

COVENANT KIDS PARENT HANDBOOK WELCOME!

Welcome to Covenant Kids preschool. It is our prayer that you and your child find this year to be a rewarding experience. We look forward to an exciting year together!

OUR MISSION

Our preschool program shares a common mission with the Orange City Christian School (OCCS) K-8 program. The mission of OCCS is to provide academically sound, scripturally-directed instruction to assist parents in teaching their children to know God and His world, to develop godly character as Christ's image-bearers, and to acquire knowledge, skills, and values to fulfill their calling as His servants.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

In our preschool program we hope to provide a stimulating and enriching experience for each child. Children at this age are learning all the time and they learn best by being active and involved. Using developmentally appropriate activities we will attempt to meet each child's emotional, mental, social, physical, and spiritual needs in a caring and loving classroom atmosphere. Through large and small group experiences we assist parents in nurturing their children in activities and experiences that will enable them to develop a love of learning.

OUR GOALS

Our curriculum identifies goals in four areas of development.

- Social/emotional /spiritual: to help children become more aware of God's presence in our world, to learn to love God, and others, to develop a good self image, to develop independence and self-confidence, to follow rules and routines, to make friends, and learn what it means to be part of a group
- Physical: to increase large and small muscle skills through balancing, running, jumping, throwing, cutting, drawing, writing etc.
- Cognitive: to acquire thinking skills such as the ability to solve problems, ask questions, and think logically – sorting classifying, comparing, counting, and making patterns-and to use materials and their imagination to show what they have learned.
- Language: to use words to communicate with others, listen to and participate in conversations with others, understand the purpose of print, recognize letters and words, and begin writing for a purpose.

Through the activities we plan, the materials we select, the way we organize the classroom and the way we talk with children, we seek to accomplish our curriculum goals and give your child a successful start in school.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

LICENSING

Covenant Kids Preschool operates under the authority of the OCCS Board of Education and holds a license from the Department of Human Services. Covenant Kids also adheres to the guidelines established by the State of Iowa for their Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program. In addition to the OCCS school board there is a separate preschool advisory committee set up to assist in the decision making process of the preschool. The committee consists of the preschool teacher, one OCCS board member, and four preschool parents/community members. As a recipient of state funding there is also an overall district administrator.

LOCATION

Covenant Kids Preschool is located at 604 3rd Street SW, Orange City, Iowa 51041. The office phone number is 737-2274. The preschool room number is 737-2274 ext. 217. The school's fax number is 737-8608.

STAFF

The OCCS principal is responsible for the day to day operations of the school, for maintaining licensing and accreditation standards, for staff supervision, and educational advisor and support for the teaching staff.

The lead teacher will have a degree or endorsement in Early Childhood Education. Classroom assistants have some early childhood education, experience working with young children, or are working on or have achieved a para professional license. Volunteers (often from area colleges) may augment the teaching staff. The staff to child ratio is 3 to a maximum of 20 children per class. All staff participates in on-going training and education, including research and trends in child development, curriculum, and teaching methods, as well as holding a license for CPR, First Aid, and Blood Borne Pathogens. Staff and regular volunteers must also file a state of Iowa criminal background check. Documentation for this is on file in the school office.

CLASS SIZE

Each class will consist of no more than 20 students with 3 adults per 20 children.

SCHEDULE/CALENDAR

The morning class runs from 8:15 – 11:15. Children may be in the room as early as 8:00 a.m. The afternoon class runs from 12:15-3:15. Students should arrive no earlier than 12:15. Students not picked up 5 minutes after dismissal time may be picked up in the OCCS office.

A preschool calendar will be sent home at the beginning of the school year. Snack schedules will be sent home monthly and class schedules will be sent home weekly. These are also posted on the parent bulletin board outside the preschool room.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

At Covenant Kids we recognize the importance of the family/school relationship and therefore, encourage parent participation in the classroom and in special events. *Studies have indicated that children who have parents who are involved in their school/education do better in school.* Parents are welcome to come and visit our classroom anytime throughout the year.

Special Events Parents are encouraged to participate in special events – some of these are during class time and others are evening events. Some of these include Fall Open House, Parent Information Night, Winter Open House, OCCS Family Fun Night, field trips, end of the year preschool program etc. Notification of these events will be sent home on the yearly calendar, the weekly preschool sheet, and a weekly announcement from OCCS (check this for community events also). Prior to and into the beginning of each school year the teacher will schedule and make a home visit to each preschool family.

