

## The Villages Early Childhood Center

The Villages Early Childhood Center is a preschool licensed and inspected by the Florida Department of Children and Families. We opened in August of 2000 in two classrooms at the current Charter Elementary, Intermediate Center. We began as *The Villages Charter Preschool* with 40 students. On November 5, 2001, we began operation under our present name with approximately 70 students in what is currently the second grade building. This year we are excited to be located in the Primary Center with one of our largest enrollments ever, consisting of two classes of three year olds and five classes of four year olds serving 126 students.

Each class has a certified preschool teacher and an assistant full time. We feel the benefits of a low child to adult ratio outweigh any cost, and have staffed more adults per class than the state requires.

We provide a complete early learning experience for three and four year olds. Our quality academic program will address all of your child's areas of growth and development including physical well being and motor development, social and emotional development, language skills, cognitive development, and approaches to learning. We are committed to providing your child with excellent care and an outstanding education. Our curriculum was developed on the best components of successful preschool programs combined with the latest knowledge in early learning and brain research, and we tailor our instruction to meet the needs of each child. In addition to our daily curriculum, we have semi-private Suzuki violin lessons available and several after school activities, which we feel are valuable in providing your child with a well rounded learning experience.

***It is our goal to provide your child with a solid foundation for a lifetime of learning!***



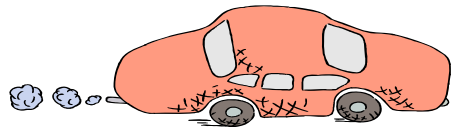
## Arriving at School

### **Supervised Care Prior to 7:30 a.m.:**

- When you arrive in the morning, please enter through the side door on the NORTH side of the building.
- It is very important that your child is signed in and you have indicated whether you would like your child out at car line to be picked up between 2:45 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. or if you would like them to remain inside for our after school supervision.
- During morning care, children arriving prior to 7:30 may bring in breakfast to eat before going to class at 7:35 a.m.

### **Morning Drop Off:**

- From 7:35 a.m. until 7:50 a.m., preschool staff members will be at the NORTH side of the building to assist each child from their vehicle, check them in, and escort them safely to class. Please enter using the driveway closest to the VHS end of the parking lot. (Siblings attending kindergarten or first grade may exit with your preschooler and walk to their classrooms).
- Preschool students may NOT use the car line in the front of the building.
- Please park only in designated spots if you chose to walk your child to class during the first days of school.
- Please observe the traffic flow patterns.
- If you arrive anytime after 7:50 a.m., you will need to check your child in at our ECC office just inside the north entrance. At 8:00 the north doors will be locked and you must sign in at the Primary Center front office and will be considered tardy. *We request that your child arrive **prior** to 8:00 a.m. so they will not miss the important, instructional start of each class day.*



## Picking-Up Your Child

### **Pick-up prior to 2:30 p.m.:**

- Please report first to the PC front office to sign your child out. It is important to have a picture ID with you. The office staff may need to verify that you are on the child's authorized pick up list.

### **Car Line, 2:30 to 2:45**

- Our afternoon car line will take place at the NORTH parking lot. You may wish to place a sign in your front passenger side dash with your child's first and last name in large letters. This will assist staff so we can have your child ready until we become familiar with everyone's vehicles. (Other Primary siblings can join the preschoolers here for pickup).
- The teacher will remain with students while they await pickup. When you pull up to the door we will escort your child to your car.
- Please remain in your car as to not interfere with the flow of traffic. Parking and walking in to pick up your child is NOT allowed at this time.

### **After Care Program, 2:45-6:00 p.m.:**

-All children picked-up after 3:00 p.m. will need to be checked out at the Primary Center After Care window. (All aftercare fees for preschoolers are included in your weekly tuition installment).

