



# PARENT/FAMILY HANDBOOK

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Revised August 2025



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# Introduction

## Welcome

Welcome to The Vine Early Learning, Inc. where we believe childhood is a sacred time of wonder, discovery, and profound growth. Our work is rooted in both faith and developmental science, offering a nurturing environment where children can grow in God's love while building the foundations for a lifetime of learning. We are so excited you've chosen to join us on this journey.

- The Vine Faculty and Staff

## Our Mission

Growing God's kingdom through education and discovery.

## Our Vision

Transforming childhood to discover God given abilities through faith, arts, and nature.

## Our Goals

- To care for children as unique individuals
- To create a safe and compassionate environment
- To teach children Christian values
- To instill respectfulness, kindness, and confidence
- To partner with parents to raise the next generation
- To educate children through joyful and curious exploration

**The Vine complies with all state ministry guidelines, the Voluntary Certification Program, CCDF voucher program, and Paths to Quality.**

**The Vine is an independent, non-profit organization that is funded through tuition and outside sources of giving. Our program holds its own statements of faith and does not necessarily adhere to the beliefs of any church that it inhabits.**

# Admissions

## Admission Policy

The Vine does not discriminate for enrollment based on gender, race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, or disability. If it is determined that The Vine cannot make reasonable accommodations for your child's enrollment, we will aid in connecting you to the nearest resource and referral programs in hopes that you find a program to fit your child's needs.

Here is a list of paperwork that is required to be completed prior to the first date of attendance. This can be done by hand or online. The enrollment packet includes:

- Handbook Acknowledgement
- Parent's/Guardian's Notice (State Form 49444)
- Sun Protection and Insect Repellent Consent Form
- Nature Exploration Consent Form
- Health Care Record (State Form 49969) or proof of recent well-child visit
- Immunization Record (or signed religious exemption)
- Transportation of Food Responsibility
- Acknowledgement of Discipline and Expulsion
- First Aid Consent Form
- Emergency Medical Authorization
- Safe Facility and Grounds Policy
- Emergency Contacts
- Authorization for Photo Release and Surveillance

Additional packet information may include the Parent/Student Calendar, Rate Sheet, Safe Sleep Acknowledgement, and Breast Milk Procedures when applicable.

## **Application Fees and Deposit**

A non-refundable processing fee of \$50.00 is due at the time of application submission for each child.

A refundable deposit equal to one week's tuition is required upon enrollment. Said deposit will be forfeited if proper notice (2 weeks) of withdrawal is not given. The deposit may be used toward the final week's tuition.

## **Waitlist**

A waitlist is maintained for each age interval. Enrollment spots are filled based on application date with priority given to siblings and referrals of current enrollments.

## **Annual Re-Enrollment**

Re-enrollment paperwork will be distributed (typically in July) and needs returned in August.

Parents/Guardians who may not need care during the summer will need to speak with the Director about options for holding their placement. There will be a holding fee each week until the child returns. Should plans change over the summer and the child does not return, the summer holding fees are non-refundable. All paperwork included in the re-enrollment packet is required to be completed prior to the first date of fall attendance.

The re-enrollment packet includes a form with updated emergency contacts, a current Parent Handbook acknowledgement, current key policies, allotted vacation day information, and updated physical and/or vaccine record as needed.

## **Withdrawal and Refunds**

A two-week notice is required to end enrollment. The enrolling party is responsible for tuition from the date of notice through the following 10 business days, regardless of attendance within that period. Families will receive a deposit credit to the open account upon withdrawal.

In the event that legal action is necessary to enforce payment, or The Vine Early Learning prevails in any legal or equitable proceeding against Parent(s)/Guardian(s) to this agreement brought under or with relation to this agreement, Parent(s)/Guardian(s) shall be responsible for any resulting attorney's fees, collection costs and court costs related thereto.

## Discipline Procedures

At The Vine we view discipline not as punishment, but as an opportunity to teach, guide, and build character. Our goal is to help children grow into kind, respectful, and self-aware individuals who can make thoughtful choices and take responsibility for their actions.

We use positive discipline strategies rooted in child development, brain science, and our Christian values. This means we focus on nurturing relationships, building emotional skills, and creating an environment where children feel safe, seen, and supported. Each classroom learns age-appropriate rules and boundaries that are upheld with consistency.

\*Children thrive with connection: A secure relationship with caregivers lays the foundation for learning self-regulation, empathy, and trust.

