

Albemarle Preschool

Parent & Student Handbook

2024-2025

Revised January 16, 2024



Purposes and Objectives of the Program

Albemarle Preschool is here to provide enriched learning experiences to individual children within a group care setting. We aim to help children improve and expand their ability to think, reason and speak clearly about each day's activities. We are here to help children become competent individuals and to naturally experience learning through play as they seek to satisfy their natural curiosity. We are to help children form relationships with adults in a setting that fosters respect and develops good healthy habits.

Educational Programs

We have chosen to base our lesson plans and classroom ideas on the Kaplan Learn Every Day curriculum. The curriculum is a research based, year round program that incorporates play into learning to enhance a child's growth and development. Research shows that high quality instruction and high quality play do not have to compete for time in the classroom, doing both well makes each one richer.

Enrollment

The following must be completed and submitted to the Director in order to enroll your child into the program:

- Albemarle Preschool Application
- Child's Information Form
- Physical Examination Report
- Immunization Record
- Signed Discipline Statement
- Signed Permission for Field Trips
- Emergency Information
- Authorized Pick up Form
- Signed receipt of Summary of NC Laws
- Signed receipt of Parent Handbook
- Emergency Action Plan (Asthma, Diabetic, Allergic Reaction)

Annual Enrollment Fee and Tuition: A non-refundable enrollment fee is charged to cover the paper work and other costs involved in enrolling each child, each year. The current ***annual*** enrollment fee is \$100.00, and is due in August for the upcoming school year.

Tuition is billed on a weekly basis and includes breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack. The tuition is as follows:

Child's Age (Room)	Available Hours	Weekly Tuition Rate
2 (Purple)	6:30 AM-6:00 PM	\$140
3 (Yellow)	6:30 AM-6:00 PM	\$140
4&5 (Blue)	6:30 AM-6:00 PM	\$140
4&5 (Red)	6:30 AM-6:00 PM	\$140

Enrollment fees and tuition will be reviewed on an annual basis. Current enrollees will be given a 30 day notice of any increase in annual registration fees and/or weekly tuition.

*Please note that the prices for enrollment will not change if you choose to opt out of our meal program.

Childcare Services and Payment Contract: The billing period is from Monday to Friday; billing is completed on Monday for the current week. Payment is expected in full on Monday. No reminders will be sent home. If payment is not received in full by Friday, the child will be discharged from the program until payment is received. Children on the waiting list will be given the opportunity to fill the spot at that time. There will be a late fee of \$20 charged on Friday. There is a \$25 fee if the card on file declines as of July 1st 2021.

Payment for weeks in which holidays occur will remain the same as all other weeks, so please plan accordingly and pay in advance if needed. We will always notify you in advance of any board-approved change to weekly tuition rates and you will be asked to sign a new enrollment contract. If you are signed up for automatic payments from your debit or credit account when your contract amount changes, we will automatically adjust the billing amount to your card.

Discharge Policy: Your child may be discharged if:

- A problem continues which negatively affects other children in attendance at Albemarle Preschool.
- There has been no payment for the current week by close on that Wednesday
- Failure to meet Albemarle Preschool policies
- Continuous late drop off or late pick up

Withdrawal: If you desire to cancel enrollment you must give two-weeks written notice to the Director or the finance department located in the main office. If a notice is not given as described, you will be charged for two-weeks of fees, based on average week or at the Director's discretion.

Waiting List: In an event that an age group should be full at any time, the child's name would be placed on a waiting list. As vacancies occur, pre-registered children would have first priority.

Child/Staff Ratios: The following child/staff ratios are used at Albemarle Preschool:

Age of Children	Minimum Staff/Child Ratio
2 to 3 Years	1/10
3 to 4 Years	1/15
4 to 5 Years	1/18

Days and Hours of Operation

Albemarle Preschool is open year round Monday through Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. We will plan to close for holidays, one full week in the summer and one full week for Christmas. We will release a calendar each year announcing those days in advance. Families are still financially responsible for their weekly tuition, and tuition will not be prorated for holidays.

