



FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Early Learning Center

PARENT HANDBOOK
AUGUST 17 2026 - JUNE 3 2027

ABOUT OUR PROGRAM

Mission

At Fruit of the Spirit Early Learning Center, our mission is to nurture the whole child by instilling the values of the Fruit of the Spirit while guiding each student toward academic excellence in a structured, Christ-centered environment. We are committed to creating a safe, joyful, and engaging space where children can thrive. We believe that a child's early experiences lay the foundation for a lifetime of learning and growth. Every child deserves to be respected as an individual and supported in an environment that encourages curiosity, creativity, and discovery. We honor each child's need for love, security, acceptance, and meaningful stimulation.

Philosophy

At Fruit of the Spirit Early Learning Center, we are dedicated to nurturing the whole child—physically, emotionally, and academically. Our Christ-centered preschool program is thoughtfully designed for children ages 2 to 4, using age-appropriate activities, crafts, and unit themes to support early development in a fun and engaging way. Our curriculum is rooted in faith, incorporating The Beginner's Bible along with joyful praise and worship to help children grow in their understanding of God's love. Through colorful, hands-on learning and a caring environment, we plant the seeds for a strong foundation in both learning and faith.

Parent Partnership

We believe in partnering with parents to ensure each child has a positive experience at Fruit of the Spirit Early Learning Center. As such, communication is an integral part of our program. Teachers provide daily communication, and the director will also keep you informed of weekly and monthly newsletters throughout the year. Daily communication is sent through the app PROCARE. Newsletters communication is sent by . We ask that you also keep us apprised on anything pertinent to your child, and we encourage you to be involved in your child's education. There will be several opportunities for you to participate in meetings and school events. We hope you will take advantage of them.

Licensing Agency

Fruit of the Spirit Early Learning Center is licensed by The Department of Children and Family as well as The Early Learning Coalition and follows their rules for childcare centers to ensure a safe and quality environment for children.

TUITION & FEES

Tuition Payment

Tuition is due for 50 weeks per year and must be paid in advance on a weekly basis. Payments are due each Friday for the upcoming week of care. A late fee of \$10 per day will be assessed for any tuition not received by the due date. Tuition is not prorated for absences or partial attendance. An exception may be made for family vacations if written notice is provided at least two weeks in advance.

Payments are accepted via Zelle, Cash App, Apple Pay, or cash. Tuition rates are subject to annual review and may increase. Parents will receive advance notice of any tuition changes.

Fruit of the Spirit ELC offers a 10% sibling discount on tuition for the youngest sibling enrolled.

Fruit of the Spirit ELC does not issue refunds or credits based on illness, vacation, holidays, acts of nature, or any other reason. Regardless of your child's actual attendance, parents are obligated to pay the full tuition amount. The program reserves the right to terminate care for a child if tuition payments are past due by 2 weeks.

- Weekly Tuition Rate: \$198

Other Fees

- Annual Registration Fee: \$100
- Late Payment Fee: \$10/day
- Late Pick-Up Fee: \$1/min

ENROLLMENT

Registration

Families are required to register annually. New families are required to tour the program prior to registering. Spots are filled in the following order:

1. Currently enrolled children wishing to enroll in the next year
2. Siblings of currently enrolled students
3. Other applicants in the order that their registration forms/waiting list applications and fees were received

In order for a child's spot to be fully secured, parents are required to submit:

- Completed enrollment form
- Completed payment contract
- Copy of child's immunization records (religious exemptions accepted)
- Registration fee of \$100

Waiting List

If no spot is available at the time of inquiry, a family may choose to place their child on the waiting list for a fee of \$25 that will be used toward your registration fee. This fee is nonrefundable and does not guarantee a spot for the child. If a spot becomes available, the Director will contact the family by telephone and email. Parents have 24 hours to contact the Director back before the spot is offered to the next child on the waiting list. To avoid missed communications, please maintain up-to-date contact information. If after 72 hours the parent has not responded, the child may be removed from the waiting list.

Trial Period

The first two weeks that your child is attending Fruit of the Spirit ELC, are considered a trial period in order to determine whether your child is suitable for our program. This trial period may be extended for no longer than 4 weeks if we feel that the child is slowly adapting.

ENROLLMENT

Withdrawal

Parents are required to provide written notice at least two weeks prior to their child's final day of attendance when withdrawing from the program for any reason.

Parents who fail to provide the required two-week notice will be responsible for paying two weeks of tuition in lieu of notice. All outstanding balances must be paid in full before any records or documents will be released by Fruit of the Spirit ELC.

