

## **WELCOME**

At Cornelius Early Scholars the social, emotional, intellectual, physical, and spiritual development of each child is our primary focus and concern. This handbook is designed to provide you with information regarding our philosophies, policies, and procedures. We invite you to be involved in your child's preschool experience.

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## **PRESCHOOL GOALS**

### **MISSION STATEMENT:**

To set children's lives on a path of success through early childhood education and a foundation of faith in Jesus Christ.

### **OUR PHILOSOPHY:**

We believe that a child's first school experience is vitally important in shaping a child's approach and attitude toward learning while building a strong social, moral, and academic foundation. At CES each student will have the opportunity to be a child, developing self-esteem, confidence, independence, and self-discipline at his/her own individual pace through planned experiences. Our program has been established to provide a safe, stable Christian environment with an academically appropriate, Bible-based education in which the children will be prepared via Best Practices to launch into their life-long education and spiritual journey with God. They will accomplish this through structured learning as we implement the outstanding Abeka curriculum as well as through listening, discovery, exploration, play, decision making, and problem solving. Preschoolers learn "pre-skills," which lay the groundwork for the future. Preschoolers also learn "school readiness" skills, which help them understand the routines of school, how to work in groups, and how to be successful students.

The Abeka curriculum utilizes centers implementing the "whole child" approach enabling, equipping, and encouraging every child. We are confident our program's learning and developmental methods will help him or her reach their full potential. Our teachers adhere to this philosophy and work hard to cater to each child's developmental needs. This means that teachers provide opportunities for children to grow in the areas of social, emotional, physical, intellectual, linguistic, moral, and spiritual development through play, academics, Biblical instruction, and hands-on experiences. We aim to nurture a child's natural love for learning. We provide a safe space where each child knows they are special and loved and will view each child as a unique individual by respecting and responding to their individual needs.

We will provide every child with the time and resources needed to experiment, explore, and grow without the fear of failure or embarrassment while also engaging their senses in a variety of ways.

We will give students freedom to explore, play, discover, create, and make mistakes. Through exploration and discovery children are empowered to form original ideas, encouraging them to think and problem solve. When children are allowed to make mistakes, they then have the freedom to invent, create and find new ways to do things. It is important to encourage creativity in all areas of learning. Young children learn best in a setting that encourages experiential play through exploration. Play helps children learn how to get along with others and share, develop motor skills, think independently, improve in language and vocabulary skills, grow in responsibility, gain mutual respect, form decision making skills, and learn problem solving skills.

CES believes in the philosophy that children, their families, and the greater community strongly benefit from high-quality early childhood development programs. We believe that the first five years of a child's life is critically linked to later success in life and that each graduate will be well equipped for kindergarten after completing our program.

We will celebrate differences in learning. Every child learns differently. Acknowledging each child's unique character and learning style allows for differentiation and equal access to all learning opportunities.

We will encourage the characteristics of forgiveness, getting along with others, learning to play as a group, assuming small responsibilities and making the transition from home to school.

We strongly believe that parents are an essential part of the educational process. In acknowledgment of this important role, we will welcome and encourage parent involvement.

**2024/2025 TEACHING STAFF**  
**(Subject to change)**

<b>3's Lead Teacher</b>	<b>Klaire Thompson</b>
<b>Pre-K 4's Lead Teacher</b>	<b>Jessica McDonald</b>
<b>T-K Lead Teacher</b>	<b>Kim Hobbs</b>
<b>4's Floater Assistant Teacher</b>	<b>Carrie Hanes</b>
<b>3's Floater Assistant Teacher</b>	<b>Selena Chavez</b>
<b>Chapel</b>	<b>Margy Nance</b>
<b>Music</b>	<b>Margy Nance</b>
<b>Science/Art</b>	<b>Kim Hobbs</b>
<b>Creative Movement</b>	<b>Carrie Hanes</b>
<b>Librarian</b>	<b>Brittani Forbes</b>
<b>Finance</b>	<b>Carol Palillo</b>

**STAFF QUALIFICATIONS**

**Lead Teacher Qualifications:**

1. College degree preferred.
2. 2 years minimum teaching experience
3. Regular attender of a Christ-centered church
4. Ability to work positively and professionally with children and adults.
5. Good written and verbal communication skills
6. Clean background check
7. CPR and First Aid certification

**Assistant Teacher Qualifications:**

1. High school diploma or GED.
2. Some related teaching experience.

3. Active in a Christ-centered church.
4. Ability to work positively and professionally with children and adults.
5. Clean background check.

## **APPROACHES TO LEARNING**

Our academic learning includes, but is not limited to, the following, as deemed age-appropriate:

- Bible stories and verses
- Prayer
- Writing
- Name recognition
- Using scissors
- Letters and sounds
- Numbers
- Shapes
- Colors
- Calendar and weather
- Arts & Crafts
- Music & Movement
- Show & Tell
- Manipulatives and puzzles
- Learning centers (Blocks/Cars, Home living, Reading, Science, Free Art)
- Gardening

CES values a balance between *classroom time* and *exploration time*. During *classroom time*, children engage in more focused and teacher-led activities with their peers. These activities emphasize the development of language and cognition skills. When children work in small groups, they develop confidence through cooperating and negotiating with others to achieve accomplishments.

