

Welcome to Joyful Beginnings at Saint Paul's. We are glad you are here! We have been here in the community serving families through our PMO program for over twenty years and we’re excited to have begun our new preschool in August of 2023 and became Joyful Beginnings in August of 2024.

We are happy you are here with us and we will make every reasonable effort to accommodate your needs. Please know that this handbook and its contents are subject to change. We encourage you to explore this Parent Handbook and to feel free to ask any questions along the way. Upon enrollment you will be asked to sign that you have read and agree to abide by all the policies included.

Thank you for considering Saint Paul’s a place for your family!

Sincerely,

Beth Wilde

Saint Paul’s Director of Early

Childhood Ministries

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Our program follows the LCS calendar for all holidays and emergency closures with the following exceptions open October 21, 2024 and March 17, 2025 Below is the link to the calendar.

<https://www.leonschools.net/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=41649&dataid=193485&FileName=2024-2025_Calendar_By_Listing.pdf>

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 Introduction and Mission Statement

The mission of Joyful Beginnings at Saint Paul’s is to provide a safe and loving Christian environment for children. A place where your child feels safe, is well cared for and has the opportunity to make friends, have fun, build confidence and learn in Christ’s love.

Saint Paul’s is a safe place for children of all backgrounds to come together and foster a joy of learning. It is a place where children of all abilities can learn the independence to navigate and contribute to the world in their own unique way. This is mostly done through cooperative and imaginative play. Our preschool class does offer formal lessons in phonics, math and social emotional intelligence and the majority of our day is spent playing in uniquely designed centers that foster independent learning.

Our toddler friends spend time working on managing their feelings and learning how to treat each other with care and love like Jesus. We also prepare them for preschool with exposure to letters, shapes, colors and numbers with minimal worksheets and more hands-on activities.

We offer a wonderful weekly music enrichment program as well as yoga and chapel time.

Please know that all children and families are welcome. Saint Paul’s does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, or religion.

We strive to offer flexible scheduling and assist all types of families with the hectic demands of family and work life. Below are the schedules available for ages 1-4.

8:45-12:15

8:45-2:45

7:45-5:45

Enrollment Requirements

Children who are new to our program will need to enroll by first submitting an on-line application along with a non-refundable $175 fee. Please know that we require the fee be paid upon submission of the child’s application.

Registration applications are accepted in the following order:

1. Currently enrolled children and their siblings
2. Children of Saint Paul’s UMC members & staff
3. New children to the program.

If all our space is full at the time of registration your child will be placed on a waiting list and you will be notified when space becomes available.

Florida Immunization form **DH 680** and Student Health Exam form **DH 3040** are required for each enrolled child. This is a requirement of The Dept. of Children and Families. It is imperative that we have Fl immunization and Fl health records on file within 10 days of enrollment. Please bring updated records every time your child has updated immunizations.

Tuition & Fees (Summer tuition may vary)

In an effort to provide stability and maintain staffing levels tuition is the same each month regardless of holidays or vacations. In the same vein note that there are no deductions made for absences or “make-up” days.

 Payment is due no later than the 5th of each month.

After the 5th a $25 late fee will be assessed. Payments are accepted via cash, check or [on-line](https://saintpaulsumc.breezechms.com/give/online). Monthly tuition reminders will be sent out on the 1st of the month with specific instructions for online payment.

You may also drop off payments to one of our staff members.

Checks made payable to: Saint Paul’s UMC memo line childcare

**Please do not send payments with your child in his/her bag.**

Monthly tuition and fees effective August 2024

Registration fee $175: A one-time new student enrollment fee (does not apply to all currently enrolled)

Supply fee $150: Annual fee (due every January) helps to cover the costs of our arts and crafts materials, Kleenex boxes, napkins, cleaning supplies, etc.

