



ESTRELLA MOUNTAIN PRESCHOOL

Loving GOD, loving each other, making learning FUN!

10485 S. Estrella Parkway
Goodyear, AZ 85338
(623) 476-5578

Parent Handbook

Dear families:

Welcome to the Estrella Mountain Preschool family! We are pleased that you have chosen Estrella Mountain Preschool for the early education of your child, are excited to collaborate with you in their development, and look forward to providing them with a safe and loving environment while they are away from home.

Enclosed you will find information on our preschool so that you may know more about us. This book includes our policies and guidelines (in alphabetical order), programs and services, parent involvement and responsibilities, and other items that will help you feel part of Estrella Mountain Preschool and answer some questions you may have.

Estrella Mountain Preschool provides excellence in instruction and guidance. Our focus is to meet the physical, emotional, and educational needs of preschool and pre-kindergarten children while nurturing their character and developing their spirituality all while protecting the wonder of childhood.

Please take a moment to review this booklet and keep it as a reference for any questions you have throughout the year. Additional information will be provided through our monthly e-newsletters, flyers, emails, and Facebook.

Blessings to you and your family,

Lisa Tucker
Director
lisat@emcaz.org

MISSION

Our purpose is to encourage a child's self-confidence, concern for others, cooperation in work and play, and learn a spirit of sharing and caring. Our purpose is to provide a safe and healthy environment where God's children can grow through experience, exploration, interaction, and guidance from Christian teachers and assistants. Through our programs, we seek to increase children's skills in listening, self-expression, independent work and play habits, decision-making and problem-solving.

PRECHOOL BOARD

Estrella Mountain Preschool is governed by a Board of Directors composed of Estrella Mountain Church Elders, representative from the Finance Committee, preschool director, and assistant director. The board is responsible for setting policy and being available to assist in the efficient operation of the preschool.

LICENSING & CLASSIFICATION

Estrella Mountain Preschool is classified as a full and part-day care facility and is licensed and regulated by the Arizona Department of Health Services, Office of Childcare Licensing, 150 N. 18th Avenue, Suite 400, Phoenix, AZ 85007 (602) 364-2539. Inspection reports are available for review on the facility premises.

STAFF

Our staff of education professionals has been carefully selected to make our program an exceptional environment for young children. They are experienced, caring, highly trained professionals in Early Childhood Education. All our teachers live within the Estrella community (many have children or grandchildren who have attended EMP in the past), have a love of children, and an understanding of early childhood development.

All our teachers are required to obtain a minimum of eighteen hours of training each year - many exceed that number. They have been fingerprinted, have a criminal background check, and are cleared through the Arizona Department of Public Safety. They are certified in child CPR, basic first aid, and are immunized against all communicable diseases as required by the Arizona Department of Health Services.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Estrella Mountain Preschool is open from 8:30 am – 2:30 pm Monday-Thursday. The school year operates from August- May. Estrella Mountain Preschool's calendar is like the Liberty Elementary School District calendar and will be closed in observance of all national holidays, one week in October for Fall Break, one week in November for Thanksgiving, two weeks in December for Christmas Break and one week in March for Spring Break.

During the hours of operation, siblings, or other children under the age of 16 are not permitted on campus or in the classrooms. This does not include drop-off and pick-up times.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

We are a non-denominational community of believers in Jesus Christ and the Word of the Bible, who exist to love God, love others, and follow Christ's teachings. We believe in one God, creator of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We believe the Bible, both Old and New Testaments to be the inspired and infallible Word of God. We are a relational community who desire, above all else, to see Christ's love formed in all people. We seek to collaborate with our families to build a strong spiritual foundation. We welcome families of all denominations who wish to provide a Christ-centered, creative, fun education for their child.

CURRICULUM

Estrella Mountain Preschool provides each child with a variety of activities which will aid in the total development of the child: educational, physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual. Our curriculum is based on The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool, an early childhood development research-based system that allows our teachers to create an educational and creative environment. We constantly re-evaluate, update, and improve our teaching practices to consider *each child's individual needs*. Our teachers work closely with the local elementary school districts to ensure that our students are learning the skills necessary to excel in kindergarten.