\*Behavior is communication: Whether it's a toddler tantrum or a preschooler's defiance, we look beneath the behavior to understand the child's needs.

\*Teaching, not punishing: We guide children toward better choices by modeling respectful behavior, offering clear boundaries, and helping them reflect and repair when mistakes are made.

### What Positive Discipline Looks Like

Our methods vary by developmental stage, but may include:

For infants and toddlers: Gentle redirection, consistent routines, and supportive language to build trust and reduce frustration.

For preschoolers: Helping name and manage big feelings, using visual cues and positive phrasing, offering limited choices, and involving children in problem-solving.

For school-age children: Encouraging personal responsibility, empathy, and self-reflection. Logical consequences and restorative conversations are used to help children learn from their actions.

Across all ages, we avoid shaming, yelling, or harsh punishments. Instead, we prioritize teaching self-control, compassion, and respect—both for others and for oneself.

## Biting Policy

At The Vine we recognize that biting can be a common—though challenging—behavior in early childhood, especially among infants and toddlers. While we take every incident seriously, we approach biting as a developmental behavior, not as intentional aggression.

### Why Children Bite

Young children may bite for many reasons, including:

- Teething or oral exploration
- Frustration, anger, or overstimulation
- Difficulty expressing needs with words
- Seeking sensory input or attention

Biting is most common in children under three and typically decreases as language and self-regulation skills develop.

### Our Response

When a biting incident occurs, our staff will:

1. Respond immediately and calmly, ensuring the safety of all children
2. Comfort the child who was bitten, clean the area, and document the injury
3. Redirect the child who bit, using simple, firm language ("Biting hurts. We use gentle hands.")
4. Observe for patterns—looking at possible causes (hunger, transitions, fatigue, etc.)
5. Document the incident and notify both sets of parents separately the same day

We do not disclose names of any child involved in biting incidents to protect confidentiality.

### Family Partnership

We will keep open communication with families of both children, share strategies for home and school consistency, provide updates if patterns continue, and develop an individualized plan if biting becomes frequent.

If a child bites frequently we will increase supervision and proactive support. Staff and administrators may meet with the family to discuss observations and interventions. In rare cases, if safety cannot be maintained, we may explore temporary removal or modified attendance, with sensitivity and support.

## Expulsion Policy and Procedures

We believe discipline works best when families and caregivers are on the same page. We'll keep you informed about how we support your child's social-emotional growth, and we welcome your input. Together, we can help children grow into who God created them to be—with strong hearts, wise minds, and peaceful spirits.

The following reasons are subject to disciplinary action and/or termination after any combination of three occurrences within the same month:

- Inability to Meet Needs
- Disruptive Behaviors
- Violent Behaviors
- Abuse to Staff or Faculty

Upon the first disciplinary notice, a written warning will be provided. Upon the second disciplinary notice, children will be suspended for one complete day; a case conference may be requested within 5 days of notice subject to Administration availability. Upon the third disciplinary notice, children will be suspended for one complete week. Shall any disciplinary action occur after the third notice, same day expulsion of the child will be communicated. Parents may gather all belongings upon pick-up and will be asked not to return.

Should none of the factors above be an issue for your child, but they remain unsuccessful in The Vine's learning environment, enrollment will be terminated with a two-week notice provided in writing.

In extreme instances, Administration reserves the right to terminate any enrollment in the best interest of all operations at any time with same day notice, including:

- Late Tuition Payments
- Uncooperativeness from Parents/Guardians
- Lack of Appropriate Materials Provided for the Child
- Misalignment of Values
- Denigrating the Business
- Late Pick-Ups

Account balances are due in full upon expulsion.

## **Grievance Procedure**

Any complaints about the facility, staff, curriculum, etc. should be reported to the Director in writing. It is a commitment of The Vine to resolve all complaints and concerns in a timely manner.

The Vine operates under a Board of Directors. Any concerns or complaints about the Director should be reported to members of the Board in writing. Any member of the Board may be requested to be present for a meeting, but is subject to availability.

## **Tuition**

All outstanding account balances are subject to legal action and/or additional fees if not settled in an appropriate, timely manner. Outstanding account balances at the time of withdrawal will accrue a 5% monthly balance fee until paid in full.

### **Rates**

Tuition is subject to change. At least two weeks' notice will be given to parents if fees are changing. Notwithstanding, tuition will be increased by 2% annually on January 1st of each year without notice.