**-All students must be picked up prior to 6 p.m.**

\*Our professional, hardworking staff is dedicated to providing excellent care for your children. The staff workday ends at 6:00 p.m. so your prompt arrival to pick up your child will help show your appreciation and respect for their personal time. We understand emergencies may occur. Please call the school as soon as possible when you know you will be delayed. We will care for your child until you arrive, but please note that the following policies apply **anytime** you are delayed:

\***Any child** picked up at any school **after 6:00 p.m.** will be assessed overtime charges. Charges are based on the school clock at the front desk.

\***Overtime charges are \$1 per minute per child.**

\*After 6:00 p.m. every attempt will be made to reach you or an authorized person on the emergency form you provided. However, if we are unable to make contact by 6:30 p.m. we are obligated to notify the proper authorities to assist in locating appropriate care for your child.

-Special additional after care programs, such as ballet and karate will be offered for an additional fee.



## Attendance

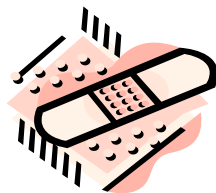
- Regular attendance is requested to provide your child with a solid early learning foundation. If you feel your child needs to leave prior to 2:30 p.m. each day, we request that you work closely with your child's teacher to make the most of their time at school. (Certain other minimum attendance requirements apply to children participating in the Florida VPK program, as indicated in the VPK tuition agreement signed at registration).
- If your child is absent, please notify the school by 9:00 a.m. When your child returns, an excuse note signed by either a parent or physician is required.

## Attire for Preschool

- Uniforms are not required for preschool.
- Preschool t-shirts are available in the school store.
- Please send your child in comfortable play clothes and athletic style shoes.
- Kindly send in a complete change of clothes, including socks, in a zip lock bag (clearly mark each item with your child's name) in case of accidents.

## Clinic

- A clinic assistant is on duty on campus during the 7:50 to 2:45 school day to assist any students who are sick or injured. We can only administer medication prescribed by a doctor (if your doctor prescribes over-the-counter medication, please have him/her give you a written prescription for our records). We will need you to complete a medication form prior to administering any prescription. Parents must bring medicines **directly** to the office in the original bottle. *Please do not send these to school with your child or place in backpacks or lunch boxes.*
- In the best interest of all our students, children with unexplained rashes or nits/lice will be sent home and can't return until cleared. (This may require a physician's note).
- We need to be kept up-to-date on all health information regarding allergies, asthma, seizures, or any changes in your child's health. This is for the safety and well being of your child.



## Discipline

-We encourage and teach all children to be responsible and caring individuals who respect themselves and others. Therefore, we administer discipline in a loving and respectful manner.

-When an adult must intervene, we are usually able to correct a situation by redirecting inappropriate behavior in a positive way. Children are encouraged to express their feelings with words. In some cases time out may be used to help the child focus on an appropriate solution, but never for more than one minute per year of the child's age. If inappropriate behavior continues, parents may be included in a conference.

-Under NO circumstances will physical punishment ever be used. Under NO circumstances will food be withheld from a child. As always, our mutual goal is the well being of all children.

-A copy of this policy is signed upon registration and kept in each child's file.

## Emergency Contact Form

-Emergency sheets are kept on file in the office. It is **very** important that we have accurate, current phone numbers and addresses, including place of employment phone numbers, on every student. It is critical that we have a phone number to use if your child is sick or injured. If any of your information, especially phone numbers, should change during the year, please notify the office.

-Only people listed on this form are authorized to pick up your child.

## Lost and Found

-Our school maintains all items left behind in our ECC office. Please feel free to check frequently or when your child's items are missing.

-We request that you mark all of your child's belongings with a permanent marker.

-The most frequently misplaced articles include jackets, sweaters, sweatshirts, and lunch boxes. Items marked with the child's first initial and last name are easy to return to their owner.

**-Items that are not claimed by the end of the school year will be donated to a charitable organization.**

## Lunch/Snack

### **Lunch:**

- Lunches need to be supplied from home.
- Please include all items needed for lunch, especially utensils, napkins, drinks and cold packs if required to keep food from spoiling.
- We are unable to purchase hot lunches. Foods warmed in the morning at home will still be warm at lunch if placed in a thermos type container.