Preschool Program: Will focus on building the foundations for learning and loving school. Our 3-year-olds will focus on social skills such as sharing, taking turns, and communication with others; fine motor skills including developing finger strength, correct pencil grasp and scissor use; gross motor exercise through playground time for coordination and balance; basic classroom management and transitioning; and discussion of letters, shapes, numbers, and colors during circle time.

Pre-K Program: Will focus on preparing 4-5-year-olds for the next step in their education: kindergarten. Our classrooms are like kindergarten with circle time, centers, group activities and small group/one-on-one time with the teachers. Our Pre-K classes emphasize a letter, number, color and shape each week including recognition; phonetic sounds of the letters and sound blending; one-to-one counting skills; beginning mathematics including addition, subtraction, graphing and patterns; science and discovery; and writing. Academics are an important part of each day, but we also emphasize assisting the students with their classroom skills such as self-control, communication with others, transitioning, and circle time participation to help them succeed in the kindergarten environment.

Chapel: On Tuesday mornings we have Chapel at 8:35 am. During Chapel Time the children come together with our Preschool Pastor and Children's Ministry Pastor to celebrate God's love through bible stories, songs, and prayer. We seek to support children's character through teaching a weekly "Big Idea" such as God Hears Me When I Pray, I Am a Treasure, etc.

Music: On Thursday, we will have Music. During each class's music time they will have fun with our wonderful music teacher singing, dancing, playing with a parachute and musical instruments. At Christmas and in the Spring, each class will work on their very own song to perform at our Christmas and Spring shows and at the end of the year the pre-k classes will work on their own class song to perform at graduation.

SCHOOL POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

Admission Requirements

For Three-Year Olds, children must be three by the first day of school and four-year-olds must be four by September 1 to be enrolled in Estrella Mountain Preschool (no exceptions) and fully potty trained. EMP reserves the right to transfer children to another class, upon consultation with the teacher and parents to accommodate its population or child's need. EMP admits students of any race, color, religious, and national or ethnic origin.

Allergies

Estrella Mountain Preschool will enroll children that have food-borne allergies through ingestion only, not air borne. We do not limit children from bringing peanut butter to school for lunches so to keep the child safe, we will follow the following guidelines:

Parents

1. Parents will provide an (2) Epi-Pens that have a pharmacist's label with the physician's name, dosage, and expiration date. If the child requires an antihistamine, we will need one with a pharmacist's label indicating physician's name, dosage, and expiration date.
2. Parents will complete and sign a Medication Consent Form for each medication on site for the child.
3. Parents will provide a snack for the child each day and a dessert for anytime another child brings in treats for birthdays.

Teachers

1. Teachers will schedule extra time at Meet the Teacher to discuss the child's allergy and complete a Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan indicating at what point to provide an Epi-Pen and/or Benadryl upon ingestion of any allergen or symptoms of anaphylaxis.
2. Teachers will place an allergy notice on the seat and back of the child's chair in the classroom.
3. Teachers will have the child sit at a separate table with one of the teachers during snack and lunch to ensure that there is no accidental ingestion from another child's food.
4. When a birthday treat is brought in by another family, teachers will immediately put on a note reminding them of the child that cannot have the treat. Teachers will provide the child with their parent-provided birthday treat first before the other children, to ensure they do not receive food they cannot ingest.

Attendance

In the event of an absence or sickness, please go the EMP App to report absence. To download the app, click on <https://www.jotform.com/app/estrella-mountain-preschool/emp-app>.

Arrival and Sign In

Estrella Mountain Preschool's school day begins promptly at 8:30 am for all students. Upon arrival, sign your child in on the tablet at the table in front of your classroom using your full signature including your **FIRST NAME or FIRST INITIAL and FULL LAST NAME**. You will sign back in on the same tablet with your pickup time at the end of the day. We are not a Daycare but a school. Teachers begin their day right at 8:30 am and we start learning right when they arrive. It is very disruptive to the class and disrespectful to the teacher to arrive late. We expect all parents will **arrive on or before 8:30 am, EVERYDAY**. Gates will be closed and locked promptly at 8:35 AM. You will need to go to the side entrance with the red door. Wait times to enter late can vary from 1 minute to 30 minutes on Tuesdays (due to Chapel.)

