

Parent Handbook

Revised 2024

Central Location

700 N Jefferson St.
Muncie, IN 47305
765-216-1409

Yorktown Location

1699 S Pilgrim Blvd
Yorktown, IN 47396
765-759-6775

Welcome to Destiny Christian Academy!

Thank you for choosing Destiny Christian Academy for your child's early learning experience. We welcome you and your family to work with us in collaboration to support you child for kindergarten readiness and help them develop as Christians, young learners, and individuals. Destiny Christian Academy is a level 3 Paths to Quality, Licensed Childcare Center offering two locations in Delaware County Indiana. One on Jefferson St. in Muncie and one on Pilgrim Blvd in Yorktown. Both locations serve children starting at 6 weeks old until the completion of 5th grade or their 13th birthday. This handbook will lay the foundation for our policies, procedures, and best practices in hopes that you will join our DCA family educated and in agreement with how we conduct your child's early learning environment and experiences. This handbook is best used as a continued reference tool for parents who have children enrolled in our program but does not take place of open communication with our staff and directors when questions or concerns do arise.

Our Philosophy

At Destiny Christian Academy we believe that our program provides developmentally appropriate curriculum, and we strive to enhance social, emotional, physical, intellectual, and spiritual growth in young children. Our program fosters curiosity, creativity, and self-esteem by taking into account the children's abilities and interests. Child initiated and teacher supported play is an essential component of our program.

Goals

- To improve social and emotional development.
- To improve physical development, both fine and gross motor
- To improve cognitive development including problem solving, logical thinking, and symbolic thinking
- To improve language development through listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities.
- To instill and nurture spiritual belief and understanding.

Child Guidance & Discipline

The goals set forth in our program outline clearly establish the need for development in areas related to cognitive development, language, and social emotional development. Within these general goals for proper development, we strive to focus on problem solving, communication, and logical thinking to help children work through disagreements appropriately. What this looks like in children varies depending on age, but the end goals are the same. Our team will work on problem solving and using words to communicate differences, wants, and needs. At DCA we understand that each child is an individual and their needs will be treated as such. We expect open communication and problem solving with our parents as well, especially when issues arise in the classroom. Destiny Christian Academy reserves the rights of dismissing any child whose needs we cannot meet or whose behavior would be dangerous for other children in our care. Each child should be able to learn and grow safely without fear from others' behaviors. Documentation will be provided to parents concerning the incidents.

Aggressive Behavior & Property Destruction

Children using actions to communicate is not only developmentally appropriate, but also to be accepted in all ages we serve. However, even when actions are used to communicate with others it is important to do so in a manner that keeps themselves and others around them safe. There may be circumstances that warrant your child being removed from the classroom if they are unable to be safely maintained around others. If staffing warrants such an arrangement, this will be done and strategies such as proximity, problem solving, emotional awareness, and time away will be used to de-escalate the child. If these practices are unsuccessful and these behaviors, including but not limited to, property destruction, aggression toward themselves or others, biting, running away from means of supervision, and instances of extreme disrespect to authority your child may have to be picked up from our facility and remain at home for the remainder of the day. Understand this is a measure taken as last resort and only done in extreme or consistent circumstances. If your child is sent home for the remainder of the day, he or she may return the following day. If this behavior occurs on a second occasion, your child will be sent home for the remainder of the day and will not be able to return until a meeting can be set up with the site's director and your child's lead teacher. Following this meeting and implementation of discussed strategies to redirect this behavior if this behavior continues your child will no longer be able to continue to attend DCA.

Biting

Biting is a reaction used as a form of communication in young children who do not have the language to express themselves. However, this is not appropriate and through our program goals we take strides to work with children on effective communication and problem-solving. Biting can be dangerous for both the biter and the person being bit due to the number of germs and fluid contamination that occurs in the process. Our official stance and procedure for instances of biting is as follows. All incidents of biting will be documented via an behavior report. One copy will be kept on file at the center and one copy will be provided to the parents. If three instances of biting occur in a thirty-day period, the child will be removed from the program for the rest of the day and the day following. If biting continues consistently your child will be required to be picked up from the center and be unable to return until a meeting can be set up with the site's director and your child's lead teacher. Following this meeting and implementation of discussed strategies to redirect this behavior if this behavior continues your child will no longer be able to continue to attend DCA.