*Exploration time* happens inside where children explore different learning centers set up and planned for by the teachers. This time allows children to discover the environment and independently choose

their own learning experiences. Teachers work together to build on the children's discoveries and interests to plan relevant classroom lessons and hands-on activities.

Children can visit the following learning centers: math, literacy, writing, construction with blocks, trucks/cars, Cutting, science, role-play in home living, open-ended and teacher directed art, play dough and sensory. Teachers are always observing and engaging children in their play to further build and develop their early academic skills. Fine motor skills are developed during Exploration time.

Circle time focuses on a specific area of learning each day, such as math, literacy, and Bible teaching. There are 2 planned circle times per day starting at age three.

During outdoor play, children are exposed to a variety of activities such as water/sensory play, sandbox, role-play, and other outdoor games. They also develop their gross motor skills by climbing, sliding, balancing, hopping, running, and jumping. Children are encouraged to make their own choices. Teachers act as guides to extend their learning experiences.

In Science, children explore all different areas of the world such as organic and non-organic material, energy, weather, health, magnets, machines, bugs and insects, birds, metamorphosis of caterpillars to butterflies, nature, forest, and farm animals, hot and cold, senses, floating and sinking, the human body, space, dinosaurs, and so much more.

Ultimately, the curriculum at CES encourages children to form deep and meaningful relationships with their teachers and peers and gain an appreciation for the diversity of individuals in the community. When children have built this strong social intelligence, they are then able to develop the academic skills needed for future success in school.

## **AREAS OF LEARNING**

### **SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

This area of learning focuses on activities for children that encourage them to develop self-confidence and self-awareness, manage their feelings and behavior and form deep relationships with their teachers and peers through showing kindness and love. Social skills include taking turns, sharing, resolving conflicts, listening and following instructions and cooperating with others. Instruction in social skills at an early age will help children better prepare for interactions with others throughout their life. Social-emotional learning or SEL involves teaching kids how to understand and manage their emotions along with helping them to develop empathy for others.

### **MATH AND COGNITION**

The environment, daily routines and everyday activities allow children to begin developing mathematical awareness at an early age. Our programs and environment enable children to explore and discuss shapes, size, weight, capacity, position, distance, time, and money, as well as counting, comparing, relating, identifying patterns and problem solving using the Abeka curriculum. In the Pre-K class adding and subtracting are introduced along with graphing, grouping, sorting, and comparisons. Color recognition is also emphasized in everyday hands-on experiences such as wearing a particular color to school or eating a snack that's the color of the week.

### **LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

The foundation for literacy begins with oral language. We provide language-oriented activities to build strong grounds for language acquisition. As the children develop their language skills, they will be introduced to activities that will further develop their early literacy skills using the Abeka curriculum where phonics (reading) and writing skills are stressed. Preschoolers will begin to learn the alphabet and the concept that letters make sounds. They will be exposed to upper- and lower-case letters. Teachers will help them practice phonological

and phonemic awareness as they lay a foundation for reading and writing. These skills involve being able to hear and manipulate sounds into words. Students will grow and develop in a literacy rich environment throughout their time in the preschool program as they engage with books and listen to stories. They will also be introduced to print awareness, learning to read a book from left to right and top to bottom as well as holding a book correctly, turning the pages carefully as they look at pictures and words. In the Pre-K class, language lessons will include verbal interaction in a group setting learning to verbalize using independent reasoning in problem solving and expressing their emotions through language. Language lessons also include story time followed by content questions.

### HANDS-ON SCIENCE

At this age curiosity is at an all-time high. Preschoolers are very interested in exploring their environment. All of this makes science a perfect subject to explore in preschool. And, since hands-on learning is often more effective with young kids, most preschool science curriculums are designed to be interactive. For example, your child might help plant and care for a class garden. They might also participate in water play activities or conduct simple experiments. The topics they learn this year will be studied more in-depth in the later grades, so it's OK if they don't seem to fully grasp the concepts. This early introduction creates background knowledge that your student can later build upon.

### EARLY CHILDHOOD SOCIAL STUDIES

In Social Studies, students learn about their community and the people who live in it. This includes learning about community helpers such as police officers, fire fighters, and librarians. They will also learn about different holidays and celebrations in different cultures as well as their own.



## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Our program strongly emphasizes the importance of creativity and imagination. The CES environment encourages children to explore and experiment with music, creative movement, and both open-ended and teacher directed arts and crafts using a variety of art materials. In all areas of learning, children are encouraged to think in original ways thereby developing their problem solving and emerging critical thinking skills as well as practicing fine motor skill development in creative expression and imagination. While in art students will continue to learn their colors, shapes, patterns, and textures using a variety of techniques using paint, crayons, clay, and other fun and interesting materials to create masterpieces to take home.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT – FINE AND GROSS MOTOR SKILLS

Our school is fully equipped with resources that allow children to run, skip, jump, climb, balance, and throw, catch, hit, and kick a ball (gross motor skills). These are the skills they use to move their bodies and manipulate objects. As they complete different physical activities, they'll strengthen their muscles and improve their coordination.

Children develop their fine motor skills through activities such as: using utensils, writing, drawing, coloring, painting, building with blocks, manipulating clay, and other manipulative activities and games.

## SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Our primary goal at CES is to plant seeds for Christ. The Abeka curriculum interweaves Bible stories and biblical principles throughout the material. In addition, Chapel is taught every week using Christian DVDs containing with songs with creative movement, puppet characters, and a Bible lesson with a verse in every episode. In addition, teachers use teachable moments throughout the day to reinforce God's word and the teachings of Jesus, God's son. Children are taught that God loves them and that they are to love Him and others and treat others with kindness and respect.

## DIVERSITY

We are an inclusive community that celebrates diversity. Mutual respect and awareness are key elements in constructing a community of learners and ultimately, global citizens.

## COLLABORATION

To provide an excellent learning environment, teachers, parents, and children must work together as collaborators. Children should also be aware of their surrounding environment and encouraged to find ways to work together with fellow community members.

## **CURRICULUM**

A preschool curriculum is a set of planned learning experiences or goals that educators use to guide what they will teach young children. The primary purpose of any curriculum should be to help kids build the skills and knowledge they need to be successful in school and beyond. Our goal is to have every child's day filled with learning experiences while meeting the needs of each child's individual development. We have combined some of the best curriculum to deliver an all-encompassing learning experience.

The official curriculum used at CES is Abeka. The Abeka Curriculum is a highly acclaimed Christian based educational tool emphasizing phonics as the foundational means to forming the building blocks necessary for early and successful reading. Writing and early emerging math skills are also taught in this outstanding curriculum. Teachers are given creative license to enhance the curriculum according to their gifts and talents. The curriculum provides activities that meet the needs of your preschooler at their level and pace. Each part of the curriculum is age appropriate and offers many exciting activities utilizing learning centers, both open-ended and teacher directed arts and crafts, music, circle time, and outside time at recess. The activities weave scripture and Bible lessons throughout the learning experience. Each week of school a theme is assigned by the director. Letters with phonics, numbers, colors, and shapes are taught

as well as writing which is practiced each day in the 4's age group both semesters and in the second semester of the 3-year-old classes. The fours also learn sight words and blends connecting the dots to early reading.

Abeka is a comprehensively designed curriculum created to achieve academic excellence and moral character using professionally illustrated textbooks and teaching aids, hands-on activities, challenging exercises, purposeful repetition, and the reinforcement of concepts. Abeka provides outstanding tools based on a traditional educational philosophy for both success in education and character development helping to equip each child for life.

## **ENHANCEMENTS**

Students will also experience special subjects, in addition to our regular curriculum. These subjects include Music, Chapel, Creative Movement, and the librarian from the Cornelius Public Library. These specials are included in the cost of the monthly tuition.

## **INSIDE OUR CLASSROOM**

### **An Engaging Learning Environment**

As previously mentioned, our classrooms are designed with learning centers, which give children the opportunity to play by themselves or in groups. The learning centers within a classroom offer social learning—playing together to develop healthy development and underlies children's ability for later academic learning. These centers include Art and Writing, Sensory Table, Cozy Reading Corner, Blocks/Trucks/Cars, Manipulatives, Home Living/Dramatic Play, Math, and Science. Each center is filled with specially selected materials and activities to foster the specific development skills a preschooler needs. Our teachers are especially attuned to the emotional quality of classroom interactions and help children identify emotions (their own and others') and learn problem-solving strategies. For example, in the dramatic play area, a supermarket gives children chances to count money, sort and classify objects (math); make signs to label shelves

or advertise special sales (language); and experience foods from other cultures (social studies).

These centers constantly change according to the theme for the month. New activities and projects are introduced to meet emerging interests and individual learning goals. Most importantly, learning centers offer opportunities for intellectual and social development, which is the key to a successful transition to our pre-kindergarten program.

### **Learning Fun!**

Developmentally appropriate themes and activities have been selected to further support the expansion of your child's creativity, literacy, problem-solving, socialization, and independence. These themes are changed weekly. Each week we will also integrate a letter and shape into the selected theme. On any given day you may find your child involved in a group science, working on early writing skills, counting with manipulatives, or using their imagination to create a one-of-a-kind masterpiece. Although our days are packed with a large variety of scheduled activities, the children are given a variety of options so that they can choose an activity that most interests them. Fine motor skills are fostered as children learn to pour from a pitcher, cut with scissors, both hold and use markers, colored pencils, tweezers, and thread beads and buttons.

### **Encouraging Independence**

Teachers work diligently to help foster each student's sense of independence and self-help skills. This is done through many different activities, some of which are encouraging students to put on and zip or button their jackets, emptying the sand/dirt from their shoes and putting them back on, serving their own lunch, and getting their own cups of water, etc. We also work with your child to help them learn good hygiene skills, such as proper hand washing procedures (which we do several times a day), teaching them to cover their mouth with their arm when coughing, teaching them to blow their own nose, and to properly clean their face when finished eating.