Pledge and Prayer - We are a Christian preschool and expect that all families will be on campus to participate in the school prayer (to honor God) and Pledge of Allegiance (to honor our country) a few minutes before 8:30 am. At the conclusion, take your child to their class. Adults must stay and supervise children until school starts at 8:30 am and they have checked in with the teacher. No early drop-offs. PLEASE BE ON TIME! Repeated late arrivals may be subject to students' withdrawal.

Bag / T-Shirt

During the first week of school, each student will receive an EMP canvas bag to take home their projects and communication with school/teachers and a school t-shirt. Please bring the bag to school each day. No backpacks.

Bathroom

Our expectation is that all children enrolled in Estrella Mountain Preschool are completely potty-trained and independent in the bathroom (we do not teach this.) Children must wear underwear under their clothing. No pull-ups. Pants/shorts with elastic waistbands and dresses with light stretch pants/shorts work best. Our teachers do not enter the stalls, so dressing/undressing and **wiping is the student's responsibility.**

If your child does have an accident, the staff will encourage the child to clean themselves to the best of their ability and provide the extra clothing that you have provided. Should your child have a BM accident, parents will be called to pick up the child immediately from school or come to clean them up. If there is a **THIRD accident within 30 days, the child will be suspended from school and will not be allowed to return until toilet training is complete.** If they have another accident after returning from suspension, they will be withdrawn for the remainder of the school year.

Please take time before school starts to introduce your boys to a urinal. We only have one seated toilet in the boys' bathrooms, so boys need to be able to use a urinal. Children should be able to enter a stall by themselves without a parent's help.

Before and After School Safety

Please do not allow children to run around (walking feet only while on our campus), climb the walls, walk on cement benches, or hang on the railings.

Biting, Spitting, Hitting Adults

For the safety of our EMP family and students, we cannot tolerate spitting/biting anyone, or disrespecting teachers for **ANY** reason. **If your child bites/spits anyone, or disrespects a teacher, you will be called to pick up your child immediately and they may be withdrawn from school.**

Discipline

Discipline is approached in a positive, loving, and patient manner. If a child is having a difficult day, we will take steps to correct the behavior and the child will always be welcomed back in a positive and loving manner:

1. The teacher will use positive reinforcement to encourage and discuss with the child their behavior and ask that it not be repeated.
2. The teacher will redirect the child to another activity or to play with different friends.
3. If the child is still having trouble, repeats the behavior, or is disruptive in a group activity, they will spend a few minutes away from the group. Parent will be notified at pickup.
4. If behavior continues, the child may spend time with the director. Once they have spent no more than 4 minutes with the Director, they will be lovingly welcomed back to class to continue their day. For repeated incidences a meeting with the Director, teacher, and parents will be scheduled to a timeline for improvement.
5. If child has no behavioral improvement by the timeline, they may be withdrawn.

Steps for Behavioral Issues

Behavioral issues in students include but are not limited to hitting, kicking, throwing toys/shoes around the room or at another person, screaming and throwing tantrums, or any other behavior that can injure themselves, another child, staff, school property, or is disruptive to the class. The following are the steps we take with our students:

1. Student will be removed from the situation and spend time with the director until parents can pick up. The teacher will write out a Behavior Incident Report to discuss with parents and for their signature.
2. Anytime a child requires one-on-one focused attention by their classroom teachers to continually monitor their behavior, will be withdrawn.
3. **If we have repeated Behavior Incidence Reports, we may withdraw the child from our program.**

Birthday Celebrations

We love to celebrate birthdays. You are welcome, although not required, to bring a treat to share with your child's class. **All items must be store bought—no homemade items.**

Breastfeeding

Moms breastfeeding their baby can take advantage of our nursery in room 114. We have rocking chairs to provide a calming experience for you and your baby. You are welcome anytime.

