



WELCOME

To

My 1st  Steps Preschool

Parent Handbook



Dear New Family,

Thank you for choosing My 1st Steps Preschool!

Below are just some of the benefits of choosing My 1st Steps Preschool:

- Options for Full Time, Part Time, or Drop In Care
- Competitive rates
- Minimum 3 day enrollment
- 1 Free date night per month (Scheduled date and sign in sheet will be posted in the office at the beginning of each month)
- Fresh and healthy homemade meals and snacks available daily.
- Dedicated and NC certified teachers and staff

We look forward to a wonderful year ahead of us. Please read this Policies and Procedures Handbook to help you understand how we operate at our preschool. Most likely, all of your questions will be answered by reading this handbook. But please feel free to contact us with any other questions, comments, or feedback.

We can't wait to see you and your little one again!

Sincerely,

My 1st Steps Preschool Staff

7106 Cornwallis Rd.

Garner, NC 27529

Phone: 919-763-3903

Email: info@m1sp.com

Website: My1stStepsPreschool.com

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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1. About My 1st Steps Preschool

Philosophy –

We believe that a quality preschool should have:

- A balance of teacher-directed structured learning, creative expression and child-initiated free play
- Activities that build academic skills at each individual child's level
- Experiences that are based on children's interests
- Small class sizes allowing for maximum student comfort and individual attention
- A loving environment fostering kindness, respect, and peaceful problem solving

Our program strives to encompass all those characteristics.

Mission Statement –

Our preschool mission is to provide guidance and support for your child during their “first steps” toward developing a life-long love of learning through play and creativity, while also providing the critical elements to build the foundation needed for their future academic success.

Goals –

Provide a balanced program with varied opportunities for learning that develop each child's interests and abilities in reading, writing, math, science, music and art.

Provide opportunities for children to freely explore and express themselves through play, art, crafts, singing, musical instrument use, dance and drama.

Establish a foundation for lifelong learning by encouraging curiosity, question asking, initiative, effort, research, hypothesizing, experimentation, problem solving, perseverance, and a sense of competence.

Establish a loving, nurturing environment based on cooperation, respect and problem solving, where all children are valued by all others.

Increase each child's abilities in communication and relationship building, including negotiation skills, compromise, taking a different point of view, showing kindness, and making friends.

Provide opportunities for children to learn about the world so they will feel comfortable and confident with their place in it.

*****Our staff information and bios can be found on our website: My1stStepsPreschool.com*****

2. HOURS OF OPERATION

Session Term –

My 1st Steps Preschool follows the Johnston County, NC Public school year calendar which is 9 months from September to June. We also offer a Fun-Filled Summer Program for Pre-Schoolers and School Age students from June through August, and continued care for preschoolers staying through the summer.

Hours -

The Center is opened to students Monday through Friday from **7:00am to 6:00pm**. Early drop off is available as early as 6:00am, for an additional charge of \$15.00 per week or \$10.00 per day. Late pick up is also available as late as 6:30 pm every day except Tuesdays; \$15.00 per week or \$10.00 per day.

Teacher/Work Days and Federal Holidays –

My 1st Steps Preschool understands the complications that Teacher Work Days and scheduled holidays can have on parent's schedules; therefore, we are happy to be open on these days (except for those dates stated in "Closures"). A small fee of \$30 for a full day or \$15 for a ½ day (up to 5 hours) is required. Please be sure to pack your child's lunch, or if you prefer they eat the meal offered at the center (listed on the menu), an additional \$10.00 will be added. **Any federal holidays we are open, those not listed in "Closures," we close promptly at 5pm. Please plan accordingly.**

Weather-Related Closures -

As a general rule, if Johnston County Schools are closed due to inclement weather, we will be closed also, although we reserve the right to remain open on a case by case basis. Please verify that we are closed by calling the center directly at 919-359-3262.

Closures –

The Center will be closed on the following days:

- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Friday Convention Day (this date will be provided)
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving & Black Friday
- Christmas Eve & Christmas Day

- New Year's Eve & New Year's Day

3. ENROLLMENT

Non-Discrimination –

My 1st Steps Preschool is available to all children without regard to race, sex, or national origin.

Enrollment –

Enrollment is based on a first-come, first-serve basis, with priority given to children enrolled in a full day or part day agreement. If our center has reached full capacity and maximum ratios we will be unable to accept children enrolled under “drop-in” status. All parents are encouraged to pre-enroll their children.

Registration Fees:

8 weeks – 6 years old: A non-refundable registration fee of \$70 per student and \$35 for any additional child(ren) is due upon enrollment. This registration fee is used to pay for many things such as supplies, materials, snacks, and toys. Please see us for Specials!

School Age Pick-up & Drop Off: A \$20 non-refundable registration fee per student and \$10 for any additional child(ren) is due upon enrollment.

In the event that our classes fill up, a waiting list will be created and openings will be filled based on availability. The director or office manager will notify all parents of their standing on the waiting list.