12 months-24 months 8:45-12:15 (Early drop off adds $5/day)

2 days/week $375

3 days/week $475

4 days/week $575

5 days/week $650

24 months-3 years 8:45-12:15

2 days/ week $325

3 days/week $425

4 days/week $485

5 days/week $555

12 months-24 months 8:45-2:45 (Early drop off adds $5/day)

2 days/week $425

3 days/week $550

4 days/week $640

5 days/week $700

24 months-3 years 8:45-2:45

2 days/week $400

3 days/week $505

4 days/week $585

5 days/week $615

Preschool tuition 8:45-2:45 child must be 4 by 9-1-2024

MWF/TWTH $575

M-F $725

12 months-24 months

7:45-5:45

2 days/week $525

3 days/week $626

4 days/week $725

5 days/week $825

24 months - 4 years

2 days/week $500

3 days/week $600

4 days/week $700

5 days/week $775

In the event you must withdraw from the program before your scheduled month or semester end please provide two weeks written notice. If two weeks’ notice is not given, tuition may be charged in full for the remainder of the month.

 Arrival & Departure

**PLEASE ALERT OUR DIRECTOR AHEAD OF TIME IF YOUR CHILD WILL NOT BE ATTENDING DUE TO SICKNESS OR PLANNED VACATION**

Weather permitting, children will be picked up on the playground. Remember to leave extra time at pick up to allow for traffic and parking and to place your child safely in the car.

Pick up times are by 12:15, 2:45 or 5:45 depending on what schedule you chose at sign up. If you are consistently late picking up your child we will add $25 to your monthly tuition. If late pick ups persist after the fine is paid you may be asked to leave the program and will NOT receive a refund. **PLEASE DO NOT BE LATE WHEN PICKING UP.**

**Entering the building:**  The classrooms are in the lower level of the #200 building located in the breezeway adjacent to the basketball court. Enter from Meridian and pull through carefully. If you anticipate it taking more than 2 minutes to get your child safely in/out of the car, pull in and walk them to the door. The doors require a code for security. Please ring the doorbell and a staff member will greet you and bring your child to his/her classroom. This is not the time for questions/concerns to be discussed. Please reach out if you are in need of a sit down with the director or your child’s teacher.

**Sign-in/Sign-Out:**  For everyone’s safety and to comply with state guidelines, only the adults listed on the enrollment forms will be allowed to pick up your child.
If someone else will be picking up your child we will need their best contact number for that day. If anyone other than the child’s parent or regular caretaker is picking your child up we require prior authorization and they may need to show identification.

**New children:**  To make your child’s adjustment as easy as possible, if there is any concern or issue in acclimating your child to a new space, we ask that for the first few times you plan to bring him/her for 1 to 1.5 hours. The staff will assist you in lengthening your child’s stay. Shortened days (beyond the first week) for newer families may be needed for those children having difficult times separating from their parents. This is a natural process and we are open to helping.

 **WHAT TO BRING FOR YOUR CHILD**

Please **label** all items with your child’s name.

1. Sippie cup, spill proof water bottle or baby bottle with water. We refill them throughout the day with water as needed. **LABEL IT**
2. A large pack of labeled diapers to be kept here for your child and replenished as needed.
3. Individually sealed snacks for your child such as goldfish crackers, cereals, granola bars etc. brought in a Tupperware or ziplock bag. **LABEL** all items! Please refrain from packing elaborate meals, snacks/lunch should be eaten with hands and will not be microwaved. We discourage squeezable fruit/yogurt pouches for children unable to properly hold and or use them.  **WE ARE A PEANUT FREE FACILITY.**
4. An extra outfit in a labeled ziplock bag that we can use as back up and will store for you in our nursery. Consider changing clothes to suit the seasons and sizes as your child grows.
5. Feel free to bring a special “lovie” or blanket that may help during your child’s adjustment period as well as rest time if they are here for that part of the day.
6. If your child is in our preschool or longer day schedule please pack them a 2nd snack and a simple lunch that needs no refrigeration or preparation. All snacks and lunches should be able to be eaten without assistance from staff. Please be mindful of your child's individual abilities and pack food that will make minimal mess.
7. If your child is in our preschool group or is staying for the extended day, they are required to have a 1 inch thick resting mat to be kept here. Sleeping bags and yoga mats are not acceptable per DCF. Also a big **labeled** beach towel that will be sent home weekly for washing.