### **Snack:**

- Each class has a morning snack time and parents are asked to provide this snack approximately once a month. We hope that by asking parents to send in snack, there will be some variety and the ability to serve fresh fruit/veggies occasionally.
- If you should forget to send in snack on your day, please send it in the following day to replenish our back-up supply.
- Snack Suggestions: Pretzels, cheese cubes, fruit, muffins, crackers, granola/cereal bars, yogurt, applesauce, cereal, veggies and dip.
- An afternoon snack is provided by the school between 3:00 - 4:00 p.m. for children who stay for the after school care program.

### *Birthdays and Other Special Occasions*

- Teachers generally schedule your child's snack day on or near their birthday. Please feel free to bring in cupcakes or a special snack on that day.
- We request NO goody bags or balloons be brought or sent to school.**
- Please do not ask teachers to give invitations to individual children. If you would like to distribute invitations for a private party at school be sure to include each child in the class.

## **Parent Communication**

It is important to keep you well informed of events and news from our school. We have several ways to get information to you.

**Newsletters:** Each teacher will post a newsletter specific to events in your child's class on their website link. Please check your child's backpack daily for notes and your child's work. A newsletter covering events from all schools on the Charter School Campus called The Campus Chatter is posted on line at the beginning of each month.

**Web Site:** The Charter School's web site contains information about the school campus as well as individual classroom links. Visit us on the web at [www.tvcs.org](http://www.tvcs.org)

**E-mail:** You can contact your child's teacher via their computer. They check their mail two times a day and will respond within 24 hours. Each teacher's E-mail address can be found on the web site. **Include only the word "student" on the subject line to ensure delivery.** Please be sure to provide your child's teacher with an accurate e-mail address where you can be reached.

## **Parental Involvement (PI)**

An essential element for the success of students at The Villages Charter School is the inclusion of parents in varied capacities. Research indicates that the involvement of parents in the academic areas of a child's life can greatly increase the child's chances of success. While involvement may take many forms, the Charter School Advisory Board has determined a minimal acceptable level of participation for each family as well as specific areas where involvement has the largest impact on student success. Parent involvement is mandatory for your child to attend The Villages Charter School and the Early Childhood Center. It is our hope that the following information will prove helpful as we journey through the school year together.

**Qualifying parent(s) (father/mother/stepfather/stepmother) and/or spouse/\*designee** must complete 20 hours per student every year for each school on campus where children are enrolled. The Primary Center and the Intermediate Center are one Elementary school and therefore count as one school. The requirement for the Villages Early Childhood Center is separate and is 10 hours per year. The maximum number of hours required for any family will not exceed 50 hours per year.

\*A single parent may designate another family member to assist in completing parent involvement hour obligations with approval of the Director of Education. This designation may only be made once each school year.

While other family members, relatives or friends are encouraged to participate as community volunteers, their time cannot be calculated as PI hours. The time frame for completing parental involvement hours begins the day after the closing of one school year until the last day of the next school year. Please plan your activities and meet your obligation early each school year. It is the parent's responsibility to track their family's PI.

**You MAY count your hours for the following:**

**Informational Meetings:** Parents must have a minimum of 10 hours PI time in this area or **5 hours if your only child is at Early Childhood:**

- Open House/Orientation
- Parent, teacher or administrator requested conferences with school staff regarding your child.
- School related informational meetings for academics, sports, grade levels and other school sponsored activities.
- Attending a Buffalo P.R.I.D.E. meeting (each meeting equals one hour for a maximum of two hours credit per meeting). Meetings are the first Tuesday of each month in the Middle school gym.
- Parenting classes/workshops

**Services Provided to the School:** PI hours are credited for each hour worked. These opportunities must be requested by one of the schools in order to qualify for PI time.