Children with Special Needs

At DCA we believe that every child should have a successful and meaningful experience. Upon enrollment, we would like a copy of your child's IEP or any other individualized plan they may have through First Steps, speech services or any other doctors order, to enable their child's teacher to tailor our curriculum and learning experiences as needed.

Parental Involvement

Your child should view our staff and your family as a team that works together to build character, faith and education as well as ensuring that there is follow through when issues come up in the classroom. Your communication with your child's teachers and your site director is key to their success. Your involvement in team meetings is a requirement for enrollment in our center. In addition to scheduled parent-teacher conferences, as needed discipline meeting and other meetings to discuss changes, questions or concerns can be requested at any time. We welcome your feedback and have an open-door policy for you to observe via camera or in person.

Cameras

Upon enrollment, each parent or guardian will receive access to our camera system. You will receive access only to areas of the building your child has access to. This privilege can be revoked at any time at the Directors discretion if it is being abused and not being used as a beneficial communication tool.

Parent Teacher Conferences

Parent teacher conferences are held once in the fall after completion of our assessment tool Ages and Stages. This assessment tool is completed by both parents and your child's lead teacher. The conference is used to address any questions, concerns, and to develop any plans necessary to meet developmental needs noted in the ASQ. Parent teacher conferences are held again in the spring prior to the start of summer care at DCA. This conference will be used to discuss progress, questions, concerns, and plans for the following year. As stated above, additional meetings held with the director and/or your child's teacher can be requested at any time throughout the school year.

Parent Supplied Items

Parents are responsible for providing diapers or pull ups, and wipes. If your child is in pull ups, we request that all pull ups have pull tab sides to assist in the changing process that does not require a child to be completely undressed to be changed. Pampers and Parents Choice do not offer training pants with tabbed sides. If supplies are low, caregivers will notify parents in a timely manner so more is able to be supplied. We do not keep extra diapers or pull ups on hand. Your child is unable to attend childcare if they do not have the needed supplies.

Each child is required to have a rest period while in childcare by guidelines set forth by the state of Indiana. Bedding, a pillow and a blanket, must be brought in on Monday and taken home each Friday to launder and return to the center the following week. No visibly soiled or items with an odor will be accepted.

Each child must always have two full sets of weather appropriate clothing in their cubby. This prevents us from having to call you to supply items when things like spills and accidents happen. Please be sure that your child's first and last name is clearly marked on all articles of clothing including coats. If your child is down to one set of clothing, caregivers will notify parents in a timely manner so more is able to be supplied. We do not keep extra clothing including appropriate winter wear on hand. Your child is unable to attend childcare if

they do not have the needed supplies. You are welcome to keep shoes and a coat at the center if these are articles your child frequently comes without.

From the Monday following Labor Day to the last day of July sunscreen is required for outside play, Sunscreen must be provided by the parents and be labeled with the child's first and last name. Sunscreen will be applied prior to outside play time. If sunscreen is low, caregivers will notify parents in a timely manner so more is able to be supplied.

Every August, or upon enrollment, parents will be required to provide a small list of school supplies for use throughout the school year. These items do not need to be individually labeled. Backpacks and school boxes are not needed. The list for each age group is as follows.

Infants (0-12 months) 3 flip top packs of baby wipes, 3 boxes of Kleenex, 1 package of egg-shaped crayons, 1 box of gallon zip lock backs, 1 box of sandwich Ziplock bags, and 2 roll of paper towel.

Toddlers (1–2-year-olds) 3 flip top packs of baby wipes, 3 boxes of Kleenex, 1 box of large 8 count crayons, 1 package of triangle markers, 1 box of gallon zip lock bags, 1 box of sandwich Ziplock bags, 1 roll of paper towel, 2 containers of playdoh and 2 cookie cutters.