Withdrawal –

When a sudden life change occurs (such as a move to a different city or a job loss) you might need to withdraw your child from preschool. Should you withdraw your child during the school year, a 2 week written notice is required (forms available upon request), along with the full tuition prepaid for attendance during those 2 weeks. If notice is not given, any tuition paid is forfeited. If not prepaid for those 2 weeks your child will be unable to attend. **Immediate withdrawal with an overdue balance will be sent to collections if not paid by the end of the week.**

Termination –

My 1st Steps Preschool reserves the right to immediately terminate enrollment for reasons including, but not limited to, the following:

- Late or non-payment of tuition
- Parent adopts an adversarial role with any member of My 1st Steps Preschool or the families it serves
- Enrolled child hurts, bites, endangers or causes the suffering of any member of My 1st Steps Preschool or the families it serves.
- Parent behaves inappropriately in the school environment or on school grounds. This includes, but is not limited to language and actions that are vulgar, abusive, dangerous or sexually suggestive.

*****Termination for these reasons does not entitle family to reimbursement of any monies paid. *****

4. PAYMENTS AND FEES

Payment Options –

Credit Card via Online Transaction – If you would like to pay by credit card, you are welcome to do so Monday thru Friday. A receipt is available to be printed or emailed to you.

Cash or Check – If you would like to pay by cash or check (made payable to My 1st Steps Preschool), a written receipt will be given to you. Payments are welcome any day of the week. Checks are cashed within 2 business days and no later than Friday each week. Please be sure funds are available so that additional charges will not be added to your account. There may be a \$25.00 fee for returned checks by your bank.

Fees –

Late Payment: Tuition is considered late after Wednesday each week. A \$20 late fee will be charged on any payments received after 6:00am Wednesday each week. If tuition has not been received by Wednesday, your child will not be permitted to attend My 1st Steps Preschool until accounts are 100% reconciled including any late fees. If there are extenuating circumstances regarding your finances, please contact the Office Manager to discuss how they might impact your tuition.

Late Pickup: You should be prompt when picking up your child from preschool. There will be an automatic \$5.00 late fee charged if your child is picked up after 6:15 pm. An additional \$5.00 will be added at 6:30 pm and again at 6:45 pm. After 7:00 pm: A \$1.00 per minute late fee will be charged in addition to the \$15.00 charged between 6:15 pm and 7:00 pm.

Refunds –

Enrolling your child reserves a space for that child. The minimum 3 day tuition is due whether or not your child attends all of the days reserved. If you pay ahead for 5 days and your child only attends 3 days, you can receive the 2 day credit, (\$20.00 credit) towards your next week's tuition. Please keep in mind there is still a 3 day minimum. Meaning if your child attends the following week for 3 days, you will still be charged the 3 day minimum and the credit will remain on your account until it is used. If you have a vacation planned, please let us know at least 2-weeks ahead, if prompt notice is given, we will not charge for the vacation days taken. **If notice is not received, no refunds will be given if paid ahead. There will be a max of 2 weeks tuition waived, for vacation or sick weeks, per calendar year (January thru December). Any additional weeks without attending will have a charge of 50% of the minimum enrolled tuition rates; this is to keep your child's seat reserved.**

5. TUITION RATES

Upon enrollment, the first payment is due the 1st day of class with each payment due thereafter by the 1st class each week or month. Discounts are available for paying ahead. There is a 10% discount for paying ahead for the month and 5% discount for paying ahead 2 weeks.

Five (5) Days a Week:	Full Day	Half Day*
Birth - 24 Months	\$200/wk	\$130/wk
2yr Olds	\$180/wk	\$110/wk
3yr Olds	\$170/wk	\$105/wk
4yrs Olds -Preschoolers	\$150/wk	\$ 95/wk
5yrs Olds -Preschoolers	\$140/wk	\$ 90/wk

Four (4) Days a Week:

1yr Olds	\$190/wk	\$120/wk
2yr Olds	\$170/wk	\$105/wk
3yr Olds	\$160/wk	\$100/wk
4yrs Olds -Preschoolers	\$140/wk	\$ 90/wk
5yrs Olds -Preschoolers	\$130/wk	\$ 85/wk

Three (3) Days a Week:

1yr Olds	\$180/wk	\$110/wk
2yr Olds	\$160/wk	\$100/wk
3yr Olds	\$150/wk	\$ 95/wk
4yrs Olds -Preschoolers	\$130/wk	\$ 85/wk
5yrs Olds -Preschoolers	\$120/wk	\$ 80/wk

School Age Rate: \$30 per day for up to 8hrs.

By the Hour Rate: \$10 per hour (ages 8 weeks - 6 yrs)

***Half Days are considered to be 5hrs long with two shift options. (7am to 12pm or 11:00am to 4:00pm). Breakfast/Lunch is included in the AM shift; Lunch and 1 PM snack is provided for PM shift, due to scheduling.**

****There are NO daily rates. If a weekly 3 to 5-day commitment is not requested the rate is based on the hourly rate. ****

****Infant enrollment is for Full Days ONLY.**

*We participate in the USDA Food Program, therefore, we offer the following meals (Breakfast, Lunch, PM Snack and Late PM Snack). If you prefer to pack your child's meals and snacks we will make sure they are served accordingly. Please label everything you pack with your child's name!