**DAILY SCHEDULE**  
**3's Class – Ms. Klaire/Ms. Selena**

8:55-9:10	Morning	11:00-11:30	Specials
9:10-9:30	Centers/Craft	11:30-12:00	Centers/Craft
9:30-10:00	Circle Time	12:00-12:30	Lunch
10:00-10:30	Snack Time	12:30-12:50	2 <sup>nd</sup> Circle Time
10:30-11:00	Outside Time	12:50-1:10	Dismissal

**Pre-K Class – Ms. Jessica/Ms. Carrie**

8:55-9:10	Morning Drop Off	11:00-11:30	Specials
9:10-9:30	Centers/Craft	11:30-12:00	Bible
9:30-9:50	Circle Time	12:00-12:30	Lunch/Story Time
9:50-10:15	Writing/Phonics	12:30-12:45	Math
10:15-10:30	Snack/Story Time	12:45-12:50	Pack Up
10:30-11:00	Outside Time	12:50-1:10	Dismissal

**T-K Class – Ms. Kim/Ms. Carrie**

8:55-9:10	Morning Drop Off	11:00-11:30	Specials
9:10-9:30	Centers/Craft	11:30-12:00	Bible & Theme
9:30-9:45	Morning Meeting	12:00-12:25	Lunch
9:45-10:00	Snack/Story	12:25-12:45	Closing Meeting
10:00-10:30	Phonics/Math	12:50-1:10	Dismissal
10:30-11:00	Outside Time		

**SAFETY**

Cornelius Early Scholars has state religious exempt licensing.

The school is inspected by the Fire and Health Departments annually and meets and exceeds all county and state regulations. Safety drills are conducted periodically with the children. Designated locations are assigned to each classroom in the event of a natural disaster or need to lock down.

In addition, the campus is equipped with staff-controlled security doors in which all visitors entering the building are screened for your child's protection. We ask for your cooperation with all our safety efforts.

## CLASSROOM RATIOS

Our student to teacher ratios is listed below and are subject to change based on the needs of the community:

3-year-olds	5:1
Pre-K	5:1
T-K	5:1

## PRESCHOOL CALENDAR

CES follows the [Charlotte-Mecklenburg Graded School District schedule](#). Preschool will not be held when public school is not in session. The preschool day officially dismisses at the end all special events such as our annual Thanksgiving feast, Christmas pageant, Picnic Day, and our parent-chaperoned field trips.

## INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

We follow the CMS schedule for holidays and school closings for inclement weather. Preschool will not be held when the public school is not in session. Please watch for preschool emails, Remind, Class Dojo, the internet, and local television stations for school closings.

***If CMS schools are operating on a one-hour delay, Preschool will also begin on a one-hour delay. If there is a two-hour delay, Preschool will be canceled.***

The preschool will make up snow days only as the CMS does. Please refer to their website for all changes. You will also be notified by the preschool.

## TUITION PROCEDURES AND POLICIES

### 2024/2025 Tuition

**This section is for those students not receiving a scholarship.**

Tuition will be charged via an invoice sent home at the end of each month. **Monthly tuition for four days a week is \$275/month for 3's and \$295/mo for both 4's classes.** Payments will cover the months of September through May. Registration for the following year will take place in early February. At that time, **only** a registration fee of **\$50** will be required to secure your child's spot. September's tuition will be due by 8/31 as tuition is paid one month ahead. Your last payment for May will be due on April 30<sup>th</sup>. You will owe nothing in May unless you are behind on tuition and need that month to catch up.

We accept cash, check, Venmo, and Pay Pal. Online payment is available on our website at [www.corneliuscholars.org](http://www.corneliuscholars.org).

**IMPORTANT:** There is a **\$35.00 return check fee**. This fee as well as any other outstanding fees must be paid before the end of the school year. If you exceed more than 1 returned check for N.S.F. (Non-Sufficient Funds) you will be required to pay with an alternative method of payment such as cash or a Money Order.

If a child is not on scholarship and is absent from school for an extended period for any reason, but expects to return to school, tuition will be charged to reserve the child's place in the school. Otherwise, the vacancy may be filled.

Payment arrangements may be made with the approval of the director. Otherwise, anyone seeking enrollment for their child will be allowed to fill your child's current spot.

## SCHOLARSHIPS

Cornelius Early Scholars (CES) is offering full and partial scholarships to families in Cornelius who meet specific income criteria. CES is accepting applications for the 2024-2025 school year.

### How To Apply

- Apply online at: [www.corneliusearlyscholars.org/apply](http://www.corneliusearlyscholars.org/apply).
- Pick up/drop off an application at:  
The Neighborhood CARE Center  
(19711 Smith Circle, Cornelius)  
First Baptist Church of Cornelius  
(21017 Catawba Ave., Cornelius)
- Documentation is not required at the time of application but will be required for enrollment.

### What Documentation Is Required?

- Proof of child's date of birth
- Child's immunization records
- Proof of residency – utility bill, lease, driver's license
- Proof of income – Tax return, paystub

### Do I Qualify For A Scholarship?

- Child's birthday is between  
9/1/2018 – 8/31/2020
- Child is potty-trained.
- Childhood immunizations up to date
- Cornelius residents preferred.

