

Early Learning Center  
Parent handbook



ASCENSION CHRISTIAN

WELCOME TO THE LION NATION

Mailing Address: 10469 Airline Hwy  
Gonzales, LA 70737  
Affiliated with: Household of Faith Church  
Pastor: Scott Bledsoe  
Superintendent: Mark Pellegrin  
Campus Administrator: Angela Duhe  
AC ELC Director: Nicole D Reed

Lead Teachers

Infants Sandy Johnson  
Toddlers Linda Peterson  
PK2 Natasha Sims  
PK3 Melissa Springman  
Center Hours: 6:30am to 6:00pm

Telephone Number Reference: School Office: 225-644-3110 Fax: 225-647-2368

## Welcome

Welcome to the Ascension Christian Early Learning Center. We are excited that you have chosen to be a part of what God is doing for the children in Ascension Parish.

The purpose of this manual is to inform you about who we are and prepare you for the experience at the Early Learning Center.

Thank you for choosing Ascension Christian for your child's education. We understand you have many choices. Our commitment is to support our community with a vibrant Christian education from six weeks of age all the way through early college education. Our scope of Christian education spans from our Early Learning Center all the way to our high school, Ascension Christian High. Our schools are all state approved, and all of Ascension Christian schools are accredited by Advanc-ED and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. In addition, Ascension Christian is certified as a S.T.E.M. school providing advanced education in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. Ascension Christian is currently the ONLY school in Louisiana to hold this distinction. Ascension Christian ELC is a vibrant part of the S.T.E.M. program and is the only ELC in Louisiana to be accredited by Advanc-ED.

## The Vision of Ascension Christian Schools

Ascension Christian Early Learning Center (ELC) is a ministry. As an affiliate of the Household of Faith Church, the ELC shares in the overall vision established by the church. The vision comes from Psalms 68:6 - *God places the lonely in families; he sets the captives free and gives them joy."*

At Ascension Christian Schools, we believe that everyone needs a place to **Belong**, then be given the opportunity to **Believe** in the promises of God, and finally, everyone needs to **Become** the person God intended them to be.

In the same way, children who attend Ascension Christian will be given a place to belong first. They will have the opportunity to connect to others in their learning and play. In these opportunities children will learn about God and his world through a quality-driven educational system and the daily Christian culture that is alive and well in the school. Finally, children can begin to learn about Jesus as our Lord and Savior and that His plans for us are good.

The Early Learning Center (ELC) was established in 1988 as a much needed Christian alternative in childcare for Ascension Parish. It was designed to reflect the love, integrity, and standard of excellence demonstrated by Jesus Christ in His attitude toward children. The program is Louisiana Class A licensed, meeting the highest standards in the child care industry.

Early childhood education at Ascension Christian ELC, where love and learning go hand in hand, embodies all the fundamentals of early childhood development. We seek to provide Christ-centered, Biblical perspectives to early childhood care and education in the major areas of human development (physical, cognitive, emotional, social and spiritual).

In addition, by interacting with other children, your child develops lasting friendships in a positive and praise-worthy atmosphere. Each child receives individual attention, while at the same time learning how to work and play with others. Our staff encourages an

interactive classroom experience. Teachers praise students, building self-confidence as students become more aware of their self-esteem and the world around them.

Our goal is to provide a structured, fun, creative, and learning atmosphere that promotes an enjoyable experience for children. Students learn to acknowledge God in all of their actions and thoughts and celebrate each other and the unique qualities of each of their peers. The diversity in our center shines through in all aspects.

Once that Foundation is built, just as the man built his house on a rock, Ascension Christian ELC, sets the foundation for higher learning in our elementary and high schools.

Our desire is that each parent feels involved with their child's experience at Ascension Christian ELC, and to set the foundation to prepare your child to be able to think critically about God's Word and the world in which we live. It is our ultimate objective to present Jesus Christ as Savior, and to show His love to all children and their parents. Our aim is that each child and his family will come to know Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord.