6. DAILY SCHEDULES

Events each day will vary depending on the theme for the week, and unforeseen circumstances may require slight adjustments to the schedules, yet the typical schedule will be:

Routines are important for children and following a set routine will help your child adjust more easily. With our set schedule and routines, **we are unable to accept children dropped off between 12:00pm and 2:00pm (rest time) as it will disturb the children laying down to rest. All children will be settled on their nap mats during this time whether they choose to sleep or not.

***If dropping your child off between 11:00am and 11:45pm we ask that you call ahead (by 10:30am) to inform the staff of your pending arrival or provide a lunch for your child as the food has been prepared for the number of children already in attendance by 10:30am.

Daily Schedule for Classroom #1 – (Infants – 12 months)

6:00am – 9:00am	Arrivals/Individual feeding
9:00am – 10:00am	Outdoor Time/Sensory Time
10:00am – 12:00pm	Floor Play/Tummy Time
12:00pm – 2:30pm	Quiet Time
2:30pm – 3:30pm	Outdoor Time/Sensory Time
3:30pm – 5:30pm	Floor Play/Tummy Time
5:30pm – 6:00pm	Clean-up and Departure

PLEASE NOTE

- * Infants will be fed and diapered according to their individual needs.
- * Outdoor/Sensory Time involves a morning and afternoon ride in the stroller. Non-mobile infants are provided a large blanket and sensory play materials such as textured toys and mats filled with water.)
- * Infants will be free to move around the indoor infant designated play area.
- * Infants will not be kept in cribs when awake.
- * Floor Play/Tummy Time involves floor time with fine motor, gross motor, dramatic play, cognitive and language activities (books read to infants either individually or in a small group)
- * Infants will not be kept in high chairs, playpens, or bucket seat tables for more than fifteen minutes unless eating.
- * Infants nap according to their individual schedule or "inner clock". Soft classical music played. Fine motor activities take place. Books read to infants either individually or in a small group.)
- * Infants' hands and faces are washed and clothes are changed as needed.

Daily Schedule for Class Room #1 - (12 months – 24 months)

6:00am – 9:00am	Arrival – Breakfast – Free Play*
9:00am – 9:15am	Clean Up
9:15am – 9:30am	Group Time (ABC/123/Shapes/Colors/Songs)
9:30am – 10:30am	Activity Centers, Art*
10:30am – 11:00am	Playground
11:00am – 11:15am	Clean Up for Lunch
11:15am – 12:00pm	Lunch
12:00pm – 2:15pm	Rest Time*
2:15pm – 3:00pm	Snack Time
3:00pm – 4:00pm	Playground
4:00pm – 4:15pm	Clean Up
4:15pm – 4:30pm	Group Time (ABC/123/Shapes/Colors/Songs)
4:30pm – 5:00pm	PM Snack
5:00pm – 6:00pm	Free Play – Prepare for Departure*

***Routines such as Diaper Changing, Potty Training, Cleaning Faces & Noses, Washing Hands, and water break are provided every 2 hours (max) and/or as needed throughout the day.**

Daily Schedule for Class Room #2 – (3yr -5yr olds (Preschoolers)

6:00am – 9:00am	Arrival – Breakfast – Free Play*
9:00am – 9:15am	Clean Up
9:15am – 10:00am	Playground
10:00am – 10:15am	Group Time (ABC, 123, Shapes, Colors)
10:15am – 11:00am	Activity Centers
11:00am – 11:30am	Lunch*
11:30am – 12:00pm	Clean Up/Story Time
12:00pm – 2:00pm	Rest Time
2:00pm – 2:15pm	Routines, Clean Up
2:15pm – 3:00pm	Snack Time*
3:00pm – 3:15pm	Group Time (Follow Up)
3:15pm – 4:15pm	Activity Centers
4:15pm – 4:30pm	Clean Up
4:30pm – 5:15pm	Playground
5:15pm – 5:30pm	Late PM Snack
5:30pm – 6:00pm	Table top toys/Books

***Routines such as Diaper Changing, Potty Training, Cleaning Faces & Noses, Washing Hands, and water break are provided every 2 hours (max) and/or as needed throughout the day.**

School Age – SCHEDULE

Before School Program:

6:00am – 7:25am – Arrival & Breakfast

7:25am – 7:30am – Kid Taxi Departure for School Drop Off

After School Program:

3:25pm – 4:25pm – Pick-Up from Respective Schools **

4:25pm – 4:45pm – Return to My 1st Steps Preschool

4:45pm – 5:00pm – Transport to Clayton Library

5:30pm – 5:45pm – Return to My 1st Steps Preschool

PLEASE NOTE:

Our School Age Children **must** be at the Center no later than 7:10am, to be able to meet the drop-off time requirement for Middle/Elementary Public Schools. The Center’s contracted driver at Kid Taxi will leave at 7:25am.