Car Seats

Children released to parents should be placed in a fastened car seat. If a parent cannot afford to provide a car seat for their child, please contact the Director and she will plan to provide one.

Chapel Time

Chapel Time will begin in September and is held every Tuesday at 8:35 am.

Clothing

Children enrolled in the three-year-old classes are required to have two sets of clothing in his/her classroom sealed in a large Ziploc bag with their name labeled on the bag. One bag with summer clothes and one bag with winter clothes. Estrella Mountain Preschool uses washable paints but cannot guarantee that stains will not happen. We are not responsible for clothes, jewelry or other items brought from home.

Communication

Estrella Mountain Preschool has a few forms of communication to keep you involved with the activities taking place at school. Weekly, parents will receive an e-newsletter and each class will also set up a Private Page for photos of your child's day, reminders, and information. In the event of an emergency, text blasts will be sent to the number(s) you provided on enrollment form.

Conferences

Two conferences between parents and teachers are scheduled each school year. In September, an informal conference is scheduled. This is an opportunity to see how your child is adjusting to school and to further your relationship with your child's teacher. In February, another conference can be scheduled to discuss your child's progress and readiness for the next year.

Custody

Please inform the preschool office of any sensitive custody issues pertaining to your child. A copy of the custody documents must be on file with the office if a child may not be released to a certain parent or adult.

Developmental Special Needs or Individual Needs

We are not a developmental preschool so we cannot enroll any child with an IEP, on any level of the autism spectrum, or has behavioral issues. **Should we find an undiagnosed child has needs outside of our resources and training, requires one-on-one attention, or is continually disruptive to the class, we will provide recommendations for programs that can accommodate the child's needs. Estrella Mountain Preschool may dismiss a child who requires more developmental attention than we can provide.**

Director

The Director at this facility is Lisa Tucker. Her hours are Monday-Thursday 7:30 am – 2:30 pm. If Mrs. Tucker is not on campus, please refer any questions or concerns to the Assistant Director Judy Watson.

Dismissal and Sign Out

When school concludes for the day, each child will be called individually to the door for dismissal. Be sure to sign out your child with pick-up time using your signature including your FIRST AND LAST NAME. We expect that all authorized pick-up persons will be waiting outside the door before 12:30 pm or 2:30 pm.

Emergencies

In the event of an accident of emergency, parents are to be notified via text message, phone, or other expeditious means, which will be accomplished by doing the following: Teachers and Assistants will take the children to a secure location while the Director, using a cell phone, will contact the families. Teachers will stay with the children until the family picks up the child or medical assistance takes the child to the hospital. In the event of an accident or emergency, parents will be sent a text blast and will be given written notification within 24 hours, which will be accomplished by doing the following: The director will send written documentation via email to the families after an emergency.

Enrollment Procedures

Registration will begin for the next school year in February and will continue until all classes are filled. There is a \$150.00 non-refundable registration fee due at the time of enrollment. This is a separate fee from tuition.

Field Trips

Two field trips are scheduled during the year to offsite locations. EMP does not provide transportation. Parents are responsible for transporting children to and from the field trip and must remain with the child for the duration of their time there.

Fundraisers

Throughout the year, EMP will have fundraisers that help provide additional resources and materials for the school and your child. Estrella Mountain Preschool is a part of Estrella Mountain Church, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and these fundraisers are an important part of keeping our tuition low while maintaining a quality program.

Grievance Procedure

At Estrella Mountain Preschool, we try our best to keep the lines of communication open between teachers, staff, parents, and students. If you have a conflict with a parent, teacher, or staff member please contact the Director of EMP to schedule a meeting with those involved to try to resolve the conflict. If your conflict cannot be resolved by this approach or is with the director, please contact the Preschool Pastor Denny Harkins at (623) 386-0300.

Jewelry

Please do not send your child to school in expensive jewelry. We are not responsible and will not be liable if it gets lost or broken.

Inclement Weather

We will be playing outdoors every day that weather permits. Please make sure that your child is always appropriately dressed for outdoor play. Our activities will include walks, playground, and other gross motor activities. During our day, outdoor play will be at least 30 minutes. Should the temperature and/or heat index reach 90 degrees or in the event of thunder/lightning or rain, playground time will be moved indoors to our air-conditioned Sanctuary or individual classrooms.

