



Top Things You Need to Know About Preschool for our 2 ½ Year Old Program

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1. Brightwheel

ELP uses a software app called Brightwheel to facilitate administrative tasks, communicate with families, record student observations, share photos and newsletters, and manage tuition billing. Parents/caregivers use the mobile app to check their child into and out of school, and can message us about an absence, delayed arrival or pickup, or unexpected change as to who is bringing your child home. You can also digitally sign and send forms, add/change emergency contacts, or send messages and questions. We hope you will find it to be a quick and easy way to touch base about your child. The office checks email every day if you prefer that option.

2. School Calendar and Parent Handbook Resources

Our school Google calendar is available on our website: www.elcviennapreschool.org. School closures, Creative Movement/Music, Science, Garden/Nature, Chapel, and other events are posted. You can sync the "ELP Public Calendar for Families" to your personal online calendar. We will send Brightwheel messages regarding inclement weather/delayed openings and closures, but FCPS also posts these and is also a good resource. We generally follow the standard FCPS calendar including holidays and teacher workdays with some key differences. We begin our school year after Labor Day and end during the week before Memorial Day. More information can be found in our **Parent Handbook** and the **Pandemic Health and Safety Handbook**. Both are on our preschool website. While we are trying to reduce paper copies, if you prefer a copy of our calendar or handbooks, they will be provided to you.

3. School Hours

Preschool classroom doors open at 9:00am and dismissal is promptly at 12:00noon. Upon arrival, students must be checked in using your Brightwheel QR code located outside classroom doors before the teachers welcome your child. If you arrive late, knock on the door as the class will be underway. If the class is not in the room, come to the office (message us through Brightwheel if not in the office), perform your Brightwheel check-in and we will escort your child to class. Please inform us of circumstances that could regularly affect arriving at 9:00am. *NOTE: The 2-1/2s have a gradual start their first month, attending 9:00am-10:30am the first week and adding 30 minutes to the length of the school day every week until they are comfortable with their routine and able to participate for the full three hours.*

As we all adjust to new schedules, driving routes, and traffic patterns remember TRAFFIC IS ONE WAY ONLY in the church/preschool lot at 10mph. Drivers should enter at the top entrance and exit at the lower drive only. We encourage you to please allow plenty of time to arrive at school for drop off and pickup. We know it can be upsetting for children to be the last one to be picked up, so we appreciate a quick message if you're running late. This allows us to reassure the children you are on your way. Brightwheel keeps a record of arrival and pickup times and any late pickups. Please be on time as we want to avoid charging late fees as outlined in our Parent Handbook.

4. Health Screening

Each morning, teachers follow our licensing guidelines to do a brief “Daily Health Observation” as they greet children making sure they are feeling well and ready for school. If a teacher has any questions regarding a child’s health, she will speak with the parent before welcoming the child into the classroom. If a child becomes ill during the school day or exhibits signs that they are not feeling well, “not themselves” and unable to participate fully, they will be cared for in a separate room while parents are called to pick up their child. Our policy is that a child must be fever-free (without medication) and may not have a fever, diarrhea, or vomiting for 48 hours before returning to school. ELP has trained staff to administer Epi-pens as prescribed in emergency situations, but does not administer any other medications, including Benadryl or Tylenol. If your child needs sunscreen, topical medicines, or lotion, we ask that you do that at home. We use soap and water, cold packs, band aids, and TLC for the occasional scrape or bump.

5. Tuition Payments

Tuition payments are invoiced and processed through Brightwheel. Tuition is split into nine (9) monthly payments for our school year. The first payment serves as a non-refundable deposit credited to May/the last month of school. It is generally paid in the spring, along with the one-time Activity Fee. The second tuition payment is due September 1st and continues through April. Billing preferences can be set as an automatic draw or manual payment through direct ACH bank transfer (with a flat \$0.60 fee per transaction) or credit card (2.9% of the tuition amount added as a transaction fee) or a combination of payment sources. If you are experiencing financial difficulties and cannot pay before the 5th of the month, please contact the ELP Office. We will do our best to work through a solution with you. Accounts that are paid consistently late may be charged an additional fee and/or required to go on an automatic payment plan. More information about tuition and late fees are outlined in our **Parent Handbook**. Summary reports of tuition expenses for tax purposes can be processed at home through Brightwheel as needed.