****Early Release Days-** Students will be picked up from their respective schools upon dismissal.

***Please advise the office manager of any changes in drop off or pick up at least 24 hours ahead of time. It is important that we are aware of all changes so that there are no delays for our other students and their parents.**

7. PREPARING FOR THE BIG DAY

School Area –

To practice their preschool skills at home, please create a “School Area” in your home. It could be stocked with pens, pencils, crayons, markers, scissors, books, glue and paper.

Clothing –

Each day is full of exciting new adventures for our preschoolers, and sometimes we get messy! While we’ll do everything we can to help keep your children’s clothes clean, please remember that the beautiful new sweater that Grandma knitted them might just get paint, PlayDoh, snacks and dirt all over it.

Please dress your child in clothing suitable for the weather as well as outdoor play. Please keep in mind jackets, coats, gloves or hats.

*****My 1st Steps Preschool staff is not responsible and cannot be held liable for lost or damaged clothing or any other personal items. Please be sure to label all of your child’s belongings.*****

What to Bring –

Please be sure to pack necessary items for your child such as multiple pairs of underwear, 1 to 2 extra outfits, extra pants/shorts if potty training, enough diapers, wipes, and sunscreen for the whole week. If we ask for these items more than twice we will start charging a \$5.00 fee for each item we must then supply, each week until we receive them. We request that **toys and personal items stay at home**. You may want to send a backpack with your child, but it is not necessary.

Meals –

Breakfast and Lunch are provided as well as two afternoon snacks. A menu is posted on the bulletin board in the office, copies are available upon request. If you prefer to pack your child’s meals and snacks, please pack food items in a lunchbox labeled with your child’s name.

Open Door Policy –

We have an open-door policy, meaning you are welcome to visit your preschooler at any time during his/her class. All doors remain locked while preschool is in session for security purposes, so please knock and we’ll let you right in. You can call during preschool hours, and while we may not answer immediately, if you leave a message we will return your call as soon as we are able.

8. SAFE ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE PROCEDURES

Arrival –

Upon arrival, all children must be accompanied inside the facility by an adult. Children may be dropped off no earlier than 7:00am. Early drop off is available at 6:00am with a early drop fee. Please be sure that your child is fed breakfast, if you plan to drop off your child after the scheduled breakfast time (8:15am).

All parents and caregivers must sign their children into preschool. If not signed in at drop off, the time will be marked as 7:00am.

Departure –

Parents/guardians should arrive promptly on or before their scheduled pick up time to pick up their preschooler. Our schedule is very tight, and we cannot stress enough **“Please do not be late.”** Your preschooler will be excitedly waiting for you to return. When a preschooler sees other parents picking up their children and no one is there to pick them up, he/she may get anxious or worried.

Upon the child’s departure, an adult must come inside the facility and notify staff that the child is leaving. If there are any concerns with your child during class, we will briefly let you know when you pick up your child. If you have any concerns, please call us after preschool hours, no later than 8:00pm so you can have our full attention.

All parents and caregivers must sign in their children out of preschool. If not signed out at pick up the time will be marked at 6:15pm and you will be charged accordingly.

Children will only be released to persons listed on the child’s application as authorized by the parent/guardian. Authorization from parent/guardian is required in writing when anyone other than the designated person(s) as listed on the child’s application arrives to pick up the child; also, a driver’s license/photo ID will be required to verify identity of authorized persons if not recognized by staff member.

Access into Classroom –

In order to ensure the safety of all children, all parents/guardians must be escorted into the classrooms in order to prevent doors from being left open. We cannot allow parents or guardians into the classrooms without an escort. If an escort is unavailable, please wait in the office and we will bring you your child/ren. We still have a 100% open door policy, yet we must be aware of who is in the facility at all times.

9. LATE PICK UP POLICY

To maintain the integrity of the program and to respect the hours of operation, as well as the teachers and staff dedicated in caring for your child/dren, the following policy has been put into place. (In effect as of June 20, 2016)

Policy -

My 1st Steps Preschool closes at 6:00 pm. All children are expected to be picked up by a parent or authorized guardian no later than 6:15 pm, unless specific arrangements have been made with the Director, Ms. Mona 919-625-3210. While we understand that unforeseen circumstances do occur, if a parent/guardian arrives after 6:15 pm., parents/guardians will be charged a designated late fee. There will be NO exceptions or warnings. If a parent/guardian is late for whatever reason (flat tire, heavy traffic, weather conditions etc.) a late charge will be issued. A “no exceptions” policy makes it easier to apply the late policy to everyone consistently and fairly.