## **The Mission Statement of the Ascension Christian Schools**

It is a single sentence that summarizes the vision and mission and philosophy of the school. The statement is the basis from which the schools operate all their activities. It provides an overall direction for the entire system. The Mission Statement is:

*"We provide a Christ-centered environment of educational excellence where every student has an opportunity to belong, to believe, and to become a light for the world!"*

As one of the only ELCs in the state to be accredited, Ascension Christian Early Learning Center provides a comprehensive program based on early childhood development that has been shown to improve cognitive and social/emotional outcomes in children.

The curriculum is based on the latest research on how children learn best and has been shown through experimental studies to improve classroom quality and promote educational readiness. The curriculum meets all standards put forth for effective early childhood curricular by the National Association of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAECS/SDE). With ongoing assessment, teachers focus on all aspects of a child's development. The curriculum has a thorough assessment process including evaluating children's learning and development, using the goals and objectives to know what to teach, and using the evaluation information to guide children to the next level of development.

The Ascension Christian Early Learning Center provides learning opportunities through play. Your child's classroom is composed of several centers which his/her teacher changes regularly. Each day your child will participate in circle time where the class and instructor come together for such things as story time, color/number/shape/letter review, music and movement, calendar and weather discussion and more. During circle time children learn to express their ideas and discover their world independently. In addition to circle time, learning centers throughout the classroom provide countless educational opportunities. No matter which area captures your child's interest on a particular day, important skills are being developed.

## **Personal Attention**

Ascension Christian ELC supports families with individual attention. Children will be closely monitored for continued improvements in their skills, and information will be communicated with parents routinely. The staff of the ELC is prepared to make the necessary connections to help every child find their place in God's world. Your child is our priority, and we make every effort to help him/her make the difficult transitions, especially when it comes to growing-up. As a Christian school, we spend countless hours connecting each of our children and their parents. Every child is our focus! Every student is important!

## ADMISSION POLICY

Ascension Christian Schools admits students of any race, color, nationality or ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, nationality, or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

### Early Learning Center Rates

Registration fee per child (non-refundable)	\$135.00
Toddler and Preschool Activity Fee	\$125.00

*(Below are the weekly rates)*

Infants 6 weeks to toddler class entry	\$155.00
Toddler (Toddler class until preschool)	\$145.00
Preschool two (Must turn 2 by Sept 30)	\$140.00
Preschool three (Must turn 3 by Sept 30 and be completely potty-trained)	\$140.00

*Discounts are available for multiple children attending Ascension Christian Schools*

## FINANCIAL POLICIES

### Payment Policy

Ascension Christian will make financial decisions based on the monthly/annual revenue it receives. Parents must commit to being faithful at fulfilling all their financial responsibilities to the school. ELC tuition fees are required in advance. Fees are assessed weekly (every Thursday) for the next week of services. Payment is due no later than the Monday services are rendered. Tuition is billed through the school's student management system, Renweb. You may pay weekly or bi-weekly. Checks should be payable to Ascension Christian ELC.

### Late Fees

The school administration and finance office will review delinquent accounts. Administration reserves the right to assess a \$6 late fee to accounts carrying a balance. As well, accounts not current may result in temporary suspension of the student(s) until fees are paid. Payments should be made before 6:00 PM on Monday.

### Non-Sufficient Funds (NSF) Fee

Administration reserves the right to assess \$35 for returned checks. Further, you child may not be able to return to school until fees are paid in full. Charges are incurred for the days that your child misses.

### Late Pick-up Fee

Children must be picked-up by 6:00 PM. Late pick-ups will be assessed at \$1 per minute after 6:00 PM. The late payment fee will be billed to your account and must be paid in full by the next billing cycle. After every third occurrence of late pick up fees assessed, there will be an additional fee of \$25.00 plus charges of \$1.00/minute late.