Parent/School Communication

Communication between parents and staff is vital to the success your child has in school. Realizing the importance of on-going communication, we encourage you to keep us informed of any situation that may effect your child's participation in school. We will also do our best to keep you informed of your child's activity at school.

A weekly newsletter from the teacher will keep you informed of the activities and projects in your child's class. You will also find information regarding upcoming events and community information. This letter will come home with your child at the end of each week (generally on Thursday) and will also be e-mailed to those of you who have provided e-mail addresses. It will also be posted on the parent bulletin board outside our room. A monthly snack schedule will also be posted and sent home. OCCS also sends home a weekly newsletter that often has community activities pertaining to families. This is available at the school web site. Community information will be sent home as it is provided to us. Please feel free to contact the teacher with any questions or concerns. Her home phone number and e-mail address are listed on each weekly sheet.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

P-T conferences are scheduled during the first half of the school year and during the second half of the school year. Conferences include a discussion with a teacher, a review of your child's portfolio, and a copy of the "Child Progress and Planning Report". Parents may feel free to request a conference any time throughout the year.

Parent Survey

Your feedback is very important to us as we make plans to continue to enrich our program. At least once a year you will be asked to complete a survey that will give us

information about the program and about future needs. We hope you will take the time to give us your honest, candid feedback.

ADMISSION, ENROLLMENT, AND WITHDRAWAL

1. Preschool classes will enroll in February for the following fall.
2. Students must be 4 by September 15 of the year they enroll. Students should be toilet trained.
3. All forms in the registration packet must be completed and turned in to the OCCS office prior to the start date of the school year.
4. Enrollment is taken on a first come first served basis. No child shall be denied equal opportunity in programs on grounds or race, color, national origin, gender (sex), sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, socioeconomic status, disability, religion , or creed.
5. A non-refundable registration fee will be paid the same time registration is complete.
6. A waiting list is kept and openings are filled from that list in the order they appear.
7. Those wishing to register after general registration should call the OCCS office at 737-2274.
8. Tuition information will be presented at registration or may be obtained from the OCCS office by calling 737-2274.
9. Parents have the right to withdraw their child from the program at any time. Two weeks notice is requested of an anticipated withdrawal. A conference with the teacher is also recommended prior to withdrawal. If, after reasonable attempts have been made to accommodate the child's individual needs, any child who demonstrates the inability to benefit from the program, or whose actions are detrimental to the group, will be dismissed. When in the best interest of the child or the group a child is dismissed, the staff will assist the family in finding another program, and will make referrals to other facilities or agencies.

GENERAL HEALTH AND SAFETY INFORMATION

1. Tornado and fire drills are held monthly for each class. Evacuation routes and procedures are posted by the classroom door. The monthly record of this is posted by the room door. Emergency phone numbers are also posted in the room.
2. All staff is CPR and First Aid certified. In addition they have taken mandatory child abuse and blood borne pathogen training. Certification is kept in the preschool employee file in the OCCS office. Each staff member is a mandatory abuse reporter.
3. A First Aid Kit will be kept and maintained in each classroom and will be taken on field trips away from school. A First Aid Kit will also be taken outside with the class.
4. The entire indoor and outdoor campus of OCCS and Covenant Kids Preschool is non-smoking and signs to that effect are posted at each entrance/exit.
5. Students are required to wash their hands upon arrival at each session. Hands will be washed before and after water play and before and after snack in addition to other times throughout the session as needed.
6. Table and bathroom cleaning schedules are posted in the preschool room and bathroom.
7. A staff member will always be present with the children. When dropping off or picking up your child, please make contact with a staff member.
8. If an injury occurs at school, an incident report will be filled out and filed in the OCCS office. Please make sure emergency notification contacts are kept current. These are kept in both the office and the preschool classroom.
10. Background check information has been done and is available in the office for each preschool employee.
11. Water in the water tables is changed daily.
12. When spending significant time outdoors, sunscreen will be applied to children.
13. Universal precautions are followed when dealing with any blood or body fluids. All preschool staff has taken OSHA training.
14. As required by law, OCCS has approved policies relating to providing drug free work areas. Employees or others violating the provisions of the drug free policy must participate in a rehabilitation program or be subject to suspension, termination, or

other disciplinary actions set by the board. Work areas include the buildings, school vehicles, and other areas used in connection with school activities.