### **Invoicing and Payments**

Tuition is invoiced weekly on Thursdays. Payment is due by the end of each Monday for the current week of care.

Payment is due regardless of absence, illness, or unforeseen closure(s) in order to hold your child's enrollment.

### **Late Fees**

Payment will be made in advance, on, or before the first day of attendance each week. Invoices are sent out via email through the Playground system on Thursday with payment due by Monday. Payment is due regardless of absence. This includes illness, doctor appointments, parent's day off work, etc. If the tuition is not paid by Monday each new week, a \$10 late fee may be added. If, after two weeks, tuition continues to be unpaid, the child(ren) will not be allowed to return to The Vine until the tuition is paid to date. There will be no reduction in tuition for absent days, weather closures or holidays.

## **Discounts**

A sibling discount of 10% off the weekly rate is available for additional child(ren).

## **Assistance**

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) who receive third party vouchers are responsible for all paperwork and documentation. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are also responsible for signing their child(ren) in and out each day to ensure accurate attendance records. Furthermore, Parent(s)/Guardian(s) shall be ultimately responsible for payment of all services received, regardless of payments/vouchers being paid on their behalf by third parties, including but not limited to governmental agencies.

## **Classroom Transitions**

We will attempt to provide a minimum of one week's notice prior to classroom transitions. Along with room transitions, tuition and fees may vary. Each lead teacher will share a welcome letter and important things to know about their classroom.

# **Attendance**

## **Drop Off Policy**

We recognize and empathize that the transition of drop-offs can be difficult for children of any age. We will do everything we can to help ease this struggle, while upholding some guidelines that our staff need to keep classrooms running smoothly. These rules cut down on distractions and interruptions.

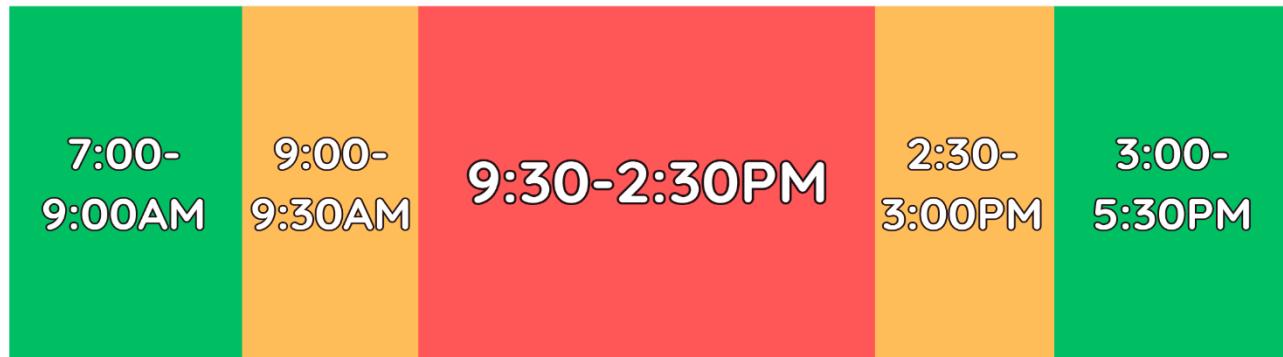
Infant classrooms may have their own adjustments based on infants' needs.

During the green zones, parents are free to pick up and drop off as needed. Parents should encourage children to walk down the hall, put things away in their cubbies, give hugs and kisses at the door, and enter the classroom. Parents should make eye contact with a staff member. Any important communications can be shared on Playground. \*Should the child need extra support, a teacher will come to the door and help them in. Especially in the toddler classrooms, separation anxiety is normal and gets better over time with consistency.

During the yellow zones, communication must occur with the teacher as well as the Director. A staff member will be available to help children quietly transition to or from the classroom if needed.

During the red zones, children should not be coming and going unless prior authorization has been given or you have a family emergency. Staff and children deserve uninterrupted work time to enhance skills of focus, concentration, and socialization.

For pick-ups at any time, please stop at the door and make eye contact with a staff member or tap lightly on the door to get their attention. If you need your child to be ready at a specific time, please send a message on Playground a few hours ahead so we can help them put their materials away and be ready to go for you. For emergencies, please reach out to the Director for assistance.



