensed facility under the Department of Children and Families and The Early Learning Coalition of Pasco and Hernando Counties.

Should you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact us at any time.

Sincerely,

The Learning Ladder Christian Preschool

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Philosophy and Purpose

At The Learning Ladder Christian Preschool, we strive to provide a loving Christian environment for your child. We feel that children develop through hands on learning. Our goal is to give them a solid foundation of the bible, while building their self-esteem. We intend to teach them the love for Jesus and a love of learning they will build on for the rest of their lives. We currently use The Creative Curriculum in meeting all the standards for school readiness through the Early Learning Coalition.

We strongly believe in the worth of each child, and know that each is valuable in God's sight. In everything we do we emphasize their worth in God's eyes.

The Center will seek to give emphasis in the following areas:

Safety: A protected environment with proper supervision, sturdy equipment, and adequate facilities.

Health: A balanced program that permits rest periods, furnishes nourishing food, encourages exercise and gives attention to good hygiene.

Self-confidence: Staff members who demonstrate and teach love in order to help the child gain self-esteem and confidence in who they are in Christ.

Social Development: Create an environment of interaction with other children and adults in order to provide growth opportunities in group situations and individual relationships.

Spiritual Development: Biblical teaching to instill in each the beginning of a knowledge of God in all of life with an understanding of His love and concern for everyone.

Hours of Operation

The school's hours of operation are from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM, Monday through Friday. Holidays and closings are determined on a yearly basis.

HOLIDAY CLOSINGS 2018

- Back to School Cleaning Day 8/10/2018
- Labor Day 9/3/2018
- Planning Day 10/15/18
- Thanksgiving Break 11/22-11/23/2018
- Christmas Break 12/24-1/1/2019
- Good Friday 4/19/2019
- Memorial Day 5/27/2019
- Independence Day 7/4/2019

(VPK Calendar has additional days off as well. If your VPK only child will need to be here through NON-VPK days, please see an office associate.)

Staff

All staff are required to complete 40 hours of child care training as well as Child CPR and First Aid within the first year of employment. They must also participate in continuing education courses throughout the year.

Several of our staff members have their CDA (Child Development Associate) or are in the process of receiving it.

The Adjustment Period

Remember your first day of school? Your child needs time to adjust as well. Please prepare your child ahead of time if possible. Discuss any concerns and talk about some of the new things that will be happening. Be enthusiastic, it is contagious.

Give your child a hug and a kiss, a cheerful smile and a reminder you are not far away and will be back soon. Your child's teacher will take it from there.
Feel free to call once you arrive to work.

Do not be alarmed if you notice changes for a short period. Clinging and toileting accidents are normal during changes in a child's daily schedule. Be loving and remember that these problems are only temporary.

Licensing

The Learning Ladder Christian Preschool is licensed by the Florida Department of Children & Families and follows its requirements and guidelines. DCF regularly evaluates teacher qualifications, the administration and the facility. All staff members are fingerprinted and background screened nationally prior to employment. The Pasco Hernando Early Learning Coalition governs our standards for education and development and we are evaluated regularly throughout the year. Children are accepted from 6 weeks of age through 5th grade on a non-discriminatory basis without regard to race, color, or religion. We follow the DCF guidelines for child-to-teacher ratios. Their ratios are as follows:

Infants 1:4 Ones 1:6 Twos 1:11 Threes 1:15

Fours 1:20 VPK 1:11 or 2:20 5 & up 1:25

Discipline Policy

A very important part of the preschool experience is helping children learn how to get along in the world and enjoy being with other children as well as follow the direction of an adult other than their parent. The teachers will focus on the positive behaviors of the children and reinforce those behaviors as often as possible. The Learning Ladder reserves the right to end child care services at any time for any reason. Our discipline policy will consist of the following strategies:

1. Encouraging children to use their words when having a disagreement with another child. Facilitating children in their attempts to settle their own disputes.

