



River Care

MDO, PreSchool, and Kindergarten Program

Parent Handbook 2026-2027

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OUR MISSION

The mission of River Care is to provide a safe, loving Christian ministry to encourage the physical, academic, emotional, social, moral, and spiritual growth of preschoolers. River Care will provide learning activities and experiences appropriate to the age, skills, and interests of preschool children.

Physically, we will provide opportunities for preschoolers to develop appropriate gross and fine motor skills.

Academically, we will encourage skills needed for a successful transition to kindergarten. We will introduce colors, numbers, and letters in ways that preschool children can comprehend.

Emotionally, we will encourage a positive self-image, evidenced by a sense of achievement, security, and self-confidence.

Socially, we will encourage a sense of belonging and an appreciation of friendship. We will help preschool children develop compassion and understanding of the needs and feelings of others.

Morally, we will encourage the development of honesty, kindness, faithfulness, and other virtues. We will teach self-discipline and respect for authority.

Spiritually, we will introduce the basic beliefs of the Christian faith through acquaintance with the stories of the Old and New Testaments. We will help preschool children develop a positive impression toward God, Jesus, the Church, the Bible, and Believers.

Because young children are active learners, our staff seeks to provide a variety of large and small group activities that encourages growth in all developmental areas. Some of the activities that preschoolers will enjoy daily are: Books, Music and Movement, Art, Dramatic Play, Puzzles and Manipulatives, Fine Motor, Sensory and Nature Materials, Chapel, and hands-on Math and Literacy activities.

OUR STUDENTS

This ministry serves children of Flint River Baptist Church members as well as children from the surrounding community. Children 18 months through 5 years are eligible to participate in the program.

The director shall review and approve or deny all applications for enrollment. No child may be denied enrollment because of race, color, or national origin. We accept children from all religious backgrounds. Eligibility for children with special needs shall be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The director shall determine availability of enrollment.

Activities planned for a 3-year-old and 4-year old preschool classes assume that a child be potty-trained before entering that class. Children not potty-trained by the beginning of the Fall Program may be asked to attend the 2-year-old program if any positions are available. If no positions are available, the child will be required to stay home until potty training is achieved. Paying the monthly tuition can reserve the child's position in the classroom.

The following forms must be in our office before a child may attend the program:

- River Care Student Information Form
- River Care Medical Form
- Policies and Procedures Agreement

Staff to Child Ratios:

Each class has one primary teacher. We also have floating teacher aides available to assist primary teachers as needed.

- Toddlers (18 - 24 months) - 1 to 5
- Two Year Olds - 1 to 6
- Three Year Olds - 1 to 8
- Four Year Olds - 1 to 12
- Five Year Olds -1 to 12

PROGRAM HOURS

River Care MDO and Preschool Program is open Monday - Thursday from 9am - 1pm. Our Kindergarten is open from 8:45am - 1:15pm.

We follow the Madison County School System Calendar. A copy of this calendar is available upon request, and is subject to change. If there are changes, we will notify you as soon as they are made.

We will follow the Madison County School System schedule for closing when inclement weather occurs or when snow, tornadoes, flooding, etc., are predicted. If MCSS are closed we will not be in session, and if schools open late we will start a half an hour after MCSS schools open.

IMPORTANT DATES 2026- 2027	
Aug 3	Open House
August 5	First Day of River Care
September 7	Labor Day - Closed
October 5-9	Fall Break - Closed
November 11	Veteran's Day - Closed
November 23 - 27	Thanksgiving Break - Closed
Dec 22 - Jan 4	Christmas Break - Closed
January 18	MLK Day - Closed
February 15	Presidents Day - Closed
March 15-19	Spring Break - Closed
May 20	Last Day of MDO

TUITION AND FEES

Registration Fee: This is a once a year fee. It holds your child's spot and covers the cost of school supplies for the year. It is \$100 per student and is non-refundable.

Tuition: This fee is charged per child per month. We will require payment to be made on the first day of the month. Monthly tuition is determined by the days your child attends. There is a \$10 Discount for siblings. Tuition for the 2026-2027 year is outlined below:

- Monday/Wednesday - \$180/Month
- Tuesday/Thursday - \$180/Month
- Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday - \$220/Month
- Monday - Thursday - \$275/Month
- Kindergarten Monday - Thursday - \$475/Month (\$300 One Time Book Fee)

* Our policy is to ensure that our center is always well-staffed and fully equipped to meet the needs of all enrolled children. Therefore, we do not offer reimbursements for absences due to illness, holidays, personal vacations, school closures, inclement weather, or hazardous travel conditions. We greatly value our teaching staff and maintain their compensation regardless of these circumstances.