Dismissal

Fruit of the Spirit ELC reserves the right to terminate services for any child when such action is considered necessary. The following circumstances warrant termination of services:

- Repeated failure to pick up a child by closing time
- Failure to abide by the payment contract and late fee policy
- Failure to abide by the policies outlined in this Parent Handbook
- Behavior from a child that is hazardous to the health and safety of other children
- Behavior that requires continual one-on-one attention from staff or the Director
- Physical or verbal abuse of staff or children by a parent

ATTENDANCE

Hours of Operation

During the school year, Fruit of the Spirit ELC is open from 7:30AM - 4:30PM, Monday through Friday.

Inclement Weather

Fruit of the Spirit ELC follows the closing policy of Miami Dade County Public Schools. If MDCPS is closed because of inclement weather, we will also be closed. If MDCPS closes mid-day or cancels after school activities, we will close early and parents may be called to pick up their children immediately.

Other Closings

In the event Fruit of the Spirit ELC has to close temporarily due to an outbreak of contagious illness within the program, pandemic, prolonged power outage, natural disaster, or others Fruit of the Spirit ELC will communicate with you by phone, text, email, or PROCARE.

Holiday closings are included in our tuition price. Therefore, there are no adjustments made in weeks where there is a closing due to a holiday. Tuition will not be waived or prorated for holidays. Parents are informed in advance in order to adjust their schedules.

Personal time/day will ALWAYS be announced months in advance. In addition to holiday closures, there will also be set noon dismissal days.

Please refer to closure & holidays form for exact dates Fruit of the Spirit ELC will be closed.

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

Entrance

Parking is located on the driveway to the left of the house , and you may enter through the door to the right of the black gate. For security, please do not hold the door open for anyone. Our door will auto lock and you are required to ring the doorbell so that Fruit of the Spirit ELC can monitor access to the premises.

Drop-Off Procedure

Arrival time is between 7:30AM - 8:30AM. Please be sure your child is here no later than 8:45AM. After that, only children who have prior permission from the Director or a who have a doctor's note may come to school. Absolutely no children may arrive after 11:00AM.

Parents of children who receive the ELC program must sign your child in every day on the attendance sheet by providing a full signature and accurately documenting the time.

Pick-Up Procedure

The regular school day ends at 3:00PM, with pick up between 3:00PM - 4:30PM. If for some reason you need to pick up early, please inform us ahead of time.

Children will only be released to parents and other adults listed on the authorized pick-up list (located on the child's registration form). Inform us ahead of time by phone or email if you have made arrangements for someone to pick up your child other than those listed. Please notify anyone picking up your child that an ID will be required. All persons may be asked to show valid picture identification until staff become familiar with them.

Late Pick-Up

Fruit of the Spirit ELC closes promptly at 4:30PM. Give yourself plenty of time to pick up your child prior to close. If you arrive after 4:30PM, a late fee of \$1 per minute will be billed to you. Excessive tardiness in picking up your child may result in dismissal from the program. If you are more than 30 minutes late and we are unable to reach you or your child's emergency contact, Fruit of the Spirit ELC will contact the local police and/or Child Protective Services. Staff are not permitted to give children rides home unless the staff member is off the clock, not working in any professional capacity, and is on the child's authorized pick-up list.

Parenting Plans

If a family has a parenting plan, please inform the Director. A certified Custody Order must be submitted in order for Fruit of the Spirit ELC to enforce any order that requires restricting one parent's access from the child.

STUDENT POLICIES

What to Bring

Please refer to the official School Supply List for a complete list of items your child will need for the upcoming school year. The supply list will be made available later in the year, closer to the start of the school term. We kindly ask that you review the list once it is released to ensure your child is fully prepared for a successful and smooth beginning to the school year.

Meals and Snacks

Breakfast, morning snacks, and afternoon snacks are provided by Fruit of the Spirit ELC. Lunch is required to be packed by parent. It is optional for your child to eat the meals provided. You may choose to pack your child's breakfast and snacks if your child does not choose to eat the meals provided. Tuition WILL NOT be adjusted if you do provide the food.

Personal Items

All personal items should have a clear and easily readable name printed on it.

To keep personal belongings safe, please keep toys at home. The only exception is if your child requires a lovey to sleep with during nap time, he or she may take it out of their bag at that time only. We are not responsible for lost, stolen, or broken items brought to Fruit of the Spirit ELC.