**WE ARE PEANUT FREE FACILITY**

**Dress Code :**  Come in comfortable clothes that are ready for play and are ok to get messy. Refrain from outfits that will make pottying and diaper changing difficult. ie belts, rompers, excessive snaps etc. The children may get messy from snacks, outdoor fun, and crafting activities. Please consider saving your best for Sunday and send extra clothing as a backup. Layers are always a good choice with the changing weather and seasons. Be sure to **label** all jackets, hats, mittens etc. We encourage closed toed sneakers with socks for safer play.

If your child needs sunscreen and/or insect repellent, please apply it before arrival. **In addition to peanut allergies we also have a staff member with a severe allergy to lavender, rosemary and various other herbs. Please check your lotions, oils, bug sprays etc. before applying them to your child and if you are not sure please ask.**

* **Snack time:**
* As mentioned in “What To Bring” individually sealed snacks for your child such as goldfish crackers, cereals, granola bars etc. brought in a Ziplock bag. Please do **not** bring:
* NO elaborate meals, snacks should be eaten with hands
* NO Microwaveable items (no microwaves in our rooms)
* NO Squeezable fruit pouches for children unable to properly hold and or use them. More of the fruit should be eaten and not spilled as a general rule.
* NO PEANUTS OF ANY KIND

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

We understand that birthdays are a big deal and we love to make our friends feel special! Your children's classmates will make a special card for your child and we will sing to them. If you would like to bring a treat for the class that is fine but we ask that to minimize mess you bring rice krispie treats or doughnut holes only.

Daily Room Schedule of Activities/Toddler Room

The below schedule will vary from season to season,

08:45- 09:15 Arrive and settle into the classroom

09:15 – 10:00 Free choice play and directed play with puzzles, coloring, craft and music enrichment.

10:00 -10:30 Begin cleaning up and potty breaks, diaper changes/checks. \*Diapers are checked and changed at this time and whenever soiled.

10:30 – 11:00 Sanitize Hands, Snack time with Story

11:00 – 11:15 Prepare for outdoor play

11:15 – 12:15 Outdoor play

Preschool Schedule

8:45-9:15 Greet/welcome Center time

Children will be encouraged to be responsible for their own belongings

 9:15-9:30 Welcome Circle

 We will discuss our goals and themes for the day

9:30-10:00 Art enrichment

10:00-10:30 Music enrichment/yoga (depending on day)

10:30-11:00 Snack and social time

11:00-11:15 Clean up and potty break.

11:15-12:00 Outdoor activities

12:00-12:30 Centers and free play

12:30 -1:00 Lunch and social time

1:00-2:15 Rest time

Children will be encouraged to rest quietly, they may look at a book or play quietly with a puzzle or something similar

2:15-2:45 Story and lessons/quiet table top toys

The longer day schedule will include outdoor exploration, cooperative play and depending on age a special area of art/science/stories.

**Classroom Management Guidelines**

One of the primary goals of our program is to help young children grow in their relationship with others. Discipline will focus on positive behaviors that encourage skills such as sharing, taking turns, and cooperative play. Simple and clear rules will be established in each classroom. No form of physical or corporal punishment shall ever be administered. Likewise, a child will not be shamed or put down for any reason. Redirection and constructive solution techniques will be used by the staff. Our preschool classroom is equipped with a calm down corner and children are encouraged to use it as needed. All children and staff members will be protected by our use of the Safe Sanctuaries policy as well.

The following behaviors will result in a written incident report being given to the parent(s), as well as being filed:

* Injury to self or others
* Biting
* Allergic Reaction

If a child’s negative behavior affects the atmosphere of the classroom in ways causing disruption, aggression, defiance, disobedience or disrespect our staff will assist the child by:

* Helping the child use appropriate words to resolve conflict
* Praising and/or rewarding kind behavior
* Providing natural consequences for undesirable behavior
* Working with parents to provide consistency both at home and at school

In the event the child’s behavior overwhelmingly interferes with the overall atmosphere of the classroom, the parents will be called to discuss the behavior and/ or pick up the child for the remainder of the day. The parents and staff will work together to come up with recommendations to resolve the issue. We reserve the right to withdraw the child from the program if unresolved behavioral issues continue to occur. Similarly, we reserve the right to decline services at any time if parents refuse or fail to comply with the licensing rules and regulations, we are subject to as a state regulated child care facility. In either scenario where a child is withdrawn due to behavior or a parent refuses to comply no refund will be given.