Preschool (3–5-year-olds) 3 flip top packs of baby wipes, 3 boxes of Kleenex 1 box of 24 count crayons, 2 box broad tip markers, 2 box fine tip markers, 1 roll of paper towel, 2 containers of playdoh, 2 cookie cutters, 1 pair of child safety scissors, and 2 glue sticks.

Tuition

All tuition payments paid are for the week previously attended. This is to avoid late charges and carrying over balances. Balances are due every Friday unless another arrangement, such as biweekly payments, has been set up with the site's director. Weekly tuition is based on enrollment and not on attendance. If you are a weekly enrolled childcare student your weekly rate is listed below. If your child only requires daily care the daily rate is listed below as well. Daily students have a two-day minimum regardless of attendance. Part-time or daily students can attend Monday, Wednesday, Friday or Tuesday, Thursday. If other arrangements are necessary, this requires prior authorization from the site director. School age students school closures are the only exception to the two-day minimum policy. School closure coverage is based on staffing availability and is not guaranteed. Please call ahead before dropping off.

Age Group	Weekly Tuition	Daily Rate
Infants	$292	$59
Toddlers	$284	$57
Preschool	$228	$46
Before and After School	$151	n/a
Breaks Only	$196	$40
School Closings	n/a	$40 per day

Family Discounts

Family discounts are available for cash paying enrollees and do not apply to children and families who receive assistance through CCDF or On My Way Pre-K programs. Families who have two full-time students enrolled will receive a ten percent discount, children with three or more full-time students enrolled will receive a 15 percent discount. This discount does not apply to students who are only enrolled in breaks only care.

Absences & Illnesses Regarding Payment

If a child is out for illness and has a doctor's note excusing them from school for four or more days, the family will only be responsible for 50% of the weekly tuition. In addition, each family is given two weeks of vacation time. This must be used for an entire five-day consecutive period and not be broken up into individual days. During this vacation week no tuition will be due. Vacations must be planned and submitted in writing to the director. This policy is available to cash paying enrollees only and does not apply to children and families who receive assistance through CCDF or On My Way Pre-K.

Additional Charges

- **Late Payment Fee** - $5 per day All payments are due to the center on or before Friday of the week to ensure your child can attend the following Monday. If Monday morning, your payment is not received a late fee of $5 per day will be applied to your account. In addition, your child will be unable to attend until your account is brought current.
- **Returned Check Fee** - $40 after 3 returned check payments, online payment through Procare using a credit card, money order or cash will be required forms of payment and check will no longer be accepted.

- **Late Pick Up Fee** – if you arrive anywhere from 5:31pm – 5:45pm a $15 fee will be added to your account. If you arrive anywhere from 5:46 pm-6:00pm an additional fee of $1 per minute, per child will be added to the $15 late fee. If a parent or other designee on the pick-up list is not present to pick up your child/children authorities will be notified. All late fees are due with tuition payment on Fridays. After 3 instances in a 30-day period, a meeting will be held with the site director to come up with a corrective plan of action. Punctuality is crucial to our productivity and continued tardiness will not be tolerated. This is a means of dismissal from the program.
- **Key Fob** – Destiny Christian Academy is a secure facility. Each person on your pickup list is required to have a key fob registered to their name. Sharing key fobs is prohibited. Each key fob is $10 and will be added to your first tuition payment. Upon termination of enrollment, all key fobs must be returned. Once key fobs are returned, your account will be credited, and the amount will be taken off your final balance.
- **Destiny Tshirts** – $10 if children attend field trips with their center, they are required to wear Destiny apparel.

Hours of Operation

Destiny Christian Academy is open from 6:30am-5:30pm Monday-Friday. The deadline to drop off your child for the day is 9:00am. This is important for us to manage food preparation, staffing and ratios. If your child has an appointment that will affect this policy, you are required to see approval by your site director prior to the day in question about your child being accepted after 9am. Anyone arriving after 9am without the director's approval will not be permitted to stay.

