



St. Mary's Preschool

Member of The Association of Episcopal Schools

Choosing the Right Preschool

Choosing a preschool for your child is a big decision! You need to choose the program that best fits your child's needs and your expectations. To help you through the process, we have put together this checklist to help guide you during the tour(s).

This checklist is designed to help you choose the right preschool program for your child. It is based on qualities that research has shown to be important for preschooler's growth and development.

The checklists are not all inclusive. For example, they do not include all the areas required by state licensing standards. However, you can check the state standards by going to <http://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/child-care/parents-resources>.

We do feel these checklists cover what we know to be important characteristics of a quality childcare program. Please take a few minutes to look it over and take notes before your tour. During your tour, ask any questions you have about the program. It's important that the program you choose meets your needs as a family.

We hope you find this information helpful! Please call me at 407-851-4723 with questions you may have about the preschool.

Blessings,
Brandi Crawford-Lavoie
Preschool Director

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Gather as much information as you can prior to the visit. The tuition rates may not be available over the telephone due to the different types of programs the preschool or center holds. Ask if they can email the rates to you or ask during your visit.

Name of Program	
Address	
Telephone	
Website & Email	
Contact Person Name: Role (Director, Teacher, Etc.)	
Type of Program: (circle one)	Half Day Full Day School Year Only Year Round Other
Days and Hours of Operation	
Holiday Schedule (school, government)	
Tuition Fees	
Registration Fees	
Additional Fees (field trips, supplies, etc.)	
Date of Tour (include day of week)	
Time of Tour	

	First Impressions	Yes	No	Notes
1.	Are the grounds in good condition (grass cut, no clutter)?			
2.	Is outside of building in good condition (no cracked/broken windows; chipped or peeling paint)?			

3.	Is the entrance clearly marked?			
4.	Were you greeted immediately upon entering the program?			
5.	Was the person giving the tour welcoming?			
6.	Were you offered the opportunity to ask questions before the tour?			
7.	Did the person giving the tour seem rushed? Was he/she focused on your tour or distracted?			
8.	Were you given the opportunity to ask questions during and after the tour?			
9.	Did the person giving the tour and the teacher(s) spend time with you and answer any questions you had?			
10.	How is discipline handled? What is the behavior policy?			
11.	How are parents notified of concerns (at pick up time, telephone call, note home, etc.)?			
12.	Are there conferences at least twice a year?			
13.	Does the teacher communicate with parents on a regular basis? How (phone, email, notes home)?			
14.	Are parents welcome to drop by at any time?			

15.	Are there opportunities for parents to be involved in the program (as a volunteer, chaperon for field trips, etc.)?			
16.	Do children go on fieldtrips? How often? Where to?			
17.	How does the program ensure the safety of the children? (Security system; one entrance and exit; is the playground secure/fenced in?)			
18.	If your child has a special need, can the program accommodate him or her? What is their policy on inclusion?			

Areas to look for and consider when observing in the classroom:

	Questions:	Yes	No	Notes
1.	Do the teachers get down to the children's level when they talk to them?			
2.	Are the teachers interacting with the children as they participate in activities in the classroom?			
3.	Are the teachers yelling to the children (across the room or the playground) or approaching children to talk to them?			
4.	Are the teachers interacting with the children on the playground or are they interacting more with each other?			

5.	Are the materials in the classroom clean and safe? (Look for cracked/broken toys etc.)			
6.	Are the children happy and engaged with activities and with each other?			
7.	Are the teachers warm and nurturing in their interactions with the children?			
8.	How are problems or arguments between children handled?			
9.	Did you feel welcomed by the staff entering the classroom?			

Questions to ask before or during the tour

	Questions:	Yes	No	Notes
1.	Is the program state licensed? If yes: for what ages and how many children? If no: Why? Meets school district requirements?			
2.	Does the program hold additional quality ratings (i.e. National Association for the Education of Young Children or other)			
3.	What training/degrees/certifications does the lead teacher have?			
4.	What training/degrees/certification does the assistant or aide have?			

5.	How many hours of in-service training are teachers receiving each year?			
6.	How long has the classroom staff been employed at the program? (2 years or more?)			
7.	What is the teacher to child ratio? (Look for 1 teacher for every 10 children)			
8.	How many children are in one classroom?			
9.	What is the general classroom schedule? (Ask for a copy)			
10.	Does the classroom have interesting learning centers (art, blocks, dramatic play, library, math, science, writing, etc.) set up for children's daily use? Are the children encouraged to participate in them or are all the children expected to do the same thing at the same time?			
11.	What curriculum is used by the teachers to guide the activities children participate in?			
12.	What is the program's philosophy of education (follows developmentally appropriate practice; faith-based; Montessori, Reggio?)			
13.	Are children given opportunities and time to explore themes, topics, and activities each day?			

14.	Do children participate in activities individually or in groups?			
15.	Do children go outside for at least 30 minutes each day for unstructured play?			
16.	What do children do for unstructured play in bad (inclement) weather?			
17.	Does the curriculum prepare children for kindergarten? (This does not mean children should be expected to do kindergarten work.) Do they provide activities for: Early Literacy? Early Math? Socialization skills & problem solving skills? Self-help skills? Small & large muscle/motor skills?			