## Illness Policy and Exclusion

Children with a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher will be sent home and may not return until they have been fever free for a minimum of 24-hours unmedicated. Children who are ill will be excluded from all activities and classroom functions and will remain with Administration in seclusion until pick-up occurs. Pick-up of ill children is required within one hour of notification.

Although there is much controversy surrounding teething and fevers... fevers cannot always be blamed on teething and will be assessed on an individual basis.

Any child that has diarrhea more than twice in eight hours with any other accompanying symptoms will be sent home. The child may not return until symptoms have concluded for a minimum of 24-hours.

Any child who is vomiting will be sent home and will be asked not to return for 24-hours after the last occurrence.

Any child with a communicable disease may not attend until proof to return has been submitted in writing by a physician and/or all symptoms have subsided. Examples of these illnesses may include but are not limited to:

- Coronavirus
- Measles
- Conjunctivitis
- Influenza
- Chickenpox
- Tuberculosis
- Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease

A communicable disease chart from the Family and Social Services Division of Indiana is available upon request.

Children who have head lice will be sent home for immediate treatment.

## Medications

In order for The Vine to administer any type of medication, written authorization from a pediatrician or physician must be on file. Prescriptions must remain in the original packaging. Non-prescription medications are also allowed with physician/pediatrician's consent. These must be provided by the parent/guardian and remain in the original packaging. Your physician may complete State Form 49968 found on the FSSA website or supply their own form, as long as it is signed and dated with instructions.

Medications that expire will be sent home with an adult and will not be administered.

According to state regulations, medicated diaper cream also falls under this category and requires a medical authorization.

Annual renewal of medication consents is required.

## After Hours Pick-Up

Any child remaining past the time of closure will be charged \$25 every 15 minutes, due upon invoice. Should your child not be picked up 60 minutes past the time of closure, a report will be made to the Department of Child Services. Efforts to communicate with parents and emergency contacts will be attempted by faculty prior to report.

## Vacation

Five days of "vacation" time will be issued to each child at the beginning of each school year. Time will be available for use until the end of July. Any additional days your child is absent, regular rates will apply. After being enrolled for one year, each full-time enrollment is eligible for an additional 5 days. No more than 15 vacation days will be given.

Families enrolling between March and May will be given two days of vacation time until the school year begins in August.

A minimum of two weeks' notice in writing is preferred to use free time. Requests should be emailed directly to the Director at [director@thevineinangola.com](mailto:director@thevineinangola.com).

Days do not accumulate annually. Any unused time will be forfeited at the end of summer programming.

\*Families who utilize CCDF vouchers do not qualify for our vacation days; they are required to follow the rules set forth by FSSA.

# Operations and Communication

## Hours

Current hours of operation are 7:00AM to 5:30PM Eastern Standard Time (EST).

Due to the nature of the program that The Vine offers, hours of operation are subject to change on a temporary basis. In the event that hours need to differ, a minimum two weeks' notice will be provided in writing.

For additional information, please refer to the Holidays and Closures section.

## Materials

These materials are expected to be available to all children, year-round.

- at least two changes of clothes, including underwear while/once toilet trained
- outdoor shoes or boots (one pair can be left at school)
- socks or slippers for indoor use
- jacket/coat, hat, gloves/mittens, depending on seasonal needs
- water bottle with Name labeled, preferably a covered mouth spout but if others are used, they will be covered with a plastic bag for health and safety rules
- blanket, small travel pillow, and one stuffed animal or similar personal item if desired

Periodically throughout the year, additional supplies may be requested. Donations are always welcomed!

Please ensure that your child is dressed in appropriate and safe attire for all areas of campus. Clothing should be comfortable and be able to get dirty. Costumes and pajamas are not permitted, unless otherwise communicated.

Toys should remain outside of the building in order to alleviate stress and/or conflict amongst peers. Should children bring items in, they will remain in the child's cubby.

The Vine provides diapers and wipes for children in the infant and toddler classrooms. If parents prefer a certain brand or a child has a reaction to our supplied diapers, they may provide their own supply. Teachers will communicate when more are needed.

Personal items must be contained in your child's cubby or bookbag. The Vine is not responsible for any lost or stolen property.



All reporting and communication regarding your child will be conducted using the Playground application. Communications through this app are sent in real time. Playground communications may include but are not limited to:

- Daily Interactions
- Photos and Videos
- Messaging
- Incident Reports
- Diapering/Feedings/Napping
- Weekly Invoicing

Children receive observation records through anecdotal notes, work lessons, portfolios, and developmental milestone checklists. Individual child information is available upon request.