The yearly calendar is distributed to parents in January of each year, or at enrollment, so parents have ample time to prepare for preplanned closings related to holidays, professional development and when school age students can be in attendance outside the hours before and after school. Generally, DCA is closed for MLK day, Presidents Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Black Friday, and the week of Christmas thru New Years Day. The week between Christmas and New Years is half rate tuition. Destiny Christian Academy does not provide reduction in tuition for individual holidays, natural disasters, or school closings.

Withdraw/Termination of Services

If you desire to cease enrollment at DCA, you must give a written two week notice to your site director. Vacation days may not be used during this time and all charges must be paid in full on the students' last day of enrollment. All key fobs must be returned at this time, each returned key fob will credit your account $10.

Additional Parent Responsibilities

All parents or the person who is dropping off and picking up children in our care are responsible for signing their child in and out on the daily sign in sheet. Your child's classroom sign is located on your child's classroom door. Signing in an out is an Indiana state licensing requirement.

Parents are required to supply an up-to-date contact list yearly. This contact list will determine who is allowed to have information regarding your child, who is allowed to pick up or drop off your child and who should be contacted in case of emergencies if you are unable to be reached. Your child's contact list can be found on Procare.

Health

Upon enrollment, all children must have a completed admissions packet, a copy of their birth certificate, a physical that has been completed in the last year and an up-to-date immunization record. If your child is behind on immunizations, we will need a written note from your child's pediatrician outlining your make up schedule for vaccines. After every additional vaccine/physical following enrollment, updated paperwork must be turned in to your site director to ensure your child has all required documentation.

Medication

If your child requires an as needed medication such as Tylenol or ibuprofen for pain or fever, diaper creams, etc DCA must have written instructions from your child's pediatrician for DCA staff to administer any medication. If such a note is written parents are responsible for supplying an unopened container of listed medication. The child's note for over the counter medication should be stated as follows:

(Childs Name, DOB) may have (name of medication, dose) every (time frame) as needed for (reason).

Example: Johnny Smith 1/1/1111 may have 5ml of Tylenol every 6 hours as needed for fever over 100.4 or pain related to teething. Please contact his parent or guardian prior to administering medication.

If your child has an allergy or asthma and requires medication daily or as needed, we need an Allergy Action Plan, or an Asthma Action Plan written by your child's pediatrician. When inhalers, albuterol and nebulizers, Benadryl or epi-pens are required on these plans, the medication must come in its original container with an up-to-date prescription on the box.

DCA is unable to use medication that is expired and is unable to accept medication not in its original container. No exceptions to this policy.

For first aid purposes DCA has first aid kits available at all times, inside these first aid kits are soap and water wipes, a bottle of water, band aids, gauze, scissors, and ice packs. DCA is never allowed to remove splinters, hang nails, teeth etc. Some injuries that require more than basic first aid such as mouth injuries, head injuries, broken bones, etc may require early pick up and prompt response from parents.

Illnesses

For the protection of all children and staff at Destiny Christian Academy please keep sick children at home. Your child may not attend childcare if they have any of the following symptoms.

- A fever of 100.4 or greater
- Uncontrolled coughing
- Irritability and consistent crying
- Unusual lethargy, wheezing or other abnormal behavior of your child.
- Diarrhea (2 episodes or more in 24 hours)
- Vomitting (2 episodes of more in 24 hours)
- Symptoms of an eye infection
- Rash

If your child has any of these symptoms while in our care, they will be sent home. Children with fever, vomitting, diarrhea must be symptom free without the use of medication for 24 hours. If your child is diagnosed with something (strep throat, ear infections, etc.) medications must be given for 24 hours prior to your child returning to daycare. If your child develops a rash or symptoms of an eye infection they will need to be seen by a doctor and may only return to DCA with a written doctor's note, as previously stated if medications are

prescribed, your child must be on said medications for 24 hours prior to their return. In instances of COVID -19 we will follow our state guidelines for your child's return timeline and any additional precautions that need to take place. RSV, Flu, Chicken Pox, Hand Foot and Mouth and other highly contagious diseases and infections will require doctors notes as well as 5 days out of the program. These policies are in place to prevent the spread of illnesses and to keep the children and staff at DCA well. In cases where there is high spread in the classroom or in the community, a doctors visit with documentation may be required for your child to return to DCA. All illnesses and symptoms will be documented using the illness report. Parents will receive a copy of this document and one will be kept on file.