2. Redirecting behavior when this seems potentially effective.

3. Separating a child from the group – one minute away for each year of age.

4. Counseling children individually about their behaviors.

5. Making parents aware of disciplinary concerns.

6. Discipline concerns will be addressed in an accident/ incident report. This will be completed to document any inappropriate behaviors that directly impact other children, staff members or the group as a whole. This report will be shared with the parent and will explain the behavior and will also explain how the situation was resolved. These incident reports will be presented to the parents at the time of pick up, but in extreme or chronic situations, a more formal conference with the parent may be required. Parents of all children involved in the incident will be notified by note, phone or conference. The incident form should be signed by the parent and returned to the office to be placed in the child's file.

7. If the behavior persists to a state that is considered extreme, management will request a conference with the family to find the best solution for the child. It may be necessary for the child to be sent home for a time to be

determined, or removed from the center altogether.
8. Parents should note that information about other children cannot be disclosed in your child's accident/incident reports. This is in keeping with our confidentiality practice.

Expulsion Policy

Unfortunately, there are sometimes extenuating circumstances where we have to expel a child from our program either on a short term or permanent basis. The following are some reasons we may expel or suspend a child from the center:

Immediate Causes for Expulsion

- The child is at risk of causing serious injury to other children or him/herself.
- Parent threatens physical or intimidating actions towards staff members.
- Parents exhibits verbal abuse to staff in front of enrolled children.

Parental Actions for Child's Expulsion

- Failure to pay/habitual lateness in tuition payments.
- Failure to complete required forms including the child's immunization records.
- Habitual tardiness when picking up your child.
- Verbal abuse to staff.

Child's Actions for Expulsion

- Failure of child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time.
- Multiple uncontrollable tantrums/angry outbursts.
- Ongoing physical or verbal abuse to staff or other children.
- Excessive biting.
- Actions that endanger the child, other children or

another person's safety.

Prior to expulsion, a parent will be called and correspondence will be sent home indicating the problem, and every effort will be made by both the center and the parent to correct the problem. Depending on the risk to other children's welfare or safety, if behavior does not improve, and the center finds that they can no longer accommodate the child, the parent will be asked to remove him/her.

Behavior Chart

Level 1*	Implemented by teacher: Child will be given appropriate redirection and warning to make better choices.
Level 2*	Implemented by teacher: Child will sit in the Thinking Spot for up to 5 minutes according to their age and then be redirected to make better choices. This step may be repeated in accordance with the choices made by the child as determined by the teachers.
Level 3*	Implemented by supervisor/director: Phone call will be made to parent regarding behavior of child and conference may be requested.
Level 4*	Implemented by supervisor/director: Parent will be asked to pick up child immediately for the remainder of the day.
Level 5*	Implemented by supervisor/director: Child will be suspended for appropriate amount of day(s) determined by circumstance.
Level 6* N/A during summer	Implemented by supervisor/director: (For VPK children) Children will only be able to attend during VPK hours (9 AM-12 PM) permanently through the end of the school year.
Level 7*	Implemented by supervisor/director: Director and/or supervisor will ask family to withdraw from the Learning Ladder permanently.

**The Learning Ladder director, supervisor, and staff reserve the right to supersede levels according to the choices that the child has made. Tuition refunds will not be made for suspension days.*

Financial Information

1. Your child's tuition is due **NO LATER THAN** 9:30am Friday of each week for the following week's care. Each child's account will accrue a $5.00 late fee each week for late/ past due payments, as well as a $45.00 charge for returned checks. If your account is not current by Friday, payment will need to be rendered before dropoff is permitted Monday. TUITION DROP BOXES ARE LOCATED IN ROOM 103 and 109. **PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE MONEY IN CLASSROOMS, WITH TEACHERS, OR ON THE DIRECTOR'S DESK.** Each Monday, parents will receive an invoice of current charges due no later than Friday that week. Tuition can be paid directly from this invoice and is the preferred method of payment. Credit and Debit payments can be made in the office, as well as through our website at www.thelearningladder.org via PayPal.