Late Entrance Policy

If a child begins preschool once the preschool school year has commenced, the tuition policy is as follows: Full monthly tuition is due for the first month if entrance is before the 15th of the month. Half of the tuition for the first month is due if entrance is after the 15th and full tuition will be required for each month following.

Late Pick-Up Fee

If you arrive after 12:30 pm or 2:30 pm (depending on the program enrolled in) you will be charged a \$25 late fee for every 15 minutes or part thereof late.

Liability Insurance

Estrella Mountain Preschool carries general facility liability insurance of at least \$300,000 as required by Arizona Administrative Code R9-5-308. Documentation is available for review on the facility premises.

Lice

A child who has been diagnosed and is being treated for lice may not return to school until no nits are found in the child's hair. **If your child has lice, the preschool office must be informed immediately.** If a child is found to have lice while at school, they must be picked up immediately from school.

Lunches

A nutritious packed lunch should be brought with your child every school day. There is no refrigeration to store lunches, or an available microwave so please include an ice pack or plan accordingly. **For safety concerns, students may not bring electric or battery-powered self-heating bento or lunch boxes. NO CANDY, COOKIES, SWEETS, JUICE BOXES/POUCHES, OR GO-GURTS.** If they are included, we will place them in the student's bag, and they can have them after you have picked them up. We will encourage but not force children to eat their lunch so please pack only those items that you know your child likes to eat. **We will not accept any food delivered by a third-party company such as Uber East, Door Dash, restaurant's delivery service, or other.**

Medication / Health Records

We do not have a certified nurse on the preschool campus; therefore, we will not give any medication to your child during class hours. Please schedule your child's medication to be taken at home before or after school hours. Per AZ law, no hospital or emergency room may treat a minor without parental/guardian consent. A child with a severe medically diagnosed allergy must have two (2) Epi-Pens on site for staff to administer in the event of an emergency (see Allergies.)

Non-Discrimination

Estrella Mountain Preschool does not discriminate based on race, color, nationality, ethnicity, or religious origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions, and other school-administered programs.

Naps

Estrella Mountain Preschool does not have naptime.

Parental Access & Volunteering

We welcome and encourage parent involvement at Estrella Mountain Preschool. Parents have access to all areas of the preschool where classes are provided during our hours of operation. Parents can participate in any childcare activity but in accordance with AZ licensing regulations, siblings may not be present. All volunteers must have a valid fingerprint clearance card.

Pets

No animals are allowed on campus during class, or at drop off or pick up times.

School Closure

If the school is closed for reasons beyond our control, there will be no refund for the days/months in which this occurs. This is including but not limited to: quarantine, epi/pan-demic, natural disaster, electrical or water outage, etc.

Security

Starting the first day of school, gates will be LOCKED after pledge and prayer each morning at 8:35 am. If you arrive after the gates are locked, please go to the side preschool entrance (with the red door) and ring the doorbell. The Director will let you in and escort you to your child's classroom. Gates will be opened 10 minutes before class ends.

Separation Anxiety

We understand that being away from home is very scary for some of our students. We will do our best to comfort, love, and help them adjust to being away from families and trust that they are ok at school. Some crying is normal for children as they are learning to trust this new situation and they usually stop within a few minutes. **However, if a child screams or is an extreme crier for more than 15 minutes, you will be called to pick them up. If loud crying/screaming is daily after the first two weeks of school causing disruption in class, they will be suspended or withdrawn from school until they are more emotionally mature.**

Shoes

For safety during our playground time, children **must wear closed toe shoes that have laces or Velcro straps (preferred) and socks. NO SANDALS.** Should your child wear something other than tennis shoes, they will not be able to attend until appropriate footwear is provided.

Sickness

Please notify the school via the EMP App when your child will be absent from school. Contact the director by phone if they have been diagnosed or exposed to a communicable disease such as any kind of flu, strep throat, conjunctivitis (pink eye), chicken pox, whooping cough, measles, mumps, or rubella, etc.