## Rest Period

According to age and/or needs, children are given the opportunity to nap either once or twice daily. Children who are not sleeping after 30 minutes can be offered an alternate activity.

Children attending Kindergarten in the Fall will begin to transition away from rest time, unless otherwise communicated, beginning the first day of Summer Program prior to entering Kindergarten.

A small blanket, travel pillow, and comfort item such as a stuffed animal are permitted during rest period for children 12 months and older. All items will remain in the child's cubby before and after resting. Children are transitioned from crib to cot sleeping between 12 and 18 months of age.

## Screenings & Assessments

Once every Fall, The Vine will complete an [Ages and Stages Screening](#) at the present age of the child. A case conference may be requested to discuss the screen within 30 days of completion. Further screening may occur upon need.

Annually, a vision screening from Operation KidSight will be conducted at no cost. *Operation KidSight* is a statewide vision-screening program that identifies treatable or preventable causes of blindness in preschool children (ages 18 months – 6 years).

Annually, a hearing screening from GiveHear will be conducted at no cost. *GiveHear* offers the community assistance in identifying and preventing hearing issues. GiveHear is a non-profit audiology organization that offers on-site diagnostic screenings in newborns and preschool aged children.

Screenings are subject to local availability.

# Emergency Procedures and Evacuation Guide

- 1) **Fire:** Monthly fire drills are conducted in accordance with the Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA) regulation.
  - a. Evacuation Plans are posted in each classroom on the exit door.
  - b. Children are taken 150 feet away from the nearest point of the building at minimum. All children are accounted for individually by visual acknowledgement in the event of a fire.
  - c. If relocation is needed, all children will be escorted to the nearest available local business parking lot. Parents will be alerted immediately upon relocation and asked to gather their child(ren) within 30 minutes.
- 2) **Tornado Watch/Warnings:** Twice annually, children will participate in a tornado drill on-site.
  - a. Children will gather away from all windows and doors in designated Tornado Safe rooms of the building.
- 3) **Power Outage**
  - a. In order to maintain safety, children will not be permitted on campus during any outage of power. Shall the power outage occur during operating hours, parents will be notified after 30 minutes if the power has not returned. Pick up is expected within one hour of the notification of closure.
- 4) **Lock Down:** Rarely, precautionary measures in response to an alert from local law enforcement of a threat near or at the facility are necessary.
  - a. In the event that any situation may arise in the community that would place your child at harm, the building will be on total lock down until otherwise communicated through local authorities.
  - b. No individuals will be permitted to enter or leave during lock down.
- 5) **Inclement Weather**
  - a. Shall an emergency of weather be issued during hours of operation, parents will be alerted immediately. Children are required to be picked up within one hour of the notification.

## **Injury Reporting**

First Aid will be provided for minor injuries. Documentation of the injury will occur on Playground immediately. In the event of a major medical emergency, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) will be called.

Administration reserves the right to treat each child's injury as necessary for the safety and well-being of the child.

Any child that ingests an object while on campus will be sent home within 30 minutes for immediate medical attention. The Vine is not responsible for any medical treatment in the event that your child ingests an object while in attendance.

## **Food & Nutrition**

Snack menus are posted weekly by Friday for the following week. Multiple faculty on campus are trained and certified in ServSafe food handling.

If your child has a food allergy or other dietary restrictions, substitutions will be made where possible. Children with dietary restrictions must have a physician's note on file. Special considerations will be made for religious restrictions; documentation must be provided. Parents/Guardians are required to provide specialized substitutions for their child upon need.

Children are permitted to bring in a 'special occasion' snack to share on their birthday. Home-baked goods are not permitted. Celebration snacks will be provided in addition to regularly planned snacks.

The Vine does not provide breakfast or dinner. Your child may bring a breakfast to be consumed prior to 7:45AM. If your child arrives after 8:00, they will wait to have snack at 8:45 with the rest of their class.

Each child must bring their own lunch. Lunches must follow the Food Transportation Responsibility guidelines as outlined in your enrollment packet. Thermal lunch containers will be stored in a commercial refrigerator until served. Heating of items is not available at this time. Any foods not consumed will be disposed of.

Food delivery of any kind is not permitted on campus for any child.