2. There will be an overtime charge of $2 dollars per minute per child for children not picked up by 6:00 PM. This is to be paid in cash, to the teacher upon arrival. **Early Holiday closings, a $5 per child per minute fee will be incurred.** Consistent tardiness will result in being asked to withdraw your child from the school. If you anticipate being late due to an extenuating circumstance, please call the center as soon as possible at 727-755-4379, however late fees will still apply. VPK parents must also pick up by 12 noon, or the above late fees will be incurred.

3. We ask that two weeks' notice is given in writing prior to withdrawing your child.

4. Each child is entitled to one (1) vacation week per calendar year. Additionally, the week we are closed from Christmas to New Years will not be charged. Requests or vacation must be made in writing or via email and in advance. Please verbally communicate this to your child's teachers as well. Full-Time students will be charged a part-time rate the week of Thanksgiving. Part-Time students rate will remain the same. Changing allotted days will be at the preschool's discression.

Coalition Funded (School Readiness) Parents

The Early Learning Coalition has certain requirements for their financially funded parents. If you are a Funded Parent, and your child is absent more than THREE days in a month, you are responsible to pay for each additional day absent.

Parent fees will not be applicable on the additional days absent. Full payment for those days will be required. There is an additional fee applied to each age group that is currently not covered by the Coalition funding. Please see your registration packet or call the office for more information.

Nap Time/Rest Time

After lunch, a nap time is provided for all children. Every child is encouraged to rest quietly on their mat, while soft music is played. Many will sleep. For the benefit of your child's health, nap time (rest time) is a must.

We ask that you provide a 1 inch mat for your child, a king size pillowcase and a blanket for your 1 - 5 year-old. (see supply list for details) Over time, your child's nap mat may rip. If that happens, you will need to replace it immediately, as DCF regulations prohibit torn mats. Parents are required to bring in a crib sheet and blanket weekly. All sheets and blankets will be sent home on Friday to be laundered. A small backpack that will fit in your child's cubby is required to keep all of his/her belongings together.

Remember to label all bedding, spare clothing, cups, bottles, backpacks, lunch boxes, jackets and any other personal items.

Infants may only use a fitted crib sheet and a light receiving blanket in cribs. No toys or heavy blankets are permitted in cribs.

Field Trips

Our children who are 2 and older may go on field trips. Most of these trips will enhance your child's learning experience. Permission slips will be sent home in advance and must be returned signed. In accordance with state law, a car seat is required for all children 5 and younger. School Age release forms for field trips are required one time only for the academic year. All van drivers are licensed and required to pass a physical exam and written test prior to driving.

Emergency Drills

Emergency Drills are held monthly to acquaint your child with evacuation and other emergency procedures. This is REQUIRED BY DCF. This may make quite an impression on your child the first time, but he/she will soon learn just what to do.

Inclement Weather Closings

When there is a threat of inclement weather or the Pasco County School system decides to close, the following is policy/procedure for The Learning Ladder Christian Preschool:

The Learning Ladder will follow closings due to inclement weather for Pasco County Schools. We will contact families via email, post updates on our Facebook page, and call parents we do not have an email address for. Please be sure to update phone numbers (home, work or cell) and email addresses with staff via emergency forms. This is imperative for communication and emergency purposes.

Arrival / Departure

The Student Attendance sheets are located in each classroom or with your child's class at the time of arrival or departure.

You must "sign in and sign out" your child every time you bring him/her to school. When signing in, please sign your full first AND last name. Initials are no longer acceptable. If you cannot pick up your child, please notify the school as to who will be in your place. Please instruct your replacement to follow these rules also. The school will release children only to those listed on the emergency card. Any necessary changes must be in writing, not verbal. The staff will ask for personal identification, such as a driver's license, of anyone they do not know.

Please make sure your child sees their teacher upon arrival and dismissal, to assist us in keeping your children safe. There are SPECIFIC GUIDELINES REGARDING CUSTODY ORDERS. PLEASE SEE ADMINW FOR ADDITIONAL POLICY/RULES AND PROCEDURE. Additional paperwork may be required. When dropping your child off, please communicate any needs or concerns to the teacher. When picking up your child please remember to:

Check your child's folder daily
Check your child's cubby for any supply needs and to take home personal belongings.
Pick up your daily report so that you are aware of any classroom needs or important information you may need to know.
Check the door and bulletin board of your child's classroom for postings of special events.