Late Pick Up Procedure –

If you know you are running late, **please contact My 1st Steps Preschool directly at (919) 763-3903** to let the staff at the center know the anticipated time of pick-up. If for any reason you cannot reach the facility please contact Krystina Johner at (919) 763-3903, ext. 704 or Lissette Costa at: (919)763-3903, ext. 702. Although it will not relieve you of the late fee, it is helpful for teachers to know in advance so they can help your child adjust to the late departure. It also helps the teacher plan for staff coverage during the additional minutes the child will remain at daycare. If there is more than one child remaining past 6:00 pm we may combine the remaining children to one group.

If a parent has not contacted the Site Manager by 6:15, the Site Manager or Teacher will follow the contact protocol below:

- First the parent/legal guardian will be called.
- If the parent/legal guardian cannot be reached, we will call from the child’s authorized emergency contact list. We will continue to attempt contact with the parent/legal guardian and/or the authorized emergency contacts until 7:00 pm.
- If by 7:00 pm, we are still not able to reach any parent/legal guardian and/or an authorized emergency contact, we will call Child Protective Services and/or the local police department. This is to ensure that if an emergency has occurred the proper procedure has been followed.
- Child Protective Services can be reached at: (919) 212-9529.
- Local Police Dept’s: Johnston County: (919) 989-5010, Wake County: (919) 856-6900.

Parents must sign out their child/ren with the accurate time of pick-up on the 'Late Pick-up Form'. (Pick-up time is determined from the Office clock setting.)

The teacher assigned to supervise the remaining child/ren will complete the Late-Pickup Report and the parent/guardian will be asked to sign it. The teacher will give the copy of the report to the parent and the original will go into the monthly accounting folder for processing.

*****Late fees are to be paid during the WEEK that they occur and MUST be paid no later than Friday in the week it occurs. The fees incurred are applied directly to the staff members' salaries that are required to stay late. *****

If you are having consistent difficulties picking up your child by no later than 6:15 pm please talk to Lissette Costa. Consistent late pick-ups without significant communication may lead to withdrawal from My 1st Steps Preschool.

Child Release –

Only adults authorized on the Child Pickup Form will be allowed to take your child home. Please let the director know if there are any changes in the routine schedule of who is picking up your child. If an emergency arises and you need to send someone not listed on the enrollment form, you must call to notify the teacher and that person you have designated will need to show adequate proof of identification.

ID cards will be checked for any person other than the parent or guardian to ensure that they are authorized by parents to pick up a child. If a staff member feels cause for concern for the child/ren's safety they will contact parent/guardian before releasing the child.

***In the case of special custody arrangements between the child's parents, please provide complete detailed instructions and any legal documentation in your child's information records. All instructions will be enforced by My 1st Steps Preschool.

Date Nights

Full Time/Part Time enrollment is granted 4 hours of free childcare, to be used on a date night, each month. There are one or two dates offered per month. These dates will be posted, along with a signup sheet, in the office and will state the upcoming date and times available. Additional children, not enrolled, are welcome but the childcare fee is \$10.00 per hour.

10. CURRICULUM - The Creative Curriculum 4th Edition - Overview

Our curriculum teaches a new letter (with a fun corresponding life science theme) each week. For instance, if we are talking about the letter T, the corresponding weekly theme might be Trains, Transportation, Toys or Trucks.

We utilize hands-on activities, games, arts & crafts, stories and songs to teach life skills and pre-K readiness skills. These activities are designed to expose them to skills and ideas and *explore*, rather than *master*, skills.

Circle/ Group Time

Sharing Time: Each child stands and takes a turn to share their Sharing Time item or tell us anything they'd like.

Weekly Theme Exploration: We discuss the weekly theme and play a learning game such as fishing for letters or categorizing small and big planets.

Rhythms and Movement: We use musical instruments to create rhythms and patterns. We sing and move our bodies and get our wiggles out before school time.

Calendar and Weather: We talk about the beautiful (or not so beautiful) weather outside and any upcoming birthdays or special events by their marked days on the calendar.

Letter of the Week

- We use our marker board to practice writing the letter correctly. We give lots of encouragement and High Fives!
- We read a story with our letter's sound.
- We pass around the Box of Sounds containing several items with the letter's sound, like lions, lily pads, and leopards for the letter L.

Arts & Crafts

Activity Sheets:

- Activity sheet about the letter of the week
- Activity sheet about a variety of skills, such as gluing, cutting, math, patterns, etc.

Crafts: We love to paint, use glitter and glue, make puppets, and bead necklaces.

Different Activity Centers:

Children can choose child-initiated activities at the centers in our preschool room. The teacher is available for small group instruction, 1-1 instruction, and problem solving.

Art Center: When children play at the art center, they use stickers to create their names and simple words, as well as using shapes to create objects.

Science & Discovery Center: In this center children use their small motor skills while playing with manipulatives such as animals, chips, monkeys, letter tiles, play money and more. They discover math by creating patterns, sorting into categories, and grouping in colors.

Writing Center: Children will explore writing with chalk, markers, crayons, and color pencils on White Boards, Chalk Boards, Paper, and Easels.