### Household income below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level for full scholarship

#### HOUSEHOLD INCOME GUIDELINES FOR FULL SCHOLARSHIP <150% FEDERAL POVERTY LEVEL

Family Size	Poverty Guideline	150% FPL
2	<b>\$20,440</b>	<b>\$30,660</b>
3	<b>\$25,820</b>	<b>\$38,730</b>
4	<b>\$31,200</b>	<b>\$46,800</b>
5	<b>\$36,580</b>	<b>\$54,870</b>
6	<b>\$41,960</b>	<b>\$62,940</b>
7	<b>\$47,340</b>	<b>\$71,010</b>
8	<b>\$52,720</b>	<b>\$79,080</b>



**TUITION BASED ON FAMILY INCOME GREATER THAN 150% FPL  
>150% FEDERAL POVERTY LEVEL (FPL)**

Tuition Scaling		Scale	Monthly Tuition	
FPL	Subsidy %	Level	3's	4's
200% +	0%	A	\$275	\$295
185-200%	25%	B	\$200	\$220
170-185%	50%	C	\$140	\$150
150-170%	75%	D	\$70	\$75
<150%	100%	E	\$0	\$0

**WITHDRAWAL POLICY**

The preschool reserves the right to request the withdrawal of any child for any behavioral or developmental cause deemed reasonable, including parents who are unable to comply with the policies and procedures of the preschool, the child is not ready emotionally or developmentally for preschool, and/or the student has special needs beyond the scope of ability, training, equipment, and/or experience of our staff and facility. In these cases, a conference will first be scheduled with the parents at which time all possible measures will be discussed, and a plan formulated throughout the dialogue to help the child succeed inside the classroom environment before a decision to withdraw the child is made. Per policy, three to four weeks is the allotted time allowed for improvements to become noticeably visible before withdrawal will be necessitated. Two weeks' notice is preferred for students who are withdrawing for any other reason such as moving out of town.

**REFUND POLICY**

For families not receiving a scholarship, tuition is NOT REFUNDABLE OR PRO-RATED due to vacations, pandemics forcing school closures, illness, snow or ice days or any other closing beyond the control of the director. Should a child have to withdraw from preschool after tuition has been paid for the following month, the decision to refund the parent will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the director and if necessary, the CES Weekday Preschool Board.

## CLASS CANCELLATIONS

The school reserves the right to cancel any classes and or registrations if there is not sufficient enrollment to justify its continuance.

## ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Parents will pull or walk up to the curb in the preschool parking lot. Staff will be present to receive your child and escort them to his or her classroom after you unload them from your vehicle or exchange hands with the teacher. Drop-off will be between 8:55 and 9:10 a.m.

If you arrive after drop-off, please walk your child into the building. It will be necessary for you to ring the bell to enter the preschool area. This security system is set up for the protection of your child.

Parents are responsible for picking up their children in the same manner as drop-off. Pick-up is between 12:50 - 1:10 p.m. Children are escorted to their rides by the staff. Any changes to drop-off and pick-up should be submitted in writing, signed by a parent, and given to the teacher at morning drop-off. Please contact the preschool office before **11:45 a.m.** to notify us of any changes. Children will be released only to the adults listed on the child's Carpool forms. A photo ID will be required of anyone other than you if the driver is not recognized.

Please keep in mind that in your child's eyes, arriving late is serious and can be frightening. A phone call or text is not an excuse to run late on a regular basis. **Acceptable reasons for late arrival include a family emergency such as sickness, mechanical breakdown, or traffic issues.**

Please contact the preschool office at \_\_\_\_\_ if you are running late. If our voice mail picks up, please leave a message and we will contact you as soon as possible. You may also send a message via Class Dojo.

If it is necessary to pick up your child early, we have a sign-out sheet that must be completed before you exit the campus with your child except in the case of an emergency.

**No CES staff member will be permitted to transport a student to or from this campus unless a request in writing is submitted to and approved by the director of the preschool for obvious liability reasons.**

To avoid delays in the dismissal process we ask that you not bring up issues that require more than a few seconds of conversation with teachers during pick-up and drop-off. Our teachers are willing to discuss any questions or concerns with you at another time. Please handle these items via email, over the phone, or during a scheduled appointment.

We would appreciate parents do not engage in conversations over the phone during either drop off or pick up in case important information needs to be communicated and to ensure the safety of your child during the transition. Also, your child will want to have your undivided attention when we turn them over to you at the end of the day. Thank you in advance for helping us to maintain a high level of safety and consideration.

## **PARENT PARTICIPATION**

One of the wonderful features of our preschool is the support and encouragement families offer the staff and each other. There are many ways to get involved, like helping with special events, participating in fundraisers, and or volunteering in your child's class. Parental involvement allows the children to see their parents interacting in the preschool environment.

Parents/guardians are required to attend all special events such as field trips, Donuts with Dad, Muffins with Mom, Thanksgiving/Christmas programs, Picnic Day, Water Day, and Graduation dance and ceremony if the child is participating in these events.

## **BIRTHDAYS**

Parents are allowed to attend during snack time on your child's birthday. Please notify the teachers ahead of time so they can adjust their class schedule if needed. Balloons, candles, chewing gum, and small candy are not permitted for safety reasons. Candy is a choking hazard. Goodie bags can be given at departure time, not during preschool time. Please do not bring gifts for your child to open during school hours.

Invitations to parties may NOT be distributed at preschool unless the entire class is invited

## **WHAT TO BRING AND NOT BRING TO PRESCHOOL**

### **BOOK BAGS**

Book bags are to come to school with your child **every day**. A communication, take-home folder will be sent home every day.

Written communication to and from you and your teachers should be placed inside of the folder. Please be aware that when your child arrives at school without a book bag, vital communication may be missed.

### **CLOTHING**

Please be sure that your child's clothing is comfortable, washable, and allows for self-dressing. Since the children play outside and often complete "messy" art projects, it is advised to dress them in "play clothes". Children sometimes become very upset when something spills on their "nice" clothes. We use smocks for certain projects, but they are not always 100% effective.