### Weather or Emergency Closure Policy

The safety of our children and staff is of utmost importance. In the event that we decide to close, you will be contacted via email, and by phone, if necessary. The school's website will also be updated. If necessary the local television stations may provide information, especially with regards to severe weather conditions. If it is necessary to close for the safety of the staff and our children, we do not credit or discount tuition fees.

### Personal Days

Parents have five personal days each school year (August - May). Students must be absent in order to use a personal day. The use of "Personal Days" is not automatic. You will need to contact front office or email [smarcello@actions.org](mailto:smarcello@actions.org) to credit your account. An additional five personal days are issued through summer months for those who are enrolled at the ELC full time.

## Termination of Services

A two-week notice is required before withdrawing a child from the ELC. Withdrawal without a two-week notice will result in additional charges. Charges must be paid within 30 days of the child's last day. Administration reserves the right to refer delinquent accounts for collection. All collection fees will be the responsibility of the parent.

## **Discipline Policy**

Ascension Christian ELC will always work to encourage children to improve. Discipline will always be fair and consistent and administered with love.

### **Action for Discipline:**

A caregiver may only use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, which include at least the following:

- Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior;
- Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements;
- Redirecting behavior using positive statements.
- Using brief supervised separation or time out from the group, when appropriate for the child's age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age.
- Parents will be informed of any irregular behavior or actions.

### **Redirection**

Children who are having difficulty for any reason will be redirected to another activity with teacher assistance. In the event that a child's behavior is likely to result in harm to the child, others, or property, or seriously disrupts group interaction, the child may be separated briefly from the group. The child will be taken to the office to sit with an administrator where he/she can gain enough self-control to rejoin the group. The child will always be in an area where he/she can be supervised and supported by a staff member. Interaction between the child and a staff member will take place immediately following the separation to guide the child toward appropriate group behavior. Paddling is not used at Ascension Christian as a method of discipline, nor is a method of discipline which frightens, demeans, or humiliates a child.

### **Discipling**

Ascension Christian staff will explain what the child did wrong and make sure he/she understands why they are being redirected to a different behavior. ELC staff will have the child repeat what he/she did wrong when what the child did was witnessed. The child will not be accused when the ELC staff is unsure of the behavior or action, and the ELC staff will not "set up" the child by asking him/her if he/she did something wrong when the ELC staff member witnessed the disciplinary event.

The above methods are the only accepted form of discipline of Ascension Christian ELC. Employees are not permitted to use any other form of discipline other than those detailed above. Under no circumstances is any staff member to spank, hit, strike, push, pull, jerk, or in any other way administer physical punishment to a child.

***"Even a child is known by his actions, by whether his conduct is pure and right."***

***Proverbs 20:11***

Teachers will spend time with children to learn classroom rules and procedures. If any student has an ongoing challenge obeying the rules, the teacher will inform the child's parents with a note and a call. ELC staff will inform parents of any severe behavior challenges as well. We look forward to helping students develop self-control and Godly behavior. Occasionally, it is necessary to address more serious behavior concerns with parents, especially when students exhibit behaviors that are difficult to manage. Those behaviors include but are not limited to the following: Hitting, slapping, kicking or punching; spitting; abusive behavior toward another child; throwing objects at others; behavior that can endanger others. Administration reserves the right to immediately dismiss children with consistent, unmanageable behavior.

### **Biting Policy**

With preschoolers, it is an unavoidable consequence of young children in group care. When this happens, it can be scary, frustrating, and stressful for children, parents, and teachers. However unfortunate, it is a natural phenomenon, not something to blame on children, parents, or teachers. There is no quick and easy solution. Some children become "stuck" for a while in a biting syndrome, and it is a

frustration for the parents of victims that we are unable to “fix” the child quickly. We make every effort to monitor and extinguish the behavior quickly and balance our commitment to all families. We will require withdrawal only when deemed an unmanageable behavior concern.