# **Holidays and Closures**

## **Calendar**

A similar schedule to that of the Metropolitan School District (MSD) of Steuben County is followed. The Vine does not operate on:

- New Year's Eve (Observed)
- New Year's Day (Observed)
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day (Observed)
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving & the day after
- Christmas Eve & Christmas Day (Observed)

The Vine typically does not operate during the week of MSD's Spring Break or the week between Christmas and the New Year. The annual calendar will be distributed in July each year.

There is no reduction in tuition for the week of Spring Break. Tuition the week between Christmas and the New Year is excluded.

## **Faculty and Staff Development**

The Vine holds annual Professional Development days for faculty, as well as monthly "early dismissals". The use of this time is to maintain quality of care rating levels and to meet FSSA regulations to better your child's education. During these specified days or times, children are not permitted on campus. These days are built into the annual calendar a year in advance. There is no reduction in tuition for these days unless free time is utilized with proper notice.

## **Campus Maintenance**

Occasionally, campus will need to close to perform annual maintenance and building renovations. During these specified days, children are not permitted on campus. There is no reduction in tuition for these days unless free time is utilized with proper notice.

## **Emergency Closings**

In the event of an emergency closure, parents will be notified as soon as information becomes available. Normal tuition rates will apply unless otherwise communicated.

## **Delays and Cancellations**

Shall there be an MSD delay or cancellation of school, The Vine will still operate as normal unless otherwise communicated. It is your discretion if your child will be in attendance. Normal tuition rates will apply.

Should The Vine need to close for inclement weather, no alternative care will be provided. Normal tuition rates will apply unless free days are utilized.

# **Campus Information**

## **Arrival & Departure**

All children are expected to be escorted to/from class by an adult. The student entrance will be available during regular business hours. A personal code will be distributed for entry upon enrollment.

Children will only be released to an adult who is listed with authorization. Photo identification will be required for verification. Any same day emergency authorizations must be reported to Administration in writing.

Any parent or guardian listed on your child's birth certificate will be granted permission to pick up unless legal documentation stating otherwise has been provided. A copy of said documentation must remain on file during the duration of enrollment.

Children will not be released to any individual who appears to be impaired or disoriented. The Vine reserves the right to arrange for an alternate pick-up to ensure the child's safety and well-being. If all attempts are unsuccessful, local law enforcement and/or the Department of Child Services will be contacted.

## Health & Safety

**The Board of Health requires that all children complete a physical examination or well-child check within 30 days of enrollment with annual participation thereafter.**

Documentation is required to remain on file along with immunization records or waivers.

Immunizations are required to be updated regularly, when applicable. Please see Administration for vaccination exemptions.

The Vine is a tobacco free, smoke-free, and alcohol-free campus.

## Daily Schedule

Although we strive to have all classrooms open for all hours of operation, during the first and last hour of each day, children close in age may combine or move to a neighboring classroom while still maintaining FSSA ratios.

Children in the Preschool and Pre-K class will be given the opportunity to rest from 12:00PM to 2:00PM daily. Alternative activities can be offered to children who are not asleep after 30 minutes. More details are listed in the curriculum section.

## Child to Adult Ratios

These are the state selected ratios that must be upheld at all times. Whenever possible, we strive to have even smaller groups to ensure more concentrated, attentive care.

Infants: 5 infants per teacher, maximum of 12 in a group

Young Toddlers (12-17mo): 5 toddlers per teacher, maximum of 12 in a group

Older Toddlers (18-23mo): 6 toddlers per teacher, maximum of 14 in a group

2 year olds: 8 toddlers per teacher, maximum of 16 in a group

2&1/2 year olds: 9 toddlers per teacher, maximum of 17 in a group

3 year olds: 11 per teacher                  4 year olds: 13 per teacher

5 year olds: 17 per teacher                  School-Age: 20 per teacher

# Curriculum

Here at The Vine Early Learning we are more than a childcare center—we are a child development hub rooted in a combination of influences and grounded in neuroscience. Our practices are guided by what research tells us about how children's brains grow: through exploration, connection, movement, and meaningful experiences. Every moment at our center is intentionally designed to support the architecture of the developing brain.

While grounded in Christianity and brain science, our approach is also deeply inspired by the wisdom of leading educational philosophies:

From Montessori, we draw the importance of independence, hands-on learning, and a carefully prepared environment that encourages self-directed discovery.

From Waldorf, we embrace imagination, rhythm, and the nurturing of a child's inner world through storytelling, art, and play.