15. The only cleaning substance used in the preschool room is bleach water which is changed daily.
16. Asbestos information is available in the school office.
17. State law mandates that all teachers and administrators must report to the proper authorities all instances of suspected child abuse. Also in child abuse laws are procedures for reporting child abuse by school personnel against children. In situations where there is suspected child abuse (physical or sexual), parents or others may report such suspected problems to the school Child Abuse Investigator. The purpose of an investigator is to conduct a preliminary investigation to determine if there is probable reason to believe that physical or sexual abuse may have occurred. If the investigator determines that this is a possibility; an investigation must be conducted by someone who is not a school employee. The Sioux County Sheriff's department will provide an investigator for this purpose. (Primary Investigator: Crista Smidt, Alternate Investigator: Arlyn Schaap)
18. Schools are required to post warning signs in their buildings for areas that may contain hazardous chemicals. We are also required to keep lists of all chemicals that we have within our guidelines on file at the principal's office. Anyone requesting information concerning these chemicals may have access to the information at the office. The areas where we have hazardous chemicals are posted with signs which indicate the type of hazard that may be found in that area.
19. A list of those approved by parents to pick up children will be kept in the preschool room. Parents are asked to alert the staff of any change in that schedule.
20. Hearing screening is conducted annually in our school by NW AEA Hearing Education/Conservation Services personnel. Following completion of the screening, you will be informed of the results.
21. Dental health information will be presented by the preschool staff with the assistance of a community dental health practitioner.
22. In case of inclement weather late starts the a.m. session will be cancelled with a normal start and dismissal time for the afternoon class. In case of an early dismissal due to weather parents will be notified by phone. Please listen to KSOU (93.9) or KDCR (88.5) FM or KTIV (Channel 4) or KCAU (Channel 9) TV for those notifications.

RESTROOM POLICY

Children shall be accompanied by an adult when they need to use the restroom. Staff will assist the child, if needed, but will encourage the child to learn to assist him/herself. If the child has had an accident wetting or soiling his/her clothes, staff shall assist the child in changing clothes in the restroom. Staff will put on rubber gloves, help remove the clothing, clean the child, and help put on dry/clean clothes. The soiled clothing will be put in a plastic bag and put with the child's other belongings. The parents will be notified of the soiled clothing. Staff will teach children how to wash their hands.

HAND WASHING

Children and anyone else entering the preschool room are required to wash their hands immediately prior to or as soon as they reach the preschool classroom. Hand washing will be taught by the staff with assistance from Community Health Partners.

ILLNESS

1. All required medical forms available in the registration packet must be filled in and returned before your child begins the school year. These will be kept on file in the OCCS office.
2. The school should be notified in writing of any allergy a child has and what medication is being taken.
3. Any child who attends school must be healthy and prepared to go outside. Children showing any signs of illness should be kept home until a proper diagnosis is made and treatment of the health condition is completed. Please notify the preschool at 737-2272 ext. 217 if a child will be absent from school.
 - A child must be fever free and free from vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to school.
 - The school must be informed if the child develops a communicable disease including but not limited to "pink eye", ring worm, or chicken pox. Notification that a communicable disease has occurred in the classroom will be posted on the bulletin board outside the preschool room.
4. School policy does not allow for the dispensing of any types of medication, prescription or non-prescription, by the teacher or assistants. If your child needs medication during the day, the school office must be contacted and they must have written permission signed by the parent/guardian and doctor on file. Medication must be in the original bottle. A record of medication dispensed is kept in the office.

INJURY AND MEDICAL EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

1. In the case of injury to a child at school, an incident report will be filled out and kept in the office. In non-emergency instances, the parents will be notified of the injury the same day it occurs. Notification will be made either in person, by phone call, or by e-mail.

2. In case of an emergency, 911 and the parent/guardian will be called. If immediate medical treatment by a doctor is warranted we will make every effort to have a staff person accompany the child with the ambulance. The ambulance will go to the Orange City Area Hospital. Once parents have been notified, they are then responsible for decisions as well as the cost of ambulance service and medical treatment received. All children will have an emergency medical release form on file in case of an emergency.
3. Playground equipment, the classroom environment, and classroom materials will be surveyed regularly. Materials posing a hazard will be disposed of and repairs will be reported to the OCCS Maintenance Staff.