## **Potty Training Policy**

Potty training should begin at home with the child’s parents or caregivers at a time when there are few changes in the child’s life. Life must be fairly stress free during this time for the child. Ascension Christian ELC will assist your child becoming potty trained once the signs of readiness as outlined in the [Potty Training Readiness Information Page](#) or have been observed by both the parents as well as the child care provider. Potty training process begins in our PK2 class where bathrooms are available in the classrooms. All children enrolled in the Early Learning Center that are not fully potty trained are required to have disposable diapers or disposable pull-ups.

## **Child Abuse Policy**

All staff of the Ascension Christian ELC are mandated by law to report any suspected abuse, neglect, or maltreatment on the part of an employee, parent, or volunteer. Any abuse or maltreatment of a child, either as an incident of discipline or otherwise is prohibited. Any means of corporal punishment will not be tolerated. Additionally, withholding or using food, rest or sleep as a punishment is also prohibited. If any type of abuse or neglect is suspected it will be reported in accordance with Louisiana Revised Statutes 14:1403 at the mandated number—**1-855-452-5437**.

## **Staff Hired by parents**

We strongly discourage our employees from making personal child care arrangements with families at the school. However, in the event that you enter into an agreement with a Ascension Christian ELC employee to babysit for your family outside of the employee’s normal work hours and/or outside of the school hours, it must be done away from the school and with the full knowledge and understanding that the sitter enters into such an agreement as a private citizen and not as a Ascension Christian employee. We are not responsible for our employees away from school and will not be liable for their acts or omissions when not on school property including the transportation of children.

## **Nutrition**

Breakfast snacks, lunch, and afternoon snacks are provided. A menu is posted in the classrooms and on Renweb for parents. Documentation of food allergies must be provided by a physician including a list of foods to avoid. A child must be present in his/her classroom by 8:00am to receive a breakfast snack at the ELC. Breakfast snack is unavailable after 8:30am.

Infants will be served fluids from a bottle until families and teachers decide together that a child is developmentally ready to use a cup. Teaching staff do not offer solid foods and fruit juices to infants younger than four months, unless that practice is recommended by the child’s pediatrician in the form of written documentation. Please discuss specifics of your child’s feeding with his/her primary caregiver.

Except for breast milk, staff serves only formula in prepared-at-home bottles labeled with the child’s first and last name; and infant food that comes to the facility in factory sealed containers. Bottle-feedings should not contain solid foods unless the child’s health care provider supplies written instructions and a medical reason for this practice. No milk or solid food is warmed in a microwave. Staff will discard any formulas or breast milk that is served but not completely consumed.

Special health care needs will require documentation from a pediatrician. Ascension Christian ELC protects children with food allergies from contact with the problem food. Families of a child with food allergies must give consent for posting information about that child’s food allergy, so that it may be posted as a visual reminder to all those who interact with the child during the program day.

## **Tardiness**

All ELC children must be in school no later than 9:00 AM unless accompanied with a doctor’s excuse. Excessive tardiness (3 unexcused) will result in a \$25 fee. After 11:00 AM children are not admitted for the day.

## **Toys**

Ascension Christian provides children with everything they will need to enjoy their time at school. Parents should not send children to school with personal toys, books, etc. “Show-N-Tell” may provide opportunities for children to bring things to campus for a day. Those items must be unbreakable and small enough to fit inside of a lunch-size brown bag. Please do not allow your child to bring anything that promotes violence or fear.

## Security

For the safety and security of students, parents, and staff all buildings are secured at all entry points. All classroom doors are locked at all times. Parents and guests must enter through the main office during the hours 6:30 AM and 6:00 PM. For security reasons, parents and guests are required to wear official badges that are visible while you are on campus. Anyone without a badge will be required to stop at the front office for admittance. A replacement badge may be required for a fee of \$10.00.