Dress

We will now be enforcing a new classroom uniform policy to promote consistency and school pride. Students will wear light pink or light blue polo shirts with navy uniform bottoms each day, and on Wednesdays, students will wear a light yellow polo shirt with navy uniform bottoms. All polo shirts must include our new official school logo. Additional details, including logo specifications, approved vendors, and purchasing links, will be provided at a later time.

Rest Time

There will be a two-hour period for all preschool children to rest during the day. Children are required to have a child-sized sleeping bag that will be placed on top of our sleep mats. An extra blanket is optional being that most sleeping bags have one built in. Sleeping bags will be kept throughout the week and sent home on Fridays. If you know your child will be absent on a Friday, please let the provider know so you can take it home on Thursday. If absent without notice, the sleeping bag will be sent home the following week when child returns.

STUDENT POLICIES

Codes of Conduct

The following actions are not permitted: hitting, pushing, biting, kicking, spitting, pinching, and use of inappropriate language or behavior. We encourage all children to use manners and respect every day. We ask that as a parent, you work with us to continue to stress these standards of conduct to your child. Our rules have been set to ensure safety for all children and staff. These rules will be discussed and taught to all children enrolled and will be expected to be followed. Repeat behavioral problems could result in termination. Respect for property and other children and staff is expected at all times. Willful destruction of property by any children will be charged to the parents.

Behavior Expectations

Fruit of the Spirit ELC knows that social and emotional learning is a major part of development at the preschool ages. We approach behavior management from a place of love with the intention of teaching children the right thing to do so that they can make good choices in the future.

Teachers will communicate behavior expectations frequently and teach acceptable behaviors through modeling, positive discipline, and positive reinforcement techniques. If a child behaves outside our expectations, teachers may use some of the following approaches to guide the child to better choices:

- Redirection
- Reminder of expectations
- Behavior reflection
- Behavior incentives
- Loss of privilege

Teachers will communicate your child's behavior to you on a daily basis. Please have conversations with your child at home about school expectations, and at any time, feel free to share any techniques or tips with your child's teacher about what's working well at home.

In the instance of recurring behaviors that require continual one-on-one attention, Fruit of the Spirit ELC might call a parent conference to address the behavior and ask the parents to help create a plan for encouraging future success of the child in the program. Depending on the frequency or severity of the behaviors, or in the instance that the parent is unwilling to work with the staff to help modify the child's behavior, the Director may, at his or her discretion, suspend or terminate care for the child.

STUDENT POLICIES

Pink Slips

In regard to discipline, Fruit of the Spirit ELC enforces a Pink Slip system for unacceptable behaviors. A pink slip will be issued when a child demonstrates behaviors that do not align with our school expectations. The number of pink slips a student receives will help determine whether the student is able to remain enrolled in the program. This system allows our staff to consistently follow through with established behavioral protocols and maintain a safe, respectful learning environment for all students.

Unacceptable behaviors include:

- Biting that leaves a mark, bruise, or breaks the skin
- Uncooperative or defiant behavior
- Disrespect toward staff or peers
- Refusal to comply after multiple warnings (non-compliance)
- Aggressive behavior

5 Pink Slips = Parent Meeting

10 Pink Slips = Dismissal

Evaluations

Children enrolled in our program will be evaluated throughout the year to monitor their overall development. Our written evaluations are helpful to both the provider and parents in assessing your child's level of development. These evaluations are merely to act as a communication tool between parents and your provider so that we may work together to enhance your child's strengths and further develop weaker areas. Please be sure to take time to review the evaluations that are sent home to you. If a child is showing signs that may indicate the need for additional support, we may request a meeting with parents to discuss possible next steps, which could include exploring outside resources such as ABA therapy or other early intervention services when appropriate.

Potty Training

Children in our classroom typically begin potty training between 24-30 months. Common signs of readiness are:

- Child has interest in the potty or in underwear
- Child is communicating when the diaper is dirty
- Child is communicating when they are going or about to go pee/poop in the diaper

When it is time to begin potty training, please keep in frequent communication about what is working/not working at home and your preferred method (if you have one). Please send extra clothing during potty training in case of accidents. Additionally, until your child is able to stay dry while sleeping, please send pull-ups or diapers for nap time.

HEALTH

Illness

Children experiencing illness must remain home. Fruit of the Spirit ELC is not a suitable environment for a sick child and needs to be able to rest.