Children must be picked up from the preschool by 6:00 p.m. Our operational state license dictates that we must legally close at that time. A late fee is applied on all occasions beginning at 6:01 p.m. and is \$5.00 for every 5 minutes past 6:00 p.m. Late fees must be paid within 2 business days of the late pick-up or you will be asked to keep your child home until you are able to pay the late pick-up fee. If you excessively pick up your child after 6:00 p.m. a meeting will be held with the Director and your child may be dismissed from the program.

Inclement Weather Policy

Weather cancellations and delays will use the FACTS calling system for official announcements for school cancellations/early closing. Teachers will also send our Remind messages. The absence of an announcement means that school will open as usual. Please remember your personal safety when making a decision to come to school. If the school does make a decision to close, families are still responsible for child care costs. Tuition will not be prorated for any reason.

Health and Wellbeing

The State of North Carolina requires that there be a medical form in your child's file. Medical examination must be signed and dated by your physician. Albemarle Preschool Medical History report must be completed, updated, and signed by the physician and parent. These forms are intended to protect your child, and we appreciate your cooperation in keeping them current.

Illness: We strive to prevent the spread of illness and ask that you keep your child home if he/she is experiencing any of the following symptoms:

- A fever of 100° F or greater before child care, accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness-until medical evaluation indicates inclusion in the Preschool.
- Symptoms or signs of possible severe illness, such as; uncontrolled coughing, irritability, persistent crying, unusual lethargy, wheezing, or other unusual signs
- Strep throat until 24 hours after an antibiotic started
- Diarrhea; runny, watery, or bloody stools within the last 12 hours
- Vomiting in the last 24 hours
- Rash with fever or behavior change
- Scabies or other infestations
- Impetigo 24 hours after treatment has begun
- Chicken pox 5-7 days after blisters appear
- Pertussis, mumps, rubella, shingles, herpetic gingivostomatitis
- Hepatitis A- until 1 week after onset
- Sore throat with fever
- Eye discharge (white or yellow) or pink eye; until 24 hours after starting treatment; if treatment is not sought then when the discharge clears
- Child is irritable, continuously crying or requires more attention from a caregiver than what they can provide without hurting the health and safety of other attending children
- Respiratory illness-RSV- until 1 week after diagnosed

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated! Please be aware that if you are asked to pick up your child because we feel that they are sick or uncharacteristically irritable and require more attention than we can realistically and safely provide, it is a requirement that you do so. This judgment call is left to the Director.

Your child may return when:

1. The above suggestions are met
2. He/she is fever or symptom free for at least 24 hours before returning to Preschool.

3. He/she has been treated by a doctor or a doctor permits them to return to Preschool.

We ask that our parents provide the doctor's release to the Director as soon as possible. If your child becomes ill while at the center, then you will be called to pick up your child **within 2 hours**. Exposure to communicable diseases and any infectious illness should be reported promptly to the center, so our staff can look for any early symptoms. The center will notify parents when a child has been exposed to an infectious disease.

Head Lice: Albemarle Preschool has a no nit policy. No exceptions will be made. Head lice are difficult to prevent and control in settings where children and their personal items have such close contact. The ages of the children we care for make it necessary for the staff to have very close physical contact with children. Head checks will be done any time the staff feels necessary.

Any child found to have live lice or nits is to leave Albemarle Preschool immediately. The child's parent will be informed and asked to pick up their child immediately. The staff member who detects the lice or nits will attempt to provide the parent or authorized person who picks up the child with proof of the lice or nits found.

If a parent finds the lice or nits please inform the director and take your child to seek treatment immediately.

Children who have been found to have lice and/or nits must be treated and be nit free before they may return to Albemarle Preschool. A doctor's written note or evidence of treatment must be given to the director before your child may return to Albemarle Preschool.

Any time lice or nits are detected, the classroom will be thoroughly cleaned and toys that could harbor lice will be sealed in plastic bags for at least 24 hours.

Medical evaluation and opinions will be considered; however, Albemarle Preschool Administration has the final say regarding when your child can return.

Student's Medication:

The Albemarle Preschool DOES NOT administer ANY medication, EXCEPT for EMERGENCY medications, which we are required to by law.