Children run, skip, jump, and climb, so it is not advised wearing sandals, flip-flops, clogs, or dressy shoes with slippery bottoms to preschool.

All parents are required to supply a change of clothing for their child, including underwear, shoes, and socks. This change of clothes will remain at the school in the event of an accident. Each item should be labeled and placed in a labeled Ziploc bag. We will notify you in advance when it is time to switch out the clothing items due to a change in seasons. ***Please send these items to school on the first day.***

As winter approaches, you may want to send in hats and mittens as we go outside even when it is cold. All outerwear should be labeled.

### **TOYS**

Please do not bring ANY toys to school unless they are to be used for "Show & Tell". "Show & Tell" items will remain in the child's cubby until the proper time.

### **BREAKFAST**

Children should have already eaten breakfast before entering preschool. It is confusing for other children when they see another child with breakfast food. Please do not send your child to the school with their breakfast or with a drink.

### **SNACKS**

Each day around mid-morning, students will receive a light snack. Please let your teacher know if your child has any allergies.

### **LUNCH**

Each school day lunch will be provided by Angels and Sparrows. Again, please make sure we are aware of any food allergies your child may have. If you do not want your child to be served lunch, let us know and you may pick your child up by 11:45 a.m. Or you may choose to send in your child's individual lunch.

## **HEALTH AND WELLNESS POLICIES**

CES will make every effort to protect the health and safety of your children. The cooperation of parents in helping prevent the spread of communicable diseases is of great importance. Therefore, we request that you do not send your child to school with any of the following symptoms:

**Fever of 100.0 degrees or higher within the last 72 hours**

**Have been diagnosed with COVID-19 (May return to school 3 days past the first symptom and 72 hours fever free).**

Have symptoms of COVID i.e.headache, fever, chills, body aches, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, new cough, new loss of taste or smell

Stomachache or loose stools

Rash or mouth sores

Severe cold, sinus infection, upper respiratory infection

Vomiting within the last 24 hours

Diarrhea within the last 24 hours

Deep and/or persistent cough

Sore throat

Discolored runny nose

Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)

Head Lice and/or Scabies (Must have the receipt to verify child has been treated.)

Any contagious disease (chicken pox, strep throat, Impetigo, MRSA, Shigellosis, Rotavirus, Fifth Disease etc.)

**Any child that comes to school with the above conditions will not be allowed to stay, and the parents or emergency contact will be called.** Be sure to keep cell phones turned on and check voice mails, emails, texts via Class Dojo in case we need to reach you. If your child becomes ill at school, we will contact you to pick him or her up. If the child is found to have a contagious disease, please notify the preschool immediately, so that the director can notify the other parents of possible exposure to their children.

Certain illnesses may require a doctor's written statement that the child is no longer infected.

**THE STAFF DOES NOT ADMINISTER MEDICATION OF ANY KIND.**

## **DISCIPLINE POLICIES**

Discipline is an important part of your child's learning experience. Regarding setting limits and managing children's behavior in the classroom, teachers always use a positive approach not punitive measure. Helping children learn appropriate behavior and how to resolve conflicts and coping skills is an everyday occurrence at **CES**. The teachers' role is to provide a classroom atmosphere where order is

maintained while assuring a safe environment for every child and respect for each child's feelings. Prevention is always the best strategy. Teachers will help children learn how to verbalize their feelings through modeling different words, phrases, and actions. Our focus is not on punishing the child, but having the child learn through choices and consequences. All discipline will be handled in a caring but firm, consistent manner to teach them to respect themselves and others. Children will learn the rules of preschool at the beginning of the year, and we will continue to work with them to ensure they are followed. If a child misbehaves, we first try a soft firm voice, eye contact, and redirection.

If the problem persists or becomes aggressive, we will implement another method such as a quiet time. We recognize that each child is different and may require a different approach. We appreciate your input so we can partner with you and implement the effective methods you practice at home.

If a quiet time does not change the behavior, the teacher will escort your child to the director's office. After he/she has been verbally corrected by the director with a clear understanding of classroom expectations emphasizing appropriate behavior, he/she will return to the classroom. At this point, **acceptable choices must be made regarding obedience to teachers and respect towards their classmates.** Should the behavior continue, you will be contacted by the director to come and pick up your child since the flow and schedule of the classroom is being interfered with due to the child's willful, deliberate, and intentional inappropriate behavior.

In the rare event that the child continues his/her actions once having returned to school, there will be a one-week suspension from the preschool. If no successful resolution has occurred in that time, we will proceed to dialogue with you the parent about taking further steps to correct the behavior including possible dismissal from the preschool if needed and only as a last resort for the best interest of the preschool in terms of smooth daily function and implementation of classroom activities and academic curriculum.

We strongly believe that children need a secure and loving environment where limits are reasonable and consistent, as well as the growing ability to make choices and learn from their actions. We primarily use re-direction and teach our children problem solving skills and what choices or behaviors are better options. Teachers work hard to reinforce positive behavior as opposed to focusing on negative behavior. We also work on teaching children empathy by having them help take care of a friend they may have played too rough with. Our teachers are very cautious to limit time out to only three minutes and to talk with the child about how they can better solve their problem next time. Our goal is to create a positive and safe environment where children gain the confidence and abilities to work out their problems and think of resolutions independently.