Housekeeping/Dramatic Play Center: Children will be able to play pretend with costumes, dolls, full child-size kitchens, play-food, cash register, cell phones, cameras, etc...

Block Center: Children will be able to play with all different kinds and sizes of blocks and use their imagination and creativity to build castles, skyscrapers, or whatever fort they can come up with.

Book/Reading Center: Children will be able to read, play with and read to puppets, and play with puzzles.

Manipulative Center: Manipulatives, sometimes referred to as table toys, are an important part of the early childhood curriculum because children can use them to practice a wide variety of skills. Some of the most common skills children learn by using manipulatives include:

- Fine motor skills, eye-hand coordination, and visual discrimination
- Recognition of shapes, colors, and textures
- Comparison of similarities and differences, matching, classification, and pattern recognition
- Following directions, following sequences, and concentrating for completing tasks
- Chances to practice creativity and problem-solving

Music Center: We introduce rhythm and melody to the children with xylophones, tambourines, symbols, and other toddler instruments for them to practice on!

Reflection Time

Quiet Reading: You'll find children reading to each other and laughing at funny parts in their favorite books.

Life Skills Lesson: We'll explore a different life skill lesson every month with puppet shows, skits, games, and more.

Story Time: Our themes come alive during our story time!

Running, Sports, and Pretend Play: We exercise our large motor skills with playtime outside or pretend play inside. A child's work is play. They learn several things through their play, like how to express their feelings, how to help others, how things can be acted upon, etc.

Playground

Outdoor play is conducted in our fenced in play area with multiple toys and alternative options such as swings, tricycles, and a jungle gym to keep them engaged and active.

Snacks/Potty Breaks

Hand Washing: We always wash hands before we eat, when we use the potty, after we come from outside play and after we cough or sneeze.

Snack Helper: Each time a child brings snacks, they get to be the snack helper.

Snack Time: Snack time is a wonderful social time for children as they relax and talk about matters that are important to them.

11. YOUR PRESCHOOLER'S HEALTH

Cleanliness Methods –

In an effort to reduce the spread of germs, teachers and children wash their hands upon entering the preschool, after playing outside, after toileting and before eating and food preparation. Hygiene, such as coughing into the bent elbow, wiping the nose with a tissue, and not sharing cups, are continually discussed. Tables and other surfaces, sinks and toilets are disinfected daily, and sanitized prior to eating. Floors are swept/mopped on a daily basis. Toys are cleaned daily and disinfected weekly.

Illnesses –

Despite our best efforts, illnesses do occur. **Keeping your child home when he or she is sick prevents the spread of germs to other children. If in doubt, it is best to keep your child at home.** When your child is sick, please call us by 10:30 a.m. to let us know he or she will not be attending that day. If a child becomes ill during the day, he or she will be separated from the group and made comfortable while a parent or substitute is notified to pick up the ill child.

The law requires that children exhibiting any of the following symptoms (within the last 24 hours) be excluded from school:

- Strep throat, fever and has been on antibiotics for less than 24 hours
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Draining rash
- Eye discharge or Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Fever of 100.6 F or greater
- Lice or nits in the hair

Please let us know immediately if your child is exposed to or contracts a contagious disease. Viruses are contagious while a fever is present.

Immunizations –

All children must be current on their immunizations. We must have a copy of this information **within 14 days** of enrollment.

Administering Medicines –

If your child needs to be given medicine during the day, you will need to provide verbal and written permission and instructions. The medicine must be kept in its original container, clearly labeled with your child's name. Administered doses will be logged. Medications will be kept out of reach of children.



12. INFANT SAFE SLEEP POLICY

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the unexpected death of a seemingly healthy baby for whom no cause of death can be determined based on an autopsy, an investigation of the place where the infant died, and a review of the infant's medical history.

We believe that a safe sleep environment for infants helps lower the chances of an infant dying from SIDS, and that parents and child care providers can work together to provide a safe sleep environment. According to N.C. Law G.S. 100-91 (15), child care providers caring for infants 12 months of age or younger, are required to implement a safe sleep policy, share the safe sleep policy with parents/guardians, and participate in Infant-Toddler Safe Sleep and SIDS Risk Reduction in Child Care training. My 1st Steps Preschool will implement the following safe sleep practices.

Safe Sleep Practices

1. All child care staff caring for infants and child care staff that may potentially care for infants will receive training on how to implement our infant Safe Sleep Policy.
2. Infants will always be placed on their **backs to sleep**, unless there is a signed *Alternate Sleep Position Waiver- Health Care Professional Recommendation*, signed by the child's Health Care Provider in the infant's file. A waiver notice will be posted at the infant's crib at all times the infant is in attendance. This facility does **not** accept *Alternate Sleep Position Waiver – Parent Request*. Waivers will be retained in the children's record as long as they are enrolled.
3. When babies can easily turn over from the back to the stomach, they will be placed to sleep on their backs and then allowed to adopt the sleep position they prefer. This is in accordance with the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommendations. Child care staff can further discuss with parents how to address circumstances when the baby turns onto their stomach or side.
4. Sleeping infants will be visually checked daily, every 15-20 minutes, by assigned staff. The sleep information will be recorded on a Sleep Chart. The Sleep Chart will be kept on file for one month after the reporting month. We will be especially alert to monitoring a sleeping infant during the first weeks the infant is in child care. We will check the infant for:
 - Normal skin color
 - Normal breathing by watching the rise and fall of the chest
 - His or her level of sleep
 - Signs of overheating: flushed skin color, increase in body temperature (touch the skin), and restlessness
5. Staff will reduce the risk of overheating by not over-dressing or over-wrapping the infants.