I. Procedures for to apply over-the-counter, topical ointments, gels, lotions, creams, or powders:

1. To apply over-the-counter, topical ointments, gels, lotions, creams, or powders such as sunscreen, diapering creams, baby lotion, and baby powder, insect repellent, when needed.

i. Valid for as long as the child is enrolled:

Standing authorization to administer an over-the-counter to apply over-the-counter, topical ointments, gels, lotions, creams, or powders to be used as directed on permission form by the parent or guardian. This permission will include a statement that the authorization is valid until withdrawn by the parent/guardian in writing.

ii. At any time:

1. A parent/guardian may withdraw his or her written authorization for the administration of applying over-the-counter, topical ointments, gels, lotions, creams, or powders at any time in writing.

a. All medications brought in to the center will be given to **the Director** for review and approval. If the Director is unavailable, the medications can be given to the **Front Office**.

b. Medication will be stored at the temperature recommended for that type of medication.

d. Emergency medication may be left unlocked so long as it is stored out of the reach of children at least 5 feet above the floor.

e. Non-prescription over-the-counter, topical ointments, gels, lotions, creams, or powders shall be stored out of reach of children at least 5 feet above the floor, but not required to be in locked storage.

II. Documentation:

- a. No documentation shall be required when over-the-counter, topical ointments, gels, ointments, creams, and powders- such as sunscreen, diapering creams, baby lotion, baby powder, topical teething products, or insect repellents- are applied to children. No areole cans will be allowed in the classrooms.

Child Accidents and Incidents

Child Accident Forms: Our staff makes every effort to ensure the safety of your child. Unfortunately, accidents do occur. In case of that event, an accident form will be completed by Albemarle Preschool staff for every detected injury that occurs. A copy with your signature will be retained for your child's file. A child coming into the program with injuries may require an accident form, so that both the parent and staff are aware that they did not occur at the Preschool.

Parents will be notified immediately in case of a serious accident. If you cannot be reached, Albemarle Preschool will attempt to notify the physician listed on the emergency information form. In the case that the physician cannot be reached, an assigned member of the staff will secure the medical attention they deem necessary in accordance with the Albemarle Preschool Emergency Medical Plan.

Behavior Form: An incident form will be completed by Albemarle Preschool staff if your child exhibits behavior that is not acceptable and does not adhere to the classroom discipline policy. A copy of this form with your signature will also be kept in your child's file.

Biting Policy: We understand that biting is a developmental stage for some children. We try to redirect the behavior and figure out what the trigger is for the biting. However, if the biting persists there will be a meeting with the parents, director and teachers. Following the meeting, a child who bites twice will be sent home for the day. We will try this technique for 2 weeks, and if the biting continues a two-week notice for dismissal will be given.

Dress Code and Personal Belongings

Dress your child in appropriate clothing so that they feel free to participate in all activities. We are not responsible for damaged clothing. We also ask that parents provide an extra set of clothing, including shoes for their child that will remain at the facility. Should a child damage their shoes during an accident, and another set of shoes is unavailable, parents will be notified to pick up their child. Clothing should be marked with the child's name. Children should wear shoes that are comfortable, yet sturdy. No flip-flops or open toed shoes are allowed. Parents are asked to provide a crib size fitted sheet, blanket and pillow or small stuffed toy for naptime. These linens are to be taken home on Friday, laundered and returned the following Monday. Parents who have children in diapers are required to provide diapers and wipes. The diapers may be placed in the child's locker and all wipes will be used "community style." **No toys should be brought from home as this can become a liability.**

Emergency Plans

Emergency plans for fire are posted in each classroom and are practiced monthly, so that your child is familiar with the drill and not alarmed in case of a real emergency. In case of an actual fire, the children will be escorted out of the building according to the Emergency Action Plan and parents will be contacted immediately, if phone lines are operable.

Emergency plans for tornado and intruder are practiced quarterly, so that your child is familiar with the drill and not alarmed in case of a real emergency. In case of an actual tornado or intruder, the children will remain in place until released by administration. Parents will be contacted immediately, and will be able to pick up their children when it is safe to do so.

In the case of a medical or dental emergency the parent of the child will be notified.