SNACKS/BIRTHDAY TREATS

Snacks will be provided by the parents according to a calendar that will be sent home monthly and posted on the parent bulletin board outside the room. Healthy snacks are required and a list to aid in the planning of those is also sent home and posted. Milk, water, napkins, cups, and utensils are provided by the preschool. Only snacks purchased from stores or licensed kitchens (bakeries, delis etc.) are allowed. These snacks must be brought in store sealed boxes/containers. Hands will be washed before and after snack time. Food allergies should be listed on the child's information sheet kept in the office and the preschool classroom.

Birthdays are special times for children and will be celebrated with his or her classmates. Your child will provide the snack for the day (summer birthdays will be honored close to the end of the school year) and a take home treat may also be provided for each child. To avoid hurt feelings we encourage you to avoid handing out invitations at school for parties that will occur outside of school time unless the entire class is being invited.

OUTDOOR PLAY/FIELD TRIPS

The time children spend outdoors every day is just as important to their learning as the time they spend in the classroom. Therefore we require that children dress appropriately for outdoor play. Items required for outdoor play include rain boots, snow boots, proper footwear, jackets, coats, mittens (preferred)/gloves, hats, snow pants or snow suits. Please make sure these items are all labeled with your child's name. Play outdoors is determined by using "Child Care Weather Watch Chart" developed by the Iowa Department of Public Health. This chart is posted in the preschool room and is available for viewing at any time.

CLOTHING

Children take pride in dressing and undressing themselves and may become frustrated when clothing is too difficult to manipulate. Bearing in mind that children learn these skills sequentially and as their motor development increases, there are steps parents can take to expedite the learning process.

- Provide clothing that is loose and has simple fasteners.
- All removable clothing should be labeled with the child's name.

- Expect your child to get messy. Please dress him/her in clothing that can get dirty or messy. Painting, gluing, playing in sand and water etc. are all parts of their growth and development. We do provide paint shirts and smocks, but they don't protect completely.
- Please see that your child has shoes that allow him/her to participate safely in outdoor and gym games.
- Please keep a complete change of clothes in your child's backpack.

TRANSPORTATION

Covenant Kids Preschool does not provide transportation or arrange "car pools". Class enrollment lists will be made available in August to parents to assist those wishing to form a "car pool".

FIELD TRIPS

- Occasionally field trips are taken with the intent to enhance your child's learning experience. Field trips are scheduled well in advance and are coordinated with our curriculum.
- Your presence as parent chaperone is encouraged and is an asset to us in the safety of the children. If you do not wish for your child to attend a particular field trip please notify the staff in advance.
- In most instances the preschool bears the cost of the transportation for the field trip. In certain circumstances the family is required to provide the cost of the field trip. You will be advised of costs well in advance.
- In order for your child to participate on a field trip, you must complete and return a signed permission slip before each field trip.
- Buses will be used for transportation.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND REFERRALS

Covenant Kids Preschool maintains a current listing of local resources and referrals, both public and private, in the areas of child health and development, family child care providers, parenting seminars, and programs in various areas relating to family and child health and welfare. We would be happy to share these with you. Any information received regarding programs of interest for parents and families will be passed on to you via the parent bulletin board, an e-mail, or included on/with the weekly schedule sent home.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Parking is permitted in front of school or on the west parking lot.

It is very important for you to walk your child in to the classroom when you arrive at school. In this way your child can "share" the classroom with you. Your child finds importance in showing you the materials and equipment he/she work with, meeting his/her friends, and seeing you make contact with their teacher. It also allows you to speak with your child's teacher informally concerning your child. If someone else is

responsible for bringing your child into the room, make sure that person makes contact with the staff.

At the beginning of the year it may be necessary in assisting your child in getting his/her coat off and things stored in the lockers or on hooks. As the year progresses please allow your child to do as much as is possible to be independent in getting settled in.

At the end of the session you are asked to wait for your child in the hall across from the preschool classroom. Please make contact with the staff to ensure we know you have your child. You are welcome to come into the room once most of the children have made contact with their pick up person. While you wait for your child check out the parent information bulletin board as well as bulletin board with student work hanging on the bulletin board just beyond the preschool room door.

CURRICULUM

Covenant Kids Preschool uses the CSI (Christian Schools International) Bible curriculum for preschoolers.