## Signing-in and Out (Computer Scanning)

Each day the child's parent/guardian/approved family member must record the child's time of arrival and departure. Our procedure includes the usage of an automated scanning procedure. There are two computers located in the main office area that you will use to scan your badge, in and out every day. This replaces the manual sign in and out in and is a state required procedure. Older brothers and sister are not allowed to drop-off or pick-up younger siblings. Only those listed in the registration packet will be allowed to pick-up a child. The ELC staff will ask for verification and identification before releasing a child to anyone unrecognized and approved. Please let us know if there is anyone who may **NEVER** pick up your child.

## Illness

Sick or contagious children cannot be allowed on campus. The following is a list of reasons that a child may not permitted to attend:

- Vomiting within 24 hours of the previously attended school day. Child must have had at least one meal after the last episode.
- Fever exceeding 100 axillary degrees. The child must be fever free for 24 hours without medication before returning to preschool.
- Diarrhea within 24 hours of the previously attended school day. The child must have had at least one meal after the last episode. Bowel movements that are extremely loose, watery and frequent are reasons for exclusion. A child should be free from diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to the center. *EXPLANATION – Diarrhea in children is an extremely contagious illness. Bowel movements that cannot be contained in a diaper or a toilet pose a high risk of contagion. Young children, especially infants, may have frequent or loose stools regularly or in response to a variety of conditions; these incidents are different from diarrhea. One or two meals should be eaten during the 24-hour requirement. NOTE: Overnight with no meals eaten should not be considered 24 hours free from diarrhea. Secondary symptoms of crying, pain, refusal to eat, etc., must be considered.*

Any of the following illnesses must be cleared by a physician. Written medical clearance from a physician must be submitted before returning to school.

- Any contagious illness
- Unexplained rash
- Strep throat
- Any communicable disease such as chicken pox, etc.
- Head lice
- Inflammation of the eyes such as pink eye, etc. must be on medication for 24 hours before returning to preschool.

The physician must see the child, diagnose, and prescribe accordingly. In the event a child contracts a communicable disease and exposes other children, notice of such exposure will be posted, and parents will be notified when they pick up their child.

If your child develops any of the above symptoms, he/she must be removed from the facility within one hour. Parents should have a back-up plan for childcare in case of illness. If a parent cannot be reached, another emergency contact person will be called.

If a sick child is required to leave school, the child may not return the next day. The only exception is with a physician's excuse listing the illness on the excuse and also specifying that they are no longer contagious. The note cannot read "not a Threat", or "harmless." The note must specify "NO LONGER CONTAGIOUS".

## Dress Code

Children play hard and need to be comfortable. We ask that children be dressed in clothes suitable for many activities in the day including art, playground, running, and climbing. Cold or wet weather does not necessarily keep children indoors, so please be sure that your child has the necessary gloves, sweater, coat and hat, etc. appropriate for the day's weather changes. All clothing should be labeled with the family's name, to facilitate dressing and reduce loss. Two full sets of extra clothes should be kept at the center in a

gallon size ZIPLOC bag when accidents happen (playing, toileting, feeding). Extra sets of clothing will need to be regularly replaced as your child uses them. Sneakers or rubber-soled shoes and socks are required for safe play. A pair of rain boots may be left in the child's cubby and teachers will gladly help with the changes.

## **Drop-off and Pick-up**

ELC has designated parking areas for drop-off and pick-up. In the morning you may park on the front side of office building and enter through the office for drop-off and pick-up. ELC parents are not able to park in the front of the office between the hours of 2:00-3:00 PM, because the elementary car lines are in use. The lot in the front of the ELC building, near the playground is the best place to park during 2:00 - 3:00 PM car lines. The front entrance of the school is the only entrance and exit during the hours of 6:30 AM and 6:00 PM. Please adhere to this policy as it is for the safety of all children, parents, and staff.

## **Holidays and Events**

The Ascension Christian ELC has a Calendar of Events. The calendar is updated annually. In the event that dates change after the calendar is published, the ELC management team will communicate the changes to you. Please be sure to get a copy of the calendar or check website to know these important dates.