(Safe Sleep Practices continued)

6. All parents/guardians of infants cared for in the facility will receive a written copy of our Infant/Toddler Safe Sleep Policy before enrollment, will review the policy with staff, and sign a statement saying they received and reviewed the policy.
7. The temperature in the room where the infant(s) sleep will be kept between 68-75°F and monitored by the thermometer kept in the infant sleeping room.
8. To promote healthy development, awake infants will be given supervised “tummy time” for exercise and for play.

Safe Sleep Environment

9. Infants' heads will not be covered with blankets or bedding. Infants' cribs will not be covered with blankets or bedding. We use a sleep sack instead of a blanket.
10. No loose bedding, pillows, bumper pads, etc. will be used in cribs. We will tuck any infant blankets in at the foot of the crib and along the sides of the crib mattress.
11. Toys and stuffed animals will not be allowed in the crib at any time.
12. Pacifiers will be allowed in infants’ cribs while they sleep. When the pacifier falls out of the sleeping infant’s mouth, it will not be reinserted into the infant’s mouth. The pacifier is the only object we will allow in a crib.
13. A safety-approved crib with a firm mattress and tight fitting sheet will be used.
14. Each infant will sleep have his or her own crib. Only one infant will be in a crib at a time, unless we are evacuating infants in an emergency.
15. No smoking is permitted in the infant room, in or outside of the premises. No SMOKING is allowed on the entire property. This includes all forms of tobacco, including E-Cigarettes.

*A form will be provided for your signature, acknowledging that you have received this information and understand our policy. This form will be kept in your child’s record for the duration of his or her enrollment.

13. POTTY TRAINING

Our Policy –

We *do not* require a preschooler to be potty trained before coming to preschool. We *do*, however, request that the parents are fully involved in the potty training efforts at home, and we will use our own positive efforts at preschool. If parents and teachers are consistent with training it is easier for the child.

How We Handle Potty Accidents –

To help facilitate this process, we will encourage children to wear underwear instead of diapers or Pull-ups at preschool (with the exception of nap time, if necessary). However, if a child has an accident while at preschool (in underwear) we will change him or her into a second pair of clothing that you provide (please keep additional clothing, especially underwear and pants, in their designated cubby). We will send soiled clothes home with you, so please be sure to bring extra outfits the following day!

Our Success –

All our preschoolers who have not been potty-trained before coming to preschool have become potty-trained within a month of attending. We attribute this success to great parental involvement and positive peer pressure from friends at preschool.

14. YOUR PRESCHOOLER'S SAFETY

Emergency & Accident Procedures –

We stress carefulness and safety at My 1st Steps Preschool. The children are supervised closely at all times. Materials, furniture and equipment are checked weekly to be sure they are in safe, working order. Medications, cleaning supplies and other harmful substances and objects are kept out of the children's reach. However, accidents can still happen.

The director and teachers have been trained in CPR and Pediatric First Aid. In the event of a minor injury, someone with the certified training will administer First Aid. In the event of a medical emergency, 911 will be called. Parents will also be contacted as soon as possible in the event of any illness or injury requiring immediate medical assistance. Completed registration forms with emergency contacts for each child are kept in an easily obtained file for quick reference. You will be notified of any injury or illness that occurs while your child is in our care. For injuries or illnesses that require medical attention, you will receive a written report and my licensor will be notified.

Minor Injuries/Incidents and Boo Boo Reports –

In the event that a child has a minor injury at preschool whether from falling, or a disagreement with another child, parents will be notified upon pick up, and the incident will be documented and discussed, along with a plan for both teachers and parents to follow in order to prevent repeat occurrences. If your child inflicts harm upon another child, depending upon the severity of the incident and repeat offenses, they may be withdrawn from our center. Please see our Behavior and Discipline Policy.

Child Abuse –

Those responsible for the care of children are mandated by law to report to Child Protective Services any suspicion of physical, sexual or emotional child abuse, child neglect or exploitation. We are not obligated by law to inform parents if the police or child protective services are called about possible abuse.

15. BEHAVIOR & DISCIPLINE POLICY

Behavioral Expectations –

At My 1st Steps Preschool we are committed to fostering kindness, care, respect and trust. In order to support the creation of such an environment, **we do not allow any fighting, kicking, pushing, biting, name-calling, physical aggression or exclusion at preschool.**

Children will work to identify and appropriately express their emotions. Positive attention and verbal praise will be used on a regular basis.