If a child is experiencing symptoms while at Fruit of the Spirit Early Learning Center, the teacher or director may call the parent and require them to be picked up immediately, within 30 minutes. This is for the child's personal health, as well as to safeguard other children and staff from illness. Examples of symptoms that require a child to remain at home include:

- Fever over 99.9°F (child may return after being fever-free for at least 24 hours without the aid of fever-reducing medications)
- Unknown rash: may return with a doctor's note stating the child is not/no longer contagious
- Diarrhea: allergies/food intolerances will be taken into consideration; may return after stool returns to normal
- Vomiting: may return 24 hours after the last time vomiting
- Persistent cough or runny nose: may return 24 hours after coughing stops without the use of a cough suppressant
- Pink eye(s) or eye discharge: may return with a doctor's note stating the child is not/no longer contagious
- Child is behaving unlike their usual self such as complaining of discomfort, showing lethargy, or experiencing a loss of appetite: may return once they are acting like their normal self

Parents must contact Fruit of the Spirit ELC if they have been diagnosed with a highly communicable disease such as:

- Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease
- Strep Throat
- Chicken Pox
- Mumps
- Lice

These illnesses may require more strict parameters for returning to school, so please inform the Director immediately to discuss a return plan.

Cleaning Procedures

To maintain a safe and healthy learning environment, classrooms and bathrooms are sanitized daily. Floors are vacuumed and mopped each day to ensure cleanliness. In addition, toys and frequently touched surfaces are deep cleaned and sanitized weekly.

HEALTH

Minor to Moderate Injuries

Every effort will be made to ensure the safety of children within our care. Should an injury occur, teachers will attend to the child with a bandage, ice pack, or other first aid supply. Parents are notified of minor bumps and bruises at pick-up. Some injuries may require that we notify the parent immediately. Those instances include:

- A bump to the head
- A bite from another child
- A moderate amount of bleeding (more than a small scratch or cut)
- Follow-up medical treatment may be required
- The child is complaining of more than mild discomfort

Whenever there is an injury, the teacher will fill out an incident report on PROCARE.

Emergency Medical Care

In the instance of a medical event, staff will first attempt to contact the parent, then the emergency contact(s) if the parent cannot be reached. If the emergency requires immediate medical care, staff will call an ambulance while also contacting the parent. Staff will ensure the child receives care until the parent or medical professionals arrive.

Medications

Medication will NOT be administered to the children while in care at Fruit of the Spirit ELC. If your child is required to take medication, we ask that you give them the required dose before and after our business hours.

Parents with children who have severe allergies are required to provide an EpiPen to be kept in the classroom.

No medications - even over-the-counter medications - may be stored in a child's personal belongings.

SAFETY

Safety Procedures

At Fruit of the Spirit ELC, the safety and well-being of every child is our highest priority. Although we operate as a home daycare, we strictly follow established safety protocols and procedures to maintain a secure learning environment. Emergency drills are practiced regularly to ensure staff and children are prepared and confident in the event of an emergency.

To further enhance security, we will be implementing an automatic locking entry door system, a Ring camera doorbell, and additional security cameras around the property. These measures are designed to provide an added layer of protection and peace of mind for our families.

Abuse & Neglect

By state law, all staff are considered mandated reporters. Fruit of the Spirit ELC recognizes our responsibility to report reasonable suspicion of abuse and/or neglect.

OUR CURRICULUM

Curriculum

At Fruit of the Spirit ELC, we use the BJU Pathways to Preschool curriculum alongside The Beginner's Bible to provide a strong academic and biblical foundation for our students. Children will participate in engaging, hands-on learning experiences while also growing in their understanding of God's Word. Each month, a Bible verse will be introduced, and students are encouraged to memorize it as part of their spiritual development.

The Fruit of the Spirit

The Fruit of the Spirit is intentionally woven throughout each day in our center.

Love – Being patient, kind, and unselfish. Loving one another as God loves us.

Joy – Choosing happiness and trusting that God is in control of every detail.

Peace – Resting in comfort and knowing that God is always with us.

Patience – Not whining or complaining and waiting with a good attitude.

Kindness – Doing nice things for others and helping with a gracious heart.

Goodness – Showing care, compassion, and understanding toward others.

Faithfulness – Being loyal and true to God and remembering He is always with us.

Gentleness – Being calm, tender, and kind to family, friends, and even pets.

Self-Control – Managing wants and emotions and choosing to do what is right.

I, _____, the parent of
_____ have read and understood all the policies that
are in this handbook.

(Date)