Again, IT IS OUR POLICY that all children are signed in by 9:30 AM.

VPK CLASSROOMS ARE 9:00AM. This is to insure your child an adjustment period before sitting down to a quiet circle/ learning time. If you will be late due to an appointment, please call the office. Please observe the "NO PARKING/

TOW ZONE" SIGNS on the property. The Learning Ladder entrance is the West Entrance of the Epicentre marked "Preschool Entrance". Do not park under any overhangs at either building, except in inclement weather.

Absence/Tardiness

Please notify the office if your child is going to be absent. We are concerned about them. You may call the preschool or send an email to **info@thelearningladder.org**. Also, a call if your child will be late is appreciated. All children must be in their classrooms by 9:30, as not to interrupt classroom circle time. Your child can be escorted to the office to wait until a more appropriate time to enter the classroom. **Teachers or office staff reserve the right to not accept a child if repeated tardiness results in the disruption of the class.**

Pledges

Your child will be learning the following:

Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag
I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Pledge of Allegiance to the Bible
I pledge allegiance to the Bible, God's Holy Word. I will make it a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. I will hide its word in my heart, that I might not sin against God.

Dress Code

Children should wear comfortable, washable clothing suitable to the weather. Please provide simple clothing that is free of complicated fastenings. **Girls must always wear shorts under their skirts or dresses.** Shoes must always be rubber soled with closed toes. **Socks are required.** This is for your child's protection. There will be NO sandals or backless

shoes permitted. "Crocs" are acceptable provided the strap remains in the back.

Childhood learning involves exploring and experimenting. This should be fun, but it is usually not neat. We strive to provide these hands-on experiences without too many hindrances. Each child will also need a complete change of clothes labeled with his or her name. The clothing should be in the child's cubby at all times, even if potty training is complete. For potty training children, it is requested that several pairs of under garments and bottoms are provided, as well as an extra pair of shoes. There is always the possibility of torn clothing, spills, etc. Please check your child's cubby daily for soiled clothing and their daily sheet for needs. Also, please check periodically to make sure that these clothes are appropriate for the weather.

Food

Parents may provide breakfast for their child, however, tables are cleared by 8:30 AM. If your child is to eat breakfast with us, please make sure that he/ she is at the school prior 8:00 AM. This will allow ample time to eat. Breakfast/Lunch boxes must be clearly labeled with your child's name. Please do not send glass bottles or containers of soda. Daily snack is provided to each child in the afternoon. You are responsible for providing a lunch for your child. "Heat ups" are not permitted, with the exception of bottles in the infant room, which are heated with a crock pot. When sending food, please make sure that it meets the daily nutritional requirements of a preschooler. Water is provided throughout the day in the classroom and on the playground. Please refrain from sugary drinks. A child's birthday may be celebrated by his/her class during lunch or snack time. Please advise the teacher if you plan to bring cupcakes, cookies, etc. in advance of the child's special day. All treats must be store bought and in their original packaging, unopened. Children in rooms 105-109 may not have whole/round hotdogs, popcorn, chips, pretzel nuggets, whole grapes, nuts, cheese cubes, or any food that is similar in shape and size of the trachea/windpipe. Food for infants must be cut into pieces 1/4 inch or smaller, food for toddlers must be cut into pieces 1/2 inch or smaller to prevent choking. Food should be prepared to meet these requirements. Baby food must be in sealed containers.

Toys

We ask that **NO toys** are brought in with your child unless it is cleared by the teacher for a special "Show and Tell" day. Always label all items that your child brings with them. We cannot be responsible for any lost or broken items. We ask that children leave electronics at home.

Diapers/Wipes

Diapers and wipes will be supplied by the parents. Please

check your child's "Daily News", that will provide notice of needed items, along with tell you how your child's day was, how they ate, napped and what they were learning in class. There will be a $1 charge for each diaper the school needs to provide, which will be invoiced on your bill.