From Reggio Emilia, we adopt the image of the child as capable and full of potential, emphasizing project-based learning, expressive communication, and collaboration.

From nature-based and holistic approaches, we affirm that connection to the natural world and a sense of wonder are essential ingredients for healthy development.

In the fall of 2025, we will be trying the *Wonder Garden* curriculum for the first time!

Children spend a minimum of 30 minutes outside daily at all age intervals, weather permitting. FSSA guidelines require children to remain indoors when temperatures exceed 85 degrees Fahrenheit and drop below 25 degrees Fahrenheit. Temperatures are monitored daily by Administration in 'real feel'.

Research shows us that children under 2 should not be exposed to screen time, and toddlers and preschoolers should have extremely limited access. Children at The Vine do not use hand-held devices. Occasionally, a music and movement video may be used for large motor time. Older children may be shown a video or movie on special occasions.

## **Infants: between 6 weeks – 18 months**

Our curriculum provides infants with a safe and nurturing world full of opportunities for active exploration and enjoyment in learning through their senses in our indoor and outdoor environments. The most important aspects of learning at this stage are secure attachment, movement of the body, and language development. An infant's day is based on the individual schedule of the child, but we do follow a general routine.

7-8:45 arrival, free movement, diapers, bottles and naps as needed

8:45 – snack time (for those eating table food)

9:30 – morning naps, diapers and bottles as needed

11:15/11:30 – lunch time (for those eating table food)

12-2 free movement, diapers, and bottles as needed

2/2:30 – afternoon naps, diapers and bottles as needed

-afternoon snack upon waking (for those eating table food)

3-5:30 - free movement, diapers and bottles as needed, preparing for departure

Parents/Guardians are expected to supply all foods, pre-mixed bottles, and/or breast milk for the child daily. All open jars and bottles must be used within 24 hours after opening. Containers that have been opened must be labeled with the child's name and the date and time the item was opened/prepared.

Parents/Guardians are expected to supply all powders and/or creams for their child ALONG WITH A NOTE FROM A PHYSICIAN. Parents/Guardians will be notified by the classroom teacher when supply of any item needs replenished. Each child must have at least TWO complete changes of clothing. The extra clothes can remain in the classroom.

### **Special Notes for Infants:**

As soon as children start sitting up to the table, they will be given a very small open cup to start practicing with.

Please do not send infants with bracelets, necklaces, or jewelry of any kind.

Infants cannot use blankets until they are 12 months old. If the classroom feels cool, we provide wearable blankets called "sleep sacks".

Pacifiers are allowed and will be sanitized throughout the day.

Infants are held to drink bottles; they will not be allowed to carry them around.

## **Toddlers: between 12 months – 3 &1/2 years**

Children's education is rapidly increasing during this plane of development. Children enjoy a setting that nurtures the spirit while supporting growth and independence through exploration. Though a classroom schedule is introduced, teachers recognize and accommodate for the individual needs of each child daily. Their general schedule is as follows:

7-8:30 arrival, free choice, diapering/toileting as needed

8:30 morning gather time

8:45 – snack time

9-11 – large motor time (inside or outside), free choice, diapering/toileting as needed

11:15-12 – lunch time, toileting, settling for nap time

12-2 – nap time as needed, quiet activities upon waking

2:30/3 – afternoon snack, free choice, diapering/toileting as needed

3-5:30 – afternoon large motor time (inside or outside), free choice, toileting as needed, preparing for departure

\*\*\*A huge developmental task in this age range is learning to do things for oneself (autonomy). We believe in helping children do things for themselves. You will see children at this stage helping with their own diapering/toileting tasks such as pulling down pants, learning to wipe, putting underwear on, etc. The children will also learn how to plate their food at lunch time, drink from an open cup, clean up after themselves, and take care of their classroom environment.

Special Notes for Toddlers:

Typically developing toddlers can stop using bottles by 15 months of age. If it is deemed medically necessary for a toddler to use a bottle, they will be held by a caregiver to drink it; they will not be allowed to carry it around or drink it on a cot to fall asleep.

Studies have proven that pacifiers can have damaging effects on children's language skills and even the formation of their mouths. Teachers will be working toward the ELIMINATION of pacifiers during this stage. Young toddlers may have pacifiers if all other means of regulation have failed, and at nap time. Older toddlers will only have pacifiers when needed at naptime. Pacifiers will not be allowed in our preschool/pre-K classrooms.

Children must be fully toilet trained before moving up to our preschool or pre-K classrooms.