Children who behave inappropriately are dealt with in a way that preserves their dignity and trust. If a problem occurs, the teacher will employ simple redirections, speak with the child individually, and provide acceptable choices.

Corporal punishment or total isolation of a child will **never** be used by anyone as a form of discipline at My 1st Steps Preschool. We don't spank or yell.

My 1st Steps Preschool's Discipline and Behavior Management Policy is as follows:

Praise and positive reinforcement are effective methods of the behavior management of children. When children receive positive, non-violent, and understanding interactions from adults and others, they develop good self-concepts, problem solving abilities, and self-discipline. Based on this belief of how children learn and develop values, this facility will practice the following discipline and behavior management policy:

We:

1. DO praise, reward, and encourage the children.
2. DO reason with and set limits for the children.
3. DO model appropriate behavior for the children.
4. DO modify the classroom environment to attempt to prevent problems before they occur.
5. DO listen to the children.
6. DO provide alternatives for inappropriate behavior to the children.
7. DO provide the children with natural and logical consequences of their behaviors.
8. DO treat the children as people and respect their needs, desires, and feelings.
9. DO ignore minor misbehaviors.

10. DO explain things to children on their levels.
11. DO use short supervised periods of time-out sparingly.
12. DO stay consistent in our behavior management program.
13. DO use effective guidance and behavior management techniques that focus on a child's development.

We:

1. DO NOT spank, shake, bite, pinch, push, pull, slap, or otherwise physically punish the children.
2. DO NOT make fun of, yell at, threaten, make sarcastic remarks about, use profanity, or otherwise verbally abuse the children.
3. DO NOT shame or punish the children when bathroom accidents occur.
4. DO NOT deny food or rest as punishment.
5. DO NOT relate discipline to eating, resting, or sleeping.
6. DO NOT leave the children alone, unattended, or without supervision.
7. DO NOT place the children in locked rooms, closets, or boxes as punishment.
8. DO NOT allow discipline of children by children.
9. DO NOT criticize, make fun of, or otherwise belittle children's parents, families, or ethnic groups.

"Time Out"

If a child is unable or unwilling to demonstrate self-control, a brief quiet time (a "time out" in view of the group for as many minutes as they are old) will be administered to help regain that control. This happens only when other measures have been exhausted, previous warnings have been given, or when behavior is aggressive or harmful to others. "Time-out" is the removal of a child for a short period of time (3 to 5 minutes) from a situation in which the child is misbehaving and has not responded to other discipline techniques. The "time-out" space, usually a chair, is located away from classroom activity but within the teacher's sight. During "time-out," the child has a chance to think about the misbehavior which led to his/her removal from the group. After a brief interval of no more than 5 minutes, the teacher discusses the incident and appropriate behavior with the child. When the child returns to the group, the incident is over and the child is treated with the same affection and respect shown the other children.

Removal From Class –

Many behavioral issues are minor and are dealt with at school. Parent involvement is only sought after the child has had opportunity to improve his or her behavior and is still having trouble. A child may be dismissed from our preschool if one or more of the following conditions are repeatedly observed:

- A child's conduct hurts or endangers others
- A child intentionally destroys property
- A child's behavior is unruly, disruptive, and prevents others from fully participating in or benefiting from class activities.

16. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parent Responsibilities –

Parents are expected to discuss concerns or questions with their child’s teacher or with the director. Parents are expected to read all notes and newsletters that go home. At least twice a year, parents may attend parent/teacher conferences. Parents should check their email regularly and add our email (info@m1sp.com) to their contacts list so our emails don’t get put into your SPAM folder.

Parents should encourage their child’s positive behavior at home.

Parent Volunteers –

We welcome parents in our classrooms! Parent helpers allow us to plan even more directed learning activities and centers. Legal requirements require that all volunteers must have a background check screening conducted prior to volunteering in the Preschool. Please contact the Office Manager for specific requirements.

17. COMMUNICATION

Assessments –

Your child will be assessed in both social and academic areas several times through the year.

Daily Reports –

We like to keep parents informed of their children’s daily activities in several ways. Most of the products that are produced (paintings, writing, and arts & crafts) are sent home the day they were created. However, many of our experiences produce no final product. We play games with dice, finger write letters in boxes of sand, act out stories, play musical instruments and build with blocks. These activities are described for parents in our daily reports.

Parent/Teacher Conferences –

We hold parent/teacher conferences in the Fall and Spring to discuss children’s growth and development and to set goals for learning. Besides these planned conferences, parents are invited to request a conference any time they wish to speak privately with the Director. For brief conversations, feel free to call between 6-8pm in order to have our full attention.

Website –

For blank forms, to read about our staff, or for any other information about our preschool, please visit our website. Please also take the time to check out and “like” our Facebook page. We try to post weekly updates and any upcoming events as often as we can.

(My1stStepsPreschool.com or <https://www.facebook.com/My1stStepsPreschool/>)