- Requested service at any school during the school day to help in classrooms, cafeterias, offices or media centers.
- Requested service at any school function such as school programs, performances, field trips or any other extra curricular function where parent involvement is assigned. Chaperoning field trips may be limited to the number of parents needed and certain restrictions may apply.
- Requested service at any school fundraiser such as Fall Festival, Buffalo Basket Benefit, Bar-B-Que Bash, Golf Scramble or any other fund raising activity where parent involvement is assigned.
- Requested service on projects at home such as cutting, sewing, organizing or any other project where parent involvement is requested.
- Requested service at athletic events such as concessions, ticket collections and other athletic special needs.

## Donations:

Parents may contribute up to half (but no more) of their PI hours in this area. All donations must be requested.

**Requested Donated Items Guidelines:** To ensure consistency in crediting your hours the value of the donated items will be added with parents receiving a 1/2 hour credit per each \$50.00 total accumulated. This valuation will be based upon a reasonable cost of replacing the item. The total accumulation will be tracked and calculated by the computer and can be located on the PI link found on the school website.

- Teacher requested snack/treat/drink
- Teacher requested Basket Auction items
- Requested incentives such as gift certificates, cash, and prizes
- Teacher requested supplies/materials

**The following are activities that do NOT count as PI hours:**

- Driving your child to events.
- Time attending a school event that is not considered an "informational meeting" or fundraiser (unless the parent actually works the event - no credit is given for attending).
- Having lunch at school with your child.
- Helping your child with homework.
- Observing your child's class.
- Sending snacks/treats not requested.

## Other important tips:

- Only the **qualifying parent(s) (father/mother/stepfather/stepmother) and/or spouse** may contribute hours for your child(ren). Other family members are encouraged to participate as a community volunteer. However, their time cannot be calculated as PI hours.
- Please call ahead to make arrangements and honor your scheduled obligation.
- All parent involvement hours **MUST** be completed from the day after the closing of one school year until the last day of the next school year. Students will be pulled from enrollment for the following school year if PI hour requirements are not met. Students may apply for re-enrollment as a new student once all PI requirements have been satisfied.

- It is recommended that parents log on periodically to the school web site and check their Parent Involvement information link for accuracy of the family information. This PI link can be found on the school webpage. Sign-on information and directions will be mailed to each family at the beginning of the school year. This information is also available at the school sites. Please report any error to the school immediately.
- Each school sends out emails of PI opportunities, therefore it is very important that we have your correct email address on file.
- A quarterly report showing PI information will be included with report cards.



*The following is a list of ongoing events:*

<b>Event</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Contact</b>
Assisting Violin Instructor as needed	Early Childhood Center	Janis Pascarella
Athletic Meetings	Middle & High Schools	Coaches of specific sports
Buffalo Adventures Events	All Schools	Buffalo Adventures Site Coordinator
Cafeteria	All Schools	School Office
Classroom Events	All Schools	Teachers
Clinic	All Schools	School Nurse
Fund Raisers	All Schools	School Office/Buffalo PRIDE
Media Center Events	All Schools	Media Center Specialist
Office	All Schools	School Office
Open House	All Schools	Schools & Website Calendars
Parent Conferences	All Schools	Teachers
Parent Information Workshops	All Schools	Schools & Website Calendars
Requested Snack	All Schools	Teachers
PRIDE Meetings	All Schools	First Tuesday of the month in the VHS Cafeteria

## Potty Training Requirements

-One of the requirements for having your child attend our school is that they are completely potty trained. We know at this age it is a fairly new skill and accidents will occur, and we are prepared to deal with these situations in a caring and encouraging way.

*- We do have several requests to help your child adjust to using the bathroom at school...*

1. All children must wear "big kid" underwear, no diapers or Pull-ups.
2. Please provide a complete change of clothes, including socks, with your child's name clearly marked on all items to be left at school.
3. If you are concerned about your child's cleanliness, you may send in flushable wipes for your child to use to make being independent easier.