Late Fees:

Late Tuition: A \$10 late fee will be added if tuition is not paid on or before the 6th of the month. Any family not up-to-date on tuition will be withdrawn on the 10th of the month not paid for. Their spot will be offered to the first person on the wait list. Tuition for the month must be paid in full before the family may re-enter the program.

Late Pick-Up: At River Care, we strive to provide the very best care possible for your children. At the same time, we must also be considerate of our teachers and their families. If you pick your child up after 1:10 p.m. for MDO/Preschool (1:20 p.m. for Kindergarten), there will be a fee of \$20. An additional \$5 will be applied every 5 minutes past 1:10(MDO/Preschool) and 1:25(Kindergarten).

Late Drop-Off: Arriving on time ensures that your child does not miss important instructions and minimizes disruptions for their classmates. A late fee of \$10 will be applied each time your child is dropped off after 9:15 am for MDO/Preschool and after 8:55am for Kindergarten classes. Late Drop-Off fees will not be applied if the director is notified via Brightwheel at least 24 hours in advance.

*** Excessive past due tuition balances and frequent late payments will be reviewed by the River Care Board of Directors and could result in the dismissal of your child.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS POLICY

Illness:

Please do not bring your child if he or she has any of the following symptoms:

- Fever (must be fever free for 24 hrs without fever-reducing medication)
- Vomiting or Diarrhea (within 24 hrs)
- Unexplained Rash
- Colored Discharge from Eyes or Nose
- Head Lice (or known exposure to head lice)
- Open Wounds without proper bandages
- Childhood Diseases (chicken pox, measles, mumps, scarlet fever, whooping cough, etc.)
- Any child who appears to be sick or might endanger self or others will not be permitted to stay. If your child is sent home for fever, vomiting and /or diarrhea they may not return to school the next day.

Medications:

- No medication or medical procedures (prescription or over the counter) shall be administered without being a written, signed authorization from the child's parent(s)/guardian(s). This form is available upon request.
- Any prescription drug or over the counter drug sent to the center shall be in its original container.
- Over the counter drugs shall be clearly labeled with the child's name and the written instructions for administering the drug.
- Medication should not be used beyond the date of expiration.
- A measuring device (if the medication requires measuring) shall be provided for each child's medication.
- Dosages and procedures shall be recorded in the child's file.
- Medicines/drugs shall be returned to the parents or disposed of properly when no longer needed.

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

Drop-Off: Arriving on time ensures that your child does not miss important instructions and minimizes disruptions for their classmates.

- For MDO classes (18mth-24mth), our **parent walk-in door opens at 8:55**. We screen each individual that is allowed into the classroom. For that reason we ask that you do NOT enter the classroom. Please try to make your goodbye short and sweet at the door.
- Preschool classes (3 and 4 year-old classes) will be dropped off via car line and staff will **begin unloading cars at 8:55am am and stop at 9:10am**. Please do not line up before 8:30am. We will unload from the Passenger side. When it is your turn to unload, please have your child unbuckled and wearing their backpack. If your child is struggling to get out of the car, you may be asked to park and walk your child to the parent walk-in door. If running late and the car rider line door is closed, you will need to park and walk your child to the parent walk-in door.
- For Kindergarten: Students will be dropped off in the front of the church. **Doors will open at 8:45am and close at 8:55am.**
- A **late fee of \$10** will be applied each time your child is dropped off after 9:15 am for MDO/Preschool and after 8:55 for Kindergarten. Late Drop-Off fees will not be applied if the director is notified via Brightwheel at least 24 hours in advance.

Pick-Up: Please be prompt to pick up your child.

- For MDO(parent walk-in door)/Preschool(car rider line), **the doors open at 12:55pm**. If pick up is after 1:10 p.m., there will be a charge of \$20. An additional \$5 will be applied for every 5 minutes past 1:10 until your child is picked up.
- For MDO classes: Children must be picked up by a pre-approved adult. The adult will be asked to show their child's Pick Up Card or a photo ID at the door.
- Preschool classes: Children are picked up via car line and must show pick-up card. Once the child is loaded, please pull forward into a parking spot to buckle them. If a pick-up card is not shown, then you must pick-up child through the parent walk-in door with your ID.
- For Kindergarten, **doors open at 1:15pm**. If you pick up your child after 1:25pm, the same late fee policy is in place as MDO/Preschool.
- Call or message us right away if you know you are going to be late, but please note that the charges will still apply. In the event that you are involved in an emergency, please notify the director. We will remain with your child until you arrange care.
- If the child has not been picked up by 1:45 pm and we have not heard from a parent/guardian, DHR will be contacted.