Lice

Lice are tiny insects that feed on blood from the human scalp. Lice is very easily spread from one person to another, especially with children in school-like settings. If your child has head lice, they are unable to attend DCA. We have a no nit policy. Your child must be bug and nit free prior to returning to childcare. Lice checks may be completed at random.

Nutrition

While at DCA, all children are enrolled in CACFP Food Program. This program ensures that our menus meet all nutritional needs for children of all ages. All of our meals are approved through this program and ensure your child is receiving whole grains, fruit, vegetables and protein daily. We serve two meals, breakfast, lunch and two snacks, morning snack and afternoon snack. Children 6 weeks to 1 year are given breast milk or formula. Parents must provide breast milk in labeled packages with the child's first name, last name and date. Children who are formula fed are welcome to provide their own formula or use the formula we provide at no additional cost at the center. Children 6-10 months of age follow an infant menu at the parent's instruction. During this time, we will continue their breast or formula bottles as outlined but will start adding baby food and baby safe snacks. At 10 months parents may choose to start the child menu where children are served what is on the regular menu but served appropriately to young children (smaller pieces and serving sizes) Children aged 1 year will receive whole milk and children aged 2 and up will receive one percent. Only 100% juice is served when juice is on the menu. All menus are posted and available to parents. If your child has special dietary requirements like milk alternative, allergies or needing to substitute items on the menu with items from home, a doctor's note is required. In addition, if a parent brings food

from home, a safe transport form must be completed prior to the start of the alternative menu.

Birthdays and Other Parties

At DCA we love to celebrate with our friends and teachers! We welcome you to participate in birthday celebrations and classroom parties. When providing snacks, drinks or treat bags for such events please follow the following guidelines. All snacks and drinks that are brought into the building for parties must be store bought and in their sealed original containers. Please check with your child's teacher or your site director for any classroom allergies prior to purchasing snacks and drinks. 100% juice boxes or water are approved for parties, there will be no soft drinks or sugary beverages permitted even on special occasions. In treat bags there should be no choking hazards permitted as gifts to children. Choking hazards include but are not limited to bouncy balls, small hard candies (gumballs, jolly rangers, gobstoppers etc), popcorn, unsharpened pencils, balloons that are not inflated, small erasers and toys. The easiest and safest way to determine is something is a choking hazard is to see if it will fall freely through a paper towel tube. If you have questions or are in doubt, please contact your site director.

Picture Day

DCA offers school pictures in the fall, Christmas pictures with Santa in the winter and school pictures/graduation pictures in the spring. These are done by a professional photographer and all images are available for purchase at an additional cost. Parents will receive information in advance to prepare for picture day.

Preschool Graduation

Moving on to kindergarten is a big deal! We at DCA want to celebrate your child's accomplishment and wish them well as they move on to the next great adventure in their education! We celebrate graduation with a small ceremony at Destiny Christian Center located at 5000 E Centennial Ave Muncie Indiana. There your little graduate with sing songs, share some things they learned during their time with us and be awarded a diploma. We ask parents to make a poster board of their child showcasing their first five years of life and sharing what they love about school, their family, their faith and all their favorites to share with their friends. This celebration is held in May and will include light refreshments. Please invite whoever you want to celebrate this milestone with, more information will be provided to parents as the time approaches.

Field Trips

Having children learn through hands-on experiences outside of the classroom is something we find important. We strive to find valuable real life learning opportunities for children in our care. When field trips do take place parents will be asked to purchase a Destiny t-shirt for their child as well as complete a written permission slip with details regarding when and where the field trip will take place. Teacher ratios while off campus will be doubled to maintain proper supervision of all children. A DCA staff person who is a licensed driver, will transport children to and from field trips. Parents may be asked to provide a car seat for transporting to and from the field trip. Field trips are optional and a privilege. If your child is not able to follow directions in the classroom, it may be deemed unsafe to take them off campus and into the community. Whoever receives an invitation to attend off campus field trips is at the director's discretion.