## **Preschool and Pre-K: from 3 years – 6 years**

This stage of development is all about purposeful work and relationships. As children begin to have more control over their minds and bodies, we help them learn to distinguish, categorize, and relate new information to what they already know. Children are encouraged to be free within limits as they strengthen their levels of independence. Their general schedule is as follows:

7-8:30 arrival, free choice, \*toileting is done freely all day long as needed

8:30 - morning gather time

8:45 – snack time

9-11 – large motor time (inside or outside), free choice, one-on-one lessons with teachers

11-12 – lunch time, settling for nap time

12-2 – nap time as needed, quiet activities upon waking

2:30/3 – afternoon snack, free choice

3-5:30 – afternoon large motor time (inside or outside), free choice, preparing for departure

In our preschool classrooms, we utilize a collaboration of materials from a multitude of sources. We use an emerging curriculum concept, which means we bring in materials to enhance what children are interested in, as well as carefully creating activities that help children learn fundamental skills that later scaffold to elementary academics.

This approach allows us to

\*Support all areas of development—cognitive, emotional, physical, social, and spiritual

\*Honor different learning styles and interests

\*Provide hands-on, purposeful learning experiences

\*Encourage creativity, exploration, and independent thinking

\*Adapt for different ages and developmental needs

## **Toileting**

Children are given several opportunities daily to toilet. Children may choose to toilet with assistance anytime once in a Toddler classroom. Toileting rewards (such as stickers or candy) are not a part of The Vine's curriculum.

## **Faith**

Children learn through culture about God's creations. Bible stories/songs may be included or referenced at any time while your child is on campus to assist with the instruction of the environment. Bible references instill respect, love, and excitement for the world; plant the seeds for a courteous heart; build connections between everyday life; provide a sense of wonder and exploration; and emphasize a compassion for learning through developmentally appropriate experiences.

The biblical material used at The Vine is family-centered and aims at creating a new generation of leaders that love Jesus and want to share their passion with the world. We want children to learn about who they are in Christ and value each other as individuals. We teach values according to scripture, aligning them to developmental and social-emotional goals that all children have.

## **Field Trips and Transportation**

Occasionally, as a part of curriculum extensions, The Vine may participate in off-site field trips that require transportation of your child. All transportation provided by The Vine is at will and may be withheld for the safety of your child or others. If your child is not able to participate in an extension, alternate instruction will be provided on campus in an available classroom.

Written permission slips will be sent home for approval at a minimum of 10 days prior to the field trip date.

## **Other**

### **Parent Engagement**

Children learn and have success in early education when strong relationships are built with families. The Vine recognizes the importance of building strong partnerships and will focus on strengthening, assisting, empowering, and supporting your family.

The goal of each child's teacher is to become a resource, so together The Vine can offer the best environment for your child. We make every effort to have an open-door policy.

All communication that pertains to children attending The Vine must occur on the Playground app. Messages from personal phone numbers or social media outlets are prohibited.

Conferences for Parents/Guardians and teachers of Preschool and Pre-K classes will be scheduled once a year during which the teachers share observations and assessments, and work with parents to set goals. Infant/Toddler Staff may communicate growth through letters or screening results rather than in-person meetings.

In addition, we may offer programs including open houses, parent in-services, and classroom activities as opportunities for parents to be involved in the education of their child. Classroom visitations should be arranged with Administration at any time. Should you need access to your child's files, please see Administration.

Parents/Guardians are always welcome at The Vine! Inquire with Administration on ways you can be involved and help support your child and our organization. Anyone who volunteers eight or more hours a month must, at their own expense, complete the requirements set forth by the Office of Early Childhood and Out of School Learning.

## **Child Abuse & Neglect**

If a faculty member suspects child abuse/neglect of a child, they will document and report it to the Child Abuse Hotline immediately.

If you suspect child abuse or neglect is happening to your child while at The Vine, it is important that you immediately report it to Administration for investigation. If faculty is accused of child abuse/neglect, they will be reported to the Department of Child Services and The Office of Early Childhood and Out of School Learning. The faculty will be suspended without pay while under investigation. If the allegation is unsubstantiated, the faculty may be allowed to return following the close of the investigation.

All Indiana adults are considered mandated reporters of any child abuse or neglect. Annual training on this topic is required for all faculty. Administration is available to assist you with the reporting process if need be. You can also report directly to the Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-800-5556.