Any form of corporal punishment is strictly prohibited at the preschool!

### **CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT**

The preschool staff has a moral and legal responsibility to protect children from physical, verbal, emotional, and sexual abuse. Any cause of abuse, no matter what its source, will be reported to the proper authorities. The name of the child and parent/guardian will be kept confidential.

### **BITING**

Toddlers thrive on exploration and using their senses to investigate their world. They will “explore” other children and adults exercising their senses just as if these people were objects. At times, a healthy toddler’s exploration of the social world will involve conflicting feelings. They may react impulsively, displaying aggressive feelings and behaviors. This may include biting. This behavior is all part of typical development before language skills are developed. When a child bites it is our policy to follow the following procedure:

1. Stop the aggressive behavior with a firm “NO!”
2. Separate the biter from the bitten. Render aid to the victim first. The teacher will wash the bite with soap and water and offer reassurance.
3. Encourage the bitten child to say, “Ouch, don’t bite!” in a loud voice.



4. The biter is then addressed immediately and is reminded that biting is unacceptable, that biting hurts, and that it is not ok to hurt our friends.
5. The biter may be given a short time-out or may be enlisted to help in the care and comfort of the child who was bitten.
6. An Injury/Incident Report is completed for both children. The teacher will attempt to contact the parents of both children before dismissal if the bite is determined to be severe.
7. Teachers will evaluate the environment, as well as any patterns that arise resulting in biting and adjust as needed.

The parent is the best resource when dealing with a child who is biting. It is also especially important to have consistency between the home and the school on methods implemented in handling these types of behaviors.

The name of the biter shall remain confidential. The parents of the child bitten will always be informed when their child has been bitten. If a child has bitten someone on more than one occasion, the parents of the biter will be called in for a conference. In addition, if biting becomes a habit at preschool, after discussion with the parents, the child will be sent home from school for three days when biting incidents occur. In extreme cases the preschool reserves the right to ask the parent of the child not to return to school for a predetermined length of time so the child can mature and hopefully reenter the classroom smoothly without incident.

### **SPECIAL NEEDS**

CES is committed to the philosophy that welcoming children with differing abilities benefits all children at preschool. Let there be no mistake, however, that CES is not therapeutic in nature, but may provide an opportunity for children with disabilities and typically developing children to interact, learn, and socialize wonderfully together.

CES affirms that there is a range of typical, normal, and acceptable abilities, behaviors, and needs of children. We attempt to accommodate as broad a range as possible in the belief that this diversity strengthens and enriches all children and the adults who work with them.

CES will be as inclusive as possible when enrolling children with disabilities, developmental delays, and/or chronic illness. We reserve the right to work with the family in making the most appropriate placement for the child, including but not limited to:

1. Choosing the teacher best qualified to handle the child's specific needs.
2. Separating atypical children so that no one class or team of teachers is overwhelmed by multiple issues.
3. Assigning children to classes based on their developmental age rather than their chronological age (under no circumstances will a child be moved to a class older than his/her chronological age.)
4. Redefining educational and developmental goals for children with special needs.

Whenever possible, CES will make reasonable adaptations to meet the individual needs of each child. However, ***the safety and successful functioning of the class always takes priority over the individual needs of any given child.***

We ask that families of children with special needs be open with the administrative staff as well as their child's teachers and that a healthy dialogue remain open between parents, teachers, therapists, and administrators as needed.

Parents whose children have therapists visiting the classroom on a regular basis should provide a copy of the schedule to the classroom teacher and the preschool office. Please indicate if the therapist needs dedicated space outside the classroom so adequate space can be reserved accordingly. Parents should also contact the preschool office

and the child's teacher if someone is coming to evaluate or observe your child.

When a child who is **identified and diagnosed** by a medical specialist as Special Needs applies for enrollment at CES, the director will thoroughly interview the parents collecting information about the child's developmental strengths, weaknesses, and concerns. Any relevant past and current records as well as evaluations of the child by professionals may be requested. The child and parent will often be invited to join a classroom for a visit where further observations can take place. If the child is transferring to CES from another local program, those teachers may be consulted as well. Based on collected information the director will then decide to accept the child if it is mutually beneficial for both the child and CES.

CES does not formally evaluate any child before entrance by means of testing. The above outlined evaluation process before acceptance is intended to provide enough information to indicate a feasible and beneficial match between school and child.

After preschool begins the child is observed closely for a period of **three to four weeks**. Teacher, director, parents, and professionals working with the child are consulted during this time. **If, at any point during this probationary time, the child's needs are determined to be exceptionally demanding on the classroom, dismissal from the preschool will be undeniable and the only viable option.**

If professional intervention is necessary, the situation is carefully monitored. The decision to continue the child's enrollment is based on professional advice, the behavior of the child, the teacher's opinion and concerns, parental input, and the director's assessment of collected data.