*-When children are around others who are using the potty at school, it usually only takes a few weeks to adjust to using the potty at school themselves. We strive to make this learning experience rewarding for your child. However if a problem persists after several weeks, it may be necessary to remove the child from school until they are ready.*



## Progress Reports

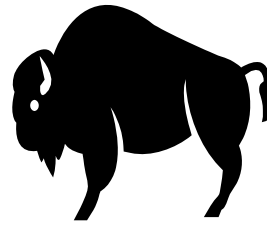
-During your child's early learning years, many important skills and abilities are established, skills that are keys to success in future learning. It is very important to monitor the growth and development of all students in our program, so we can address any possible delays.

-We will screen students in the Fall and as needed throughout the school year, and will notify you of your child's progress. If further evaluation is needed, you will be involved in all steps toward more formal assessment.

-Monthly progress reports will be sent home.

**-Formal reports will be sent home two times during the school year, January 22nd and May 28th, 2010.**





## **Parent/Teacher Association**

The Villages Charter School has an active parent/teacher group which provides many fun, family centered events/activities and fundraisers for our campus. We encourage ALL families to participate in these wonderful activities. Buffalo P.R.I.D.E. meetings are held the first Tuesday of every month. The meetings are usually only an hour and attendance does count toward your Informational Parent Involvement hours.



## **Registration Forms**

The Enrollment Office, located in the Villages High School can provide you with the Pre-enrollment eligibility application (verifying your employment relationship with The Villages). After eligibility has been established, we require our completed VECC registration application along with an original immunization form (blue) and physical (yellow) from your pediatrician and a copy of your child's Social Security Card and Birth Certificate.

**\*\*It is the responsibility of the qualifying parent to immediately notify the Enrollment Office of any changes in employment. Failure to do so can jeopardize your child's continued eligibility.**

## **Speech Services**

Children will be screened as needed throughout the school year. If further evaluation is needed, you will be involved in all steps toward a more formal evaluation. If you have any concerns about your child, or questions about this screening, please do not hesitate to contact the school.





## Supplies

Every child will need.....

- A backpack large enough to hold a letter size folder
- A *small* blanket or towel for rest time
- Items listed on the age level supply list
- A lunchbox with cold pack to keep lunches fresh

Teachers also gratefully accept donations of additional requested items.

## Tax Reporting: Child Care Credit

- The school accountant will NOT issue annual statements, but you will receive monthly statements that can be used for tax purposes.
- Please keep checks/cash receipts for your records and/ or these monthly statements.
- For your year end reporting purposes The Villages Charter School's **taxpayer I.D. # is: 59-3597803**

## Tuition

- The preschool's tuition agreement was signed during registration. A copy was given to you and a copy is maintained in your child's file. Another copy is included in the back of this handbook. (This is for your records please do not remove and sign). Please review for any payment information.
- Payment is due the Friday prior to attending.
- Payment received after 9:00 a.m. on Monday will incur a \$10 late fee.
- A tuition payment-tracking sheet is also included in the back of this handbook for your convenience. This form lists dates payments are due.
- All payments must be paid PRIOR to your child attending.*



## Florida's Voluntary Pre-K (for four year olds)

The Villages Early Childhood Center is pleased to be a provider for the Florida VPK program. Parent is responsible for obtaining a Certificate of Eligibility for their child prior to the start of school as well as following other criteria as indicated on the VPK Supplemental Tuition agreement.

Florida's Voluntary Pre-K Program (VPK) provides for 3 hours a day of free preschool for Florida's 4 year olds in participating centers and schools for the 180 day school year. (Child must turn 4 by September 1st).



### 4 Year Old VECC + VPK Program

- ☀ Provides outstanding educational opportunities while fulfilling your child care needs for the school year plus Spring Break
  - ☀ Available 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.—Eleven hours a day
  - ☀ \$75 weekly installments
  - ☀ \$100 one time registration fee
  - ☀ Additional programs available summer
  - ☀ Opportunities to participate in fun and enriching after school activities
- > For wrap around care

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