Moving Up

Moving up to the next classroom happens at different times throughout the year. It doesn't always take place on birthdays. Sometimes it happens before a birthday while other times it may be after your child's birthday. Before your child moves to the next classroom, we will contact you about the changes that we would like to make. Before a child can move into the 4-year-old room, they must be fully potty trained.

Voluntary Pre-K Parents

Fees, absences, arrival, and departure information is available in the VPK Policy Handout. Please be sure you have received this information if you are enrolling your child in our VPK program.

Health and Safety Information

Your child's health is a matter of major importance to us.

1.Health Examinations and Immunizations are required by law and must be kept up to date. By state law the center cannot extend time limits. This information must be supplied by parents within two weeks of enrollment on Florida State HRS Form 3040 (Student Health Examinations) and Florida Certificate of Immunization HRS Form 680, filled out by your child's physician and kept in your child's folder in the school office. In order for your child to begin child care services, these records must be provided or documentation of a scheduled appointment within the next two weeks provided by your child's physician. Please note, some children in care may not have current immunizations.

2. A daily health inspection is given upon each child's arrival at school. A staff member must check your child for any obvious bumps, bruises, cuts, insect bites, etc. The staff member will also be looking for signs of illness such as pink eye, runny nose (discolored mucus), etc. The staff member has the right to ask you to take your child home if she feels it will affect the health of your child and the others around him/her. Please realize this is for the safety of your child even though it may be inconvenient to you at the time.
3. A child with a fever or signs of illness will not be permitted to remain at the center. We will notify the parents or a person listed for emergencies and request the child be removed from the center as quickly as possible. The child is not to return to school the following day, and all signs of illness must also be gone prior to their return. These signs include, but are not limited to:

Fever, vomiting, diarrhea, an uncontrollable cough, any rash or rash like appearance on the body, and any yellow or green discharge from the nose, eyes or mouth.

Rashes will require a doctor's note in order for your child to return, which may still be at the office's discression. Your child should be free of any Fever Reducing medications 24 hours before returning to school. Any illness exceeding 3 days must have a physician's clearance to return as well. INFLUENZA GUIDELINES HAVE BEEN ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES. Please obtain a copy from the office. The influenza information pamphlet is required to be signed annually between August 1 - September 30.

4. Staff members can only give medication for diaper creams and life-saving measures, such as: Epipen, inhalers, and allergy medication for allergic reactions, that have been prescribed by a doctor. In addition to the pharmacy directions, the prescribing doctor's contact information must be provided. Parents must fill out and sign a medication form before the school can administer any medication. Staff members can only give prescribed medication that is still in its original container. All medication must be placed in a sealed, clear baggie with your child's name written on the outside. If a spoon is needed, please place one in the baggie as well.

5. A "head check" will be conducted approximately every 2 weeks. If lice or nits are found in your child's hair, you will be called immediately and asked to pick him/her up as soon as possible. This is necessary due to the speed in which it can be passed. Your child will not be permitted back to school until they have been treated and your child is **nit free**. It will be necessary to take their sheet, blanket, backpack, and clothing home to be washed as well.

6. In case of a minor accident, a staff member will write up an accident report. This must be signed by the parent and returned to the office the same day.

7. In case of accidental injury, we will make an immediate attempt to contact the parent. If we cannot reach you, we will call the child's physician. If necessary, we will also call an ambulance. The physician, paramedics or the director will be in charge and make all decisions concerning the care of the child until the arrival of the parent. **It is to your child's benefit to keep the school up to date on the phone numbers, emergency numbers and other pertinent information including additional emergency contacts.**

Contract Page

Please sign below, and return this sheet to the office as soon as possible.

By signing this contract, you are stating that you understand the policies.

I have read the Parent-Student Handbook, understand and agree to the terms within regarding attendance, closing times, schedules and payment. I realize it requires myself, as the parent, the teacher and the administration working together for my child to develop to his/her potential at The Learning Ladder Christian Preschool.

Child's Name: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____

The Learning Ladder Preschool Administrator

The Learning Ladder

Christian Preschool

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