Tornado Procedures

- **Tornado Watch:** All classes will be notified in person or over the intercom of the tornado watch. School will be dismissed at the normal time in the regular manner.
- **Tornado Warning:** The tornado warning signal will be the repeated sounding of a sound producing device (bell, air horn, etc.) or intercom, if we still have power. Teachers are to take their classes to the designated shelter areas and have their students assume the protective, curled position and cover their heads and eyes. There should be absolutely **NO TALKING** so that important information can be passed efficiently and effectively to everyone, on the premises.
- **A tornado is sighted, approaching school, NO WARNING!** If time permits, go to an interior hallway. If time does **not permit** go to the inside wall farthest away from doors and windows. Get out of places with WIDE, FREE-SPAN ROOFS. Get under any heavy furniture. Assume the protective, curled position and cover your head and eyes.
- **Tornado Shelter Plan:** Go to main hallway facing interior walls, two rows deep in protective curled position.
- *Any student or staff member should go to the closest available shelter if they are not in their regular location.*

Bomb Threat Procedures

- **With time-** checklist personally delivered and picked up by the Headmaster or designee.
- **No time-** evacuation-fire drill route/plan **EXCEPT** move to areas at least 300 feet from the buildings.
- Teachers will see that windows are **opened** and the door is left **opened**.
- Teachers will take roll and notify the Headmaster/Director if someone is missing.
- If someone is missing, the Headmaster/Director will immediately organize a search among classes outside the building **ONLY** and will notify the on-scene law enforcement commander immediately.
- Students and staff will **NOT** return to the building until it has been declared safe by competent police authority.

Lockdown Procedures

- If you hear, **"We are in Lockdown"** over the intercom or an administrator announces this quote in person:
Everyone is to stay where they are.

Classroom teachers are to:

§ Quickly glance outside the room to direct any student or staff member in the hall into your room immediately.

§ Lock your door

§ Lower or close any blinds

§ Place students against the wall, so that the intruder cannot see them. Look for the **“Safe Corner”**

§ Turn out lights and computer monitors.

§ Keep students quiet

Albemarle Preschool will practice Fire Drills, Tornado Drills, and Lockdown Drills throughout the year.

Arriving and Leaving the Center

Attendance: Children will not be able to attend preschool for the day if they are not dropped off by 9:00 a.m. If your child has an appointment and will be later than 9:00 a.m., the Director must be notified at least one day in advance. Due to classroom schedules, children who are dropped off after 9:00 a.m. may not be included in meal counts, and are disruptive during naptime. Lunch is served at 11:15 a.m. and when children arrive after 9:00 a.m. they are not hungry for lunch, we may not have made enough food, and they may have excess energy that they would not have been able to use before nap. Also, due to ratio counts, students need to be counted present to ensure the correct number of staff are in each room.

Arrival: A parent or other authorized adult must take the child inside the classroom daily and sign in. A child should arrive no later than 9:00 a.m.

This allows the child to take part in preschool activities and the preschool curriculum. If later arrival is indicated, please contact the Director.

Authorizing Individuals to pick up your Child: On the enrollment form, you will find a line asking for the names of the individuals who are authorized to pick up your child. You may authorize as many individuals as you wish in writing on your form. You must leave a written note in the morning if a situation arises that requires someone not authorized on the list to pick up your child. For the safety and protection of your child they will not be allowed to leave with an unauthorized person. This is for the safety and protection of your child. We will check the ID of the person listed to pick up your child, so please make sure that the name you provide us with on paper will match the driver's license of the person picking up the child. Please remember to keep this form updated with your current phone number and address changes.

Checking In and Out: It is required that all children be escorted inside the center and the arrival time is recorded on the attendance sheet in your child's classroom. When picking up your child please communicate with a staff person and record the departure time on the attendance sheet. Please notify the center **before 9:00 a.m.** if your child will not be coming for the day.

A parent or authorized adult must notify the teacher before taking the child from the Preschool. A child will only be released to those authorized by written permission from the parent. Parents must notify the center if anyone other than themselves will be picking up their child. The center will require a picture ID of anyone picking up a child other than the parents.