A child should be kept home from school if any of these symptoms occur **the night before or morning of school:**

- Child does not feel well.
- Child shows evidence of a fever over 100. If they have a fever, they must stay home for 24 hours AFTER they are fever free without the use of medicine.
- If you have to give your child any medicine in the morning – DO NOT SEND THEM TO SCHOOL. They are still sick and you are risking getting the other students and teachers sick.
- Child has open sores/blisters that cannot be covered with a band-aid.
- Child has had a fever at any time THE PREVIOUS DAY. They must stay home for 24 hours AFTER symptoms have resolved.
- Child has had diarrhea/vomiting the previous day.
- Child has a thick/heavy nasal discharge.
- Child has a rash.
- Child has persistent itching or scratching of the body or scalp.
- Child has red eyes and or mucus discharge oozing from them.

Smoking

Estrella Mountain Preschool and parking lot is a smoke-free campus.

Snack Schedule

Parents agree to provide a light and nutritious snack on a rotating basis. Each month a snack calendar will be sent home showing the date you and your child are responsible for bringing snacks for that class. Please be sure to send in enough snacks for all the children in the class and the two teachers. **All food items must be store bought and unopened.**

Sun Safety Practices

Estrella Mountain Preschool will not apply sunscreen to students. We will encourage children to use sunglasses, hats, or other protective clothing the parents provide for their children as well as play in the shade on the playground, however we are not responsible for liable for items brought from home that are lost or destroyed. Sunscreen must be applied by parents before school starts.

Suspension

Should a child be placed on suspension for potty issues, tuition must still be paid each month to hold their spot in the class. If tuition is not paid, the student will go back on the waiting list until a spot becomes available.

Tantrums

For the safety of the child and the children around them, if a child throws a tantrum, they will be removed from class to spend time with the director until they are able to calm down. If we cannot get them to calm down, parents will be called to pick up the child. If a child has repeated tantrums, the child may be withdrawn from school.

Termination of Enrollment by EMP

Estrella Mountain Preschool's program is designed to be a positive experience for children. **Termination is at the preschool director's discretion based upon if the program does not meet the needs of the child, the expectations of the parents, if the child manifests multiple instances of harmful, disruptive, or inappropriate behavior, child needs special one-on-one attention, or has not mastered the ability to be independent in the bathroom.** The Director, along with the child's teacher, and parent(s) will be involved in deciding continued enrollment. Service may also be terminated due to lack of tuition payment. The preschool reserves the right to refuse service.

Transportation

It is the responsibility of the parents to provide transportation to and from the preschool and any scheduled field trips.

Tuition by Check, Cash or Zelle

Tuition paid by check, cash, or Zelle is due by the first school day of each month. **Payments made after the first Friday of each month are subject to a \$25 late fee** to be added for every week the tuition is late. We recommend setting up an automatic withdrawal from your checking or savings account to avoid possible late fees or to secure a later payment date. If school ends, and a family still has a balance, Estrella Mountain Preschool reserves the right to charge the checking account provided at registration with the remaining amount due. Sorry we do not accept debit or credit cards.

If my child will not be in attendance for a month or more due to illness, travel, suspension, or other situation I understand that I am still responsible for the full payment of tuition while away from school. If tuition is not paid, the child will be placed back on the waiting list and the family will be contacted when a spot becomes available. We cannot guarantee that a spot will open in the same class child was originally enrolled in.

Water Bottles

Every school day, your child should bring a medium-sized water bottle of at least 20 ounces with a pop or sports top filled with water only. **Please no screw top or disposable bottles.** Each water bottle should be clearly marked with Sharpie on the top with your child's first name. No juice or flavored water in the water bottles – **WATER ONLY**. We will refill it with water from our RO System if needed.

Withdrawal

If you need to withdraw your child from EMP, notice is required two weeks prior to the last day by the child's parent/guardian stating the reason for withdrawal. This must be accompanied by a complete signature, and it must be dated. All tuition fees must be paid prior to withdrawal including payment for these last two weeks after notification.