6. Forms and Paperwork

According to licensing requirements, all students’ registration paperwork, accompanying documentation, health forms, medication consent forms, etc., must be completed and submitted prior to the start of the school year. *It is VERY important that you keep the office up-to-date with any changes to this information, and helpful to let us know if the emergency contact information on your child’s Brightwheel profile is different than what you listed on their registration form.*

7. Clothing/Masks

All adults and children (2 or older) must wear a mask covering nose and mouth on school grounds during the drop off and pickup period, regardless of vaccination status. With fun and safety in mind, all children should be dressed in comfortable play clothes and sneakers (no Crocs, boots, or sandals). We are encouraging learning through exploration and children will be painting, using markers, crayons, and other art materials as well as playing on the playground, digging in our Children’s Garden, and moving their bodies in Creative Movement & Music. At preschool, we want them to be free to engage in any activity without worrying about their clothes. Children in the 3s and 4s PreK class must be fully toilet-trained. Any soiled clothes will come home in a red plastic bag. Parents should pack an extra change of clothes, including socks, in their child’s preschool tote bag and replace them seasonally. Children will wear masks indoors throughout the preschool day. Please provide a supply of additional masks, kept in a child’s tote bag, as some children need a clean mask during the day. Cloth masks should be washed daily.

Children in the 2s do not need to be fully toilet-trained; teachers will change diapers as needed. Pull-Ups are not permitted. If your child is not regularly staying dry, keep using diapers. While teachers can provide

some assistance to children practicing their toileting independence, they do not have the time or resources to toilet train your child during the school day.

8. **Allergies/Snacks**

Licensing requires children with a medically diagnosed allergy to have **a signed letter from your child's physician confirming the allergy and also designating the appropriate course of action or treatment in case of an emergency.** Typically, in a preschool setting, the most common allergy is food-related. A child who requires an epi-pen for allergic reactions must provide two (2) epi-pens in the original prescription box to the ELP before the child can attend. These epi-pens are kept out of the reach of children, and "travel" with the teacher as the class moves throughout the day from the classroom to specials and outdoor activities. Staff will confirm with the parent the symptoms their child may exhibit if exposed to an allergen and agree on a written plan of action/treatment (FARE plan).

ELP serves a rotating variety of crackers, pretzels, goldfish, cheerios, etc. with apple juice and water each day. Parents of children with food allergies can review the brands and ingredients list for our school snacks and authorize the snacks their child may eat. For class celebrations, parents who sign up to bring treats from home can provide something their child enjoys. Parents who have a child with an allergy will be asked to provide a special snack for their own child (no candy please) to be used on those days. In past years, we have defrosted a cupcake from a parent-provided supply kept in the school freezer. We can also store individually wrapped shelf-stable snacks like Rice Krispie treats or Oreos in the classroom cabinet.

9. **Chapel**

Our chapel program for our 3s and 4s PreK classes takes place on most Wednesdays at 11:35am. During Chapel, we enjoy singing (masked) with the children and our pastors and ELC staff will share a short story and a prayer. Our goal is for the children to experience God's love for us. We will be in the sanctuary for Chapel, staying in our classroom cohort and distancing from other classes. We will let you know if having family members join us for Chapel becomes possible at a later date.

The teachers will determine if and when the 2 ½ year old class is ready to add Chapel to their weekly routine, typically after January. The children practice the transition of walking as a group to and from the Sanctuary, sitting distanced apart in the back pew, and learning "Chapel manners." Children would participate in a modified/shortened introduction to Chapel, arriving first and singing one or two songs together with the rest of the preschool classes, but returning to the classroom before the story/lesson. This gentle introduction allows them to feel more comfortable when participating in Chapel the next year.

10. **Playground**

At this time, the playground will be closed before and after school, available for use by students and staff during their scheduled class time. We do ask that parents remind their children the importance of abiding by the playground rules at all times. Teachers go over these rules before children go out on the playground reiterating that children should slide down the slide one at a time on their bottoms, feet first (never head first). They also should not take any buckets, toys, or balls onto the climbing equipment, and gravel should stay on the ground and may not be thrown. We appreciate your help keeping all the children safe.

11. **Lunch Program Eligibility**

After school lunch programs are only for our 3s and 4s PreK classes.