To ensure that our teachers can focus on their primary responsibility of caring for your children, we kindly ask that parents refrain from engaging in extended conversations with teachers at drop-off or pick-up times. If you need to discuss any matters in detail, please send a message, or message a request for a phone call, or reach out to the director to schedule a conference. This approach allows us to maintain an uninterrupted learning environment for all children.

WHAT TO BRING

MDO Classes:

- Backpack
- Plenty of Diapers and Wipes
- 2 Changes of Clothes (Top, Bottoms, and Socks)
- Lunch (We cannot refrigerate or heat lunches. Please make sure all food is toddler-friendly and not a choking hazard.)
- Spill-Proof Water Bottle (Only water should be sent in this water bottle.)
- Please label all items.

Preschool and Kindergarten Classes:

- Backpack (Large enough to fit a 9x12 inch folder without bending.)
- A Change of Clothes (Top, Bottoms, Underwear, and Socks)
- Lunch (We cannot refrigerate or heat lunches. Please make sure all food is toddler-friendly and not a choking hazard.)
- Spill-Proof Water Bottle (Only water should be sent in this water bottle.)
- Please label all items.

* We request that children wear comfortable, washable play clothes and closed toe shoes with a rubber sole for ease at indoor and outdoor play. Please no sandals, Crocs or slippers.

WHAT NOT TO BRING

Please have your child leave the following at home:

- Toys
- Candy or Gum
- Jewelry
- Money

These can easily become broken or lost at school. Teachers will not be responsible for the above personal belongings.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Our Approach:

At River Care, our preschoolers are expected to treat each other with love and respect. Discipline at River Care is handled in a positive manner, consistent with the developmental needs of children. Clear behavioral limits are set and consistently enforced. Children are encouraged to gain self-control and to handle conflicts in a peaceful, effective manner.

- * We DO: model and praise appropriate behavior, encourage, listen, retell expectations, redirect, and provide appropriate behavioral alternatives.
- * We do NOT: physically punish, push, or pull a child, embarrass or shame the child in front of the others, take away snack, lunch, recess, or any of the learning activities, or leave a child unattended, or threaten any of the above.
- * When a child has not responded to other positive guidance techniques, we will use a "COOL-DOWN" method. This will consist of a quiet space that is out of the main activity of the classroom but is in the teacher's sight, and a few self-soothing sensory tools. After a brief interval of no more than five minutes the child will return to his or her regular activities. This time allows the child to exercise self-control. With the help of the teacher, older preschoolers can begin to examine situations and learn to make better choices.

Disruptive Behavior:

- * We are committed to maintaining a safe and respectful environment for all children and staff. Repeated instances of a child hitting or hurting others, including teachers, will not be tolerated. Should such behavior occur, we will contact you promptly and may ask you to come to the center to address the situation with your child.
- * Staff members will make reasonable effort to work with the child and his/her family to resolve behavioral concerns. Physical or emotional abuse of another child or teachers, which is determined to be repetitious or excessive by the staff and director will be grounds for dismissal from our program.
- * Biting: River Care has a no-biting policy to ensure the health and safety of all children. If a child bites another child or staff member, parents will be notified immediately, and the incident will be documented. We will work with the child to understand and modify this behavior in a supportive manner. Repeated biting incidents may result in temporary suspension or permanent dismissal from the program.

BIRTHDAY POLICY

If you would like to send a birthday treat to share with the class, you are welcome to! Please let the teacher know in advance, and ask the teacher about allergies of the children. The special snack will be served at morning snack or at lunch. Birthday invitations for parties may only be brought in if you are inviting the whole class. If you are not inviting the whole class, please mail them.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

There are many opportunities for parents to help the teachers and staff!

- Parents who have a talent, career, or hobby that they think would be interesting to the children are encouraged to set up a time to share it with the children.
- Great substitute teachers are vital to keeping River Care successful. If you are interested in working as a substitute teacher, please email rivercare@frbc.org
- On an as-needed basis, parents may be asked to serve on special committees for specific projects such as special events, holidays, fundraisers, etc.

Please contact the Teacher or Director after class hours with your praises, suggestions, concerns, or questions. We encourage open communication.

WITHDRAWAL

If for any reason you must leave the program, we request a 30-day written notice. This gives the program a chance to fill your empty spot. You will be held financially responsible until a written notice is received. You will be released from financial responsibility 30 days from the date our office receives notice.

If, for any reason, our ministry is unable to work with a child or his/her parents, we reserve the right to withdraw the child.