There are times when a child not initially diagnosed at the time of admission as having special needs will exhibit such behaviors at some point during the year. If this occurs, the process outlined above will be implemented. **The final decision is determined by the CES Board of directors following the recommendation of the preschool director and may not follow protocol precisely depending on**

**the nature of concern and its severity such as the student endangering himself/herself or another child. In such a case immediate removal of the student from the preschool may be only action of discourse and option.**

### **SUSPECTED SPECIAL NEEDS**

It is common for preschool teachers to be the first to notice possible developmental delays. Teachers are an incredibly valuable resource in the identification of a child's difficulties for multiple reasons in that they spend a great deal of time with the child, second only to the parents. Furthermore, teachers have had contact with many other children over time, helping them to establish a basis of 'typical' and as a result have ongoing typical "control" children in the class. Therefore, they can discern which child is different from all the other kids in the classroom.

In the case of a delay is suspected, the teacher will discuss the issue with the director who may choose to observe the child. The teacher will then discuss the concern with the parent. Although we would never attempt to diagnose a child with an illness, delay, or disability, we are qualified through experience to notice subtle differences in development that may be less apparent to family members. The preschool's policy is to work in partnership with the family to provide the best possible care and environment for each child by communicating any visible concerns.

### **TOILET TRAINING POLICY**

All children must be potty trained before the school year begins. We realize there will be accidents. If your child is newly potty trained, please send in extra clothing and undergarments in case of an accident.

### **CLASSROOM PLACEMENT**

The age cut off for kindergarten in North Carolina is 8/31. We follow the same procedure so that your child is on schedule for entering kindergarten. Your child must be the required age of the enrolled

classroom by 8/31 for your child to be accepted into that age group. We do not advance kids into older classes once they turn a year older. For example, if your son turns 4 on October 5<sup>th</sup>, we will not place him in the 4's class. He will remain in the 3's class for the entire school year. Using the same example of the October 5<sup>th</sup> birthday, this child will turn 6 on 10/5 of his kindergarten year and 18 on 10/5 his or her senior year graduating a slightly older age than his classmates on average. Older aged kids are at an advantage in many ways. Please do not let age discourage you or pressure you to have your child tested out necessarily. Older kids are more mature and perform at a higher rate than their younger counterparts in many cases.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

All field trips are parent chaperoned events. The director collects the fees for the trip prior to the scheduled event. There is no school on the day of the field trip except in the case of inclement weather in which case the preschool operates on a normal schedule. Field trips cancelled due to inclement weather are in most cases rescheduled for a future date. School is officially over at the end of the field trip. We do not resume classes at the preschool should the field trip end early.

### **COMMUNICATION**

Weekly emails will be sent home to each preschool family as well as reminders regarding upcoming events, announcements, and policy/procedural reminders. **Please do not attempt to contact your child's teacher during preschool hours except in case of an emergency.** Their first responsibility is to their classroom and the children. We appreciate your cooperation and respect for not interrupting the class. Your child's teacher will also send home classroom communication on a regular basis via behavior sheets, Class Dojo, emails and/or notes.

Please be respectful of our teaching hours. Teachers are required to remain in the classroom with their students. It is inappropriate to stop a teacher discussing confidential information related to your child in

the hallway during preschool teaching hours.

In addition, for safety purposes, drop-off and pick-up times are not conducive to discussing more in-depth issues regarding your child.

### **CONFERENCES**

We are always willing to share our observations of your child with you. Most often, these will be informal conversations, phone calls, or emails. Parent/teacher conferences are conducted twice a year for Pre-K and T-K students, once in the early fall and the second in January. Three-year-old students' conferences are held in early May. If at any time you would like to talk to your child's teacher, please plan to meet with them before or after school. The three's teacher only conducts one conference at the end of the year.

### **GRIEVANCE POLICY**

Please share thoughts and concerns with your child's teacher as issues arise. We want you to be always satisfied with the program. Open communication between parties is essential. Every effort should be made to resolve the issue at this level.

The director of the preschool should be contacted if the parties involved have not been able to reach a solution.

If the parent/guardian is not satisfied, the complaint is then to be presented in written form and brought before the preschool board.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

Please avoid communication regarding your child's individual progress with other families until you have contacted your child's preschool teacher or the director first. These matters are confidential in nature and should only be divulged to the appropriate people involved. This method will ensure you receive information to help you make necessary decisions related to your child in the following areas: academically, socially, emotionally, physically, mentally, and

spiritually. In addition, **Posting negative comments with regard to any aspect of Cornelius Early Scholars via all social networks is strictly prohibited at CES and may result in the removal of your child as a student once denoted by a CES Staff member board member, or by any observer who discloses the posting to us. Please see page 7 to review Cornelius Early Scholar's Withdrawal Policy.**

## **GRADUATION**

Graduation for our 4-year-old students is a wonderful finale to a rich and fulfilling experience in preschool. This ceremony is limited to the parents and relatives of our graduating students. This is not a school-wide event but is a privilege for our kids who have successfully completed preschool and are on their way to "Big School". We roll out the red carpet for our graduating students by providing a lovely and memorable graduation ceremony in the Sanctuary followed by a beautiful reception in the Fellowship Hall. All the festivities are free to the graduating students and their families except for the cap, gown, and tassel. Caps & gowns are ordered in early May. Your graduate will receive a preschool diploma and a Children's Bible as gifts from the preschool. All these efforts will ensure a stunning graduation for you to both enjoy and remember for years to come.

Thank you for choosing Cornelius Early Scholars! You made the right choice for your child to continue a successful educational journey with a love for learning planted lasting a lifetime.

"Start children off on the way they should go, and when they are old, they will not turn from it." Proverbs 22:6