Children must be picked up from the preschool by 6:00 p.m. A late fee is applied on all occasions. This will begin immediately at 6:01 p.m. and is \$5.00 for every 5 minute past 6:00 p.m. late fees need to be included in the very next tuition payment. If you excessively pick up your child after 6:00 p.m. a meeting will be held with the Director. If a child has not been picked up by 7:00 p.m., the child will be considered abandoned. A child protective services worker will then be notified to pick up your child. If an emergency occurs and you anticipate a problem with picking up your child, please notify the center immediately.

Meals

Menus will be posted in each of the classrooms. All meals served at the Preschool meet the nutritional guidelines set by the Department of Human Services. We follow specific requirements for the kinds of foods served and the way they are served. Snacks and lunches are provided by Cape Fear Tutoring.

Two nutritious snacks and lunch are provided and served from the school cafeteria daily. You may provide breakfast and lunch for your child, we ask that any meal provided follow nutritional guidelines. Please do not send anything that needs to be refrigerated or reheated, as students do not have access to a refrigerator or microwave. Albemarle Preschool does not allow any outside foods (i.e. fast foods) and we do not allow sodas or candies to be eaten during the school day. If your child will be arriving after 9:00 a.m., please notify the Director. Special treats (birthday parties and special holidays) are allowed and need to be scheduled prior to an upcoming event.

Involvement

Parent & Staff Communication: Albemarle Preschool strives for open communication between parents and staff. The teaching staff will be available to greet the children and parents upon arrival daily, as well as visit with parents at the end of the day. Parents are encouraged to share information about their child with the teacher and to feel free to discuss and ask questions. Notes, letters, notices and newsletters will be sent to parents to keep them up-to-date about what is happening in the center and with their child. Parents should check their child's folder daily. Staff will host 2 parent teacher conferences a year that parents can sign up to participate in. During these conferences, teachers will discuss the child's developmental, social, emotional, and academic progress

Volunteers: Albemarle Preschool encourages volunteers! Volunteers are important and can often serve as a mentor in your child's life. All volunteers are required to have a criminal records check. On occasions there are students who are in need of training for required courses. These students will be supplementing your child's learning day with activities such as reading stories, art activities, and helping with your child's development. We welcome parents and grandparents to observe at any time. They may even share an interest with the children such as a hobby or a book.

Fundraisers: From time to time Albemarle Preschool may do fundraisers to raise money for needed toys, supplies, and educational materials. These fundraisers are a positive way to show community and family support for early childhood education.

Transportation

Albemarle Preschool does not provide transportation to and from school. In the case of an emergency, a licensed staff member will transport children. Children will only be transported with the written consent of the parent or legal guardian.

Field Trips

Field trips are an important part of the program, and teachers are encouraged to take the children on various excursions throughout the year. A signed permission slip for each child will be required for each trip.

Procedures for Resolving Classroom Concerns

During the school year, situations may occur where concerns regarding classroom procedures, instruction, curriculum, discipline, etc. may arise. In order to facilitate a rational and measured resolution, the following steps/procedures will be followed:

- Schedule a conference with your student's teacher to discuss specific concerns. Please have available dates, times, and specific instances regarding your concerns so the teacher can address them and relate them to class activities and procedures.
- If a conference with your student's teacher does not resolve your concern, then schedule a conference with the Director to discuss the original concern and evidence that the original concern was not satisfactorily resolved. Please provide all documentation of your original concern and notes from the teacher conference.
- If, after having met with the Director the concern is not resolved, the Director will, at the request of the parent/legal guardian, schedule a meeting with the Headmaster of Albemarle School.
- If having met with the Headmaster the concern is not resolved, the Headmaster will, at the request of the parent/legal guardian, schedule a meeting with the Albemarle School Board. Requests will be made in writing and addressed to the Chair of the Albemarle School Board of Directors. The decision of the Albemarle School Board of Directors is final.

Classrooms

Balloons: Out of concern for the safety of our children, the center does not permit balloons and they may not be a part of party bags brought for special occasions.

Items to be provided by parents:

- Crib-sized sheet
- Blanket
- 2 Extra sets of clothing
- Optionally, you may provide a stuffed animal comfort item for your child to use at nap time as long as it fits in their cubbies.