Creative Curriculum is used to provide a framework of the best practices based on the developmental continuum of teaching preschool children. Creative Curriculum is a nationally recognized, research-based curriculum. It is aligned with early learning standards. It translates new research and theory from the field of Early Childhood Education into a practical, easy-to-understand approach to working with children and their families.

Combined with the CSI Bible Curriculum all areas of your child's development – spiritual, social/emotional, physical, cognitive, and language are addressed. Areas that help to encourage growth in these areas are Literacy, Math, Science, Social Studies, The Arts, and Technology.

The classroom is set up to accommodate this learning. Children have opportunities to make choices, experiment, come up with ideas, take responsibility for their work and participate in individual, large group, and small group activities.

Information about our curriculum is posted in the classroom and is provided to parents through [A Parent's Guide to Preschool](#). Additional information is available at www.teachingstrategies.com.

Curriculum information will be shared with parents at a formal presentation at the beginning of each school year.

ASSESSMENT

To ensure that your child is making progress in our program we keep track of what each child knows and can do. This assists us in planning for further teaching and learning. We

observe children as they obtain new skills and we support them along the way. Through careful daily observation we make anecdotal notes that help us to build on what they know and help them move to the next step. We take samples of each child's work and keep them in a portfolio. We summarize this information throughout the year and share it with you. We ask what you have seen your child do. Together, in covenantal partnership we gain a more complete picture of your child's progress and we can plan together how to support your child's learning.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

At Covenant Kids we believe that each child is loved by God, made in His image, and redeemed for His service. Covenant Kids views behavior management as a process of developing appropriate behaviors. Positive reinforcements for appropriate behavior in a loving, supportive environment promotes the child's self-confidence and leads to increased desirable behaviors. A challenging environment that allows for choices, experimenting, active learning, physical activity, and quiet times prevents boredom and promotes appropriate behavior. It is our goal to help children to learn self-control, problem-solving, and negotiation. Praise and recognition, talking with the child, redirecting the child to a more controlled situation, helping the child maintain self-control, and guiding the child to problem-solve for a more appropriate/effective solution are methods that we find to be effective and respectful of each child. Parents will be kept informed about progress in these areas.

Covenant Kids uses *indirect guidance* techniques:

- We give adequate notice; "In five more minutes we will be going outside".
- We give choices.
- We establish regular routine.
- We avoid nagging.
- We're consistent.

We also use *direct guidance* techniques:

- We use affirmatives.
- We try very hard to be fair.
- We make contact with the child at his/her level.
- We avoid arguments by asking the child to assist us in reaching solutions.

We, as a staff, pray for the children and families in our program. We use prayer with the children, asking God for His guidance in all our daily activities and asking Him to open our hearts to do His will.

STUDENT DISMISSAL

A student is expected to adhere to classroom rules which are designed to ensure the health and safety of each child, and to promote a relaxed, happy environment conducive to learning. If a child is unable to gain control and requires more individual attention than can be given within child-to staff ratios, we may need to contact a parent. A child requiring one-to-one attention may have to leave the classroom temporarily for safety's

sake. If, after reasonable attempts have been made to accommodate the child's individual needs, any child who demonstrates the inability to benefit from the program, or whose actions are detrimental to the class, will be dismissed. When, in the best interest of the child or the group, a child is dismissed, the staff will assist the family in finding another program or making referrals to other facilities or agencies.

COVENANT KIDS DAILY SCHEDULE

A.M. / P.M.

8:15/12:15	ARRIVAL
8:20/12:20	GROUP MEETING
8:25/12:25	CHOICE (CENTER) TIME
9:15/1:15	LARGE GROUP & BIBLE
9:35/1:35	SMALL GROUPS
10:05/2:05	SNACK TIME
10:20/2:20	SMALL GROUPS Continued
10:50/2:50	GROUP MEETING
10:55/2:55	OUTDOORS
11:15/3:15	DISMISSAL

PLEASE HELP US:

- Pray for your child, his/her classmates, and his/her teachers and assistants.
- Communicate to us your concerns or questions regarding our program or your child.
- Look through your child's backpack daily. His/Her work is very important and provides another means of communication between parent and child and helps the parent share in the child's day.

WE WISH TO HELP YOU:

- We promise to pray for your child and for his/her family.
- We will love and respect your child.
- We will recognize and treat your child as the unique individual God has created him/her to be.
- We will work hard to provide the best, most developmentally appropriate educational experience.