**Please share with the director if your child has been diagnosed with any special needs or if there is anything medical that would impact the care your child receives.**

 **Potty Training Policy**

Staff members are happy to help with your child’s transition from diapers to independently using the toilet. We ask that children wear diapers until they have used the toilet successfully for one full week (excluding overnight) at home. We will remind your child to use the bathroom throughout the morning. Toilet training is a big transition to independence.

Please help your child be as independent as possible by dressing him/her in “user friendly” clothing and avoid the following:

* Onesies
* Belts
* Overalls/Rompers
* Buttons/Snaps
* Very tight leggings

**A potty training child should be able to perform these tasks with minimal help while in our care.**

* Able to indicate the need to use the restroom using words or pointing to the restroom not by grabbing themselves, crossing legs etc.
* Pull down/up pants and underwear by themselves
* Able to physically get to the potty and sit without help
* Attend to their own hygiene (wiping).
* Flush a toilet
* Boys (whether sitting or standing) need to be able to “hit the water” in the toilet.

For sanitation reasons, we reserve the right to require diapers on your child if he/she continuously has accidents at school.

We want this to be a success for everyone and welcome a conversation on the subject as your child reaches this stage.

Not being completely potty trained IS NOT a requirement for our preschool program.

**Health Information**

**We are required to share with you that there may be children in our care with your children whose families choose to not vaccinate and or are not fully vaccinated as recommended by the CDC and AAP (American Assoc. of Pediatrics).**

We have a 24- hour policy for illness. If your child has any of the following symptoms do not bring him/her to PMO until your child is symptom free **without the use of medicine for at least 24 hours:**

* 100 Degree Temperature
* Vomiting or diarrhea
* Infected skin rash or impetigo
* Other contagious or communicable disease (e.g., hand, foot and mouth disease, pink eye, chicken pox)

If your child has recently had any of this variety of sickness, please notify us so that we can alert other parents in the program.

If you find that your child has Lice**,** inform us immediately. The infected child may not return to school until the child has been treated for 24 hours.

In the event that a child becomes ill at school or there is another emergency, we will attempt to contact parents by phone. If parents cannot be reached, the emergency contacts will be called. If a serious emergency arises 911 will be called and parents notified.

**Allergies:**  Please inform us if your child has any food or environmental allergies. It may be necessary to have a medical plan in our files for safety. Staff are not allowed to administer any medication to children without written permission. If an Epi-pen or inhaler is necessary, staff will need to be provided one to have in their room for your child.

**Children With Special Needs:**

Saint Paul’s UMC has limited capacity to serve children with special needs. If the director determines that the school is unable to meet the needs of the child appropriately, the child may be asked to withdraw from the program.

 Safety and Health Measures

In addition to the routine hand washing and sanitization of the spaces the below practices were adopted and proven helpful over the course of the last few years to prevent the spread of sickness for everyone. It takes everyone who is participating to do their part and I am so proud to be able to serve such wonderful families.

**A child with a fever or any other illness should remain home until symptom free without medicine for at least 24 hours before returning to school.**

Curbside drop off and outdoor pickup was implemented to prevent crowding indoors.

Drop off: Parents drive up to the main breezeway door where the parent unbuckles and readies the child to be met at the door by a staff member. If there are no signs of fever or sickness the staff will sign in the child and walk them to their classroom.

Pick up: Parent’s arrive at the same door and ring the bell. A staff member will bring your child to you. It is EXTREMELY helpful if you let us know ahead of time if you will be picking up your child earlier than your normally scheduled time.

In Classroom

* If at any time a child displays obvious symptoms of sickness the child will be separated from the group with a staff member until a parent or authorized person returns for the child.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information. It is important for our program's success to have cooperation from our families.

We are happy to sit down with you and go over specific information and always feel free to reach out as needed when questions or concerns arise.