Safe Sleep

DCA follows the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Consumer Safety Commission for safe sleep environments to reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). SIDS is the sudden death or an infant under one year of age which remains unexplained after a thorough investigation by the authorities. All staff members are required to take safe sleep training yearly. All infants will be placed on their backs in safety approved cribs unless DCA is given a written doctors statement that requires modifications for medical purposes. In addition, nothing will be placed in the infants sleeping environment.

Safe Conditions

Children will be actively supervised and remain within the state regulated age-appropriate ratio. If ever a teacher becomes out of ratio, they are to notify the director or person in charge immediately so changes can be made, and ratios can be maintained. DCA will not allow children in areas that are being repaired, remodeled, or repainted. The director is responsible for safe conditions and maintenance of the building. Regular checks of all areas of the building are conducted to ensure that the building is in good repair and sanitary condition. All items labeled keep out the reach of children shall remain locked when not in use.

Emergency Preparedness

Fire drills are conducted monthly at random. Parents are not made aware of the drills so we are able to practice like a real emergency is taking place. Drop off and pick ups will not be allowed until the drill is complete to maintain proper count of the drill and to ensure everyone is back inside the building in their correct location. In the event of a real fire or an emergency the director or staff will notify parents via phone. If we are unable to remain open, all children will need to be picked up within 30 minutes.

Tornado drills are conducted once monthly from April – October.

In the event of inclement weather, an email will be sent to all parents with instructions and details about the delay or closure.

If the closure happens while children are already in our care, staff will call parents to pick up their child. If the parent is unavailable, the staff will move down the emergency contact list until someone is notified, all children will need to be picked up within 30 minutes.

Indoor/Outdoor Play

Outdoor play is an important part of a child's physical development and provides learning opportunities that differ from indoor experiences. DCA will take children outside as long as the feel like temperature is 25 degrees or higher and the playground is deemed free of standing water, ice, snow, wasps, bees and/or any other dangerous material including damage to the playground equipment or fencing. Please be sure to dress your child for the weather. As stated in prior sections of the handbook you can keep winter gear and shoes in your child's cubby if these are items that are not typically worn or easily forgotten.

Staff

Providing your child with the best care is important to us. All staff members of DCA are fingerprinted and have a full background check prior to hire. This reoccurs every 3 years of employment. In addition, staff members are trained in CPR and first aid every two years, child abuse and neglect, safe sleep and universal precautions are trained yearly. All staff must complete a total of 20 hours of training or more directly relating to the age group of children they serve. DCA provides one professional development day per quarter to train staff on important policies, and other areas of development that directors see fit. When possible DCA hires teachers who are working toward, or already have

a degree in early childhood education. After six months of employment, we give staff the opportunity to continue their education with us through Ivy Tech or other college programs to obtain a CDA or associate degree in Early Childhood Education.

DCA hires floating staff members that fill in for teachers during lunches and planned or unplanned absences. In the case of a severe injury or death of a childcare provider parents will be notified. If the child witnesses such an event, DCA will contact parents to pick up their child and parents will be able to process this event with their child how they see fit.

Mandated Reporters

All staff are trained in child abuse and neglect through the state of Indiana yearly. Under the Child Protection Services Act, mandated reporters are required to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. The staff of DCA are mandatory reporters under this law and are not required to discuss their suspicions with parents or do further investigations of their own prior to making a report. Under the CPS Act mandated reporters can be held criminally responsible for failing to report suspected child abuse or neglect. We take this responsibility very seriously. We also understand that children fall down, and bumps and bruises happen and communication with your child's teacher or director is key. Please understand your child's safety and well-being is our number one priority and we have their best interest at heart always.

Curriculum

DCA follows a creative curriculum in our centers allowing the lead care givers to pick weekly themes based on children's interests. We utilize the Indiana Department of Educations Early Learning Standards to plan developmentally appropriate activities and learning centers. In addition, we are a Christian academy. We do pray before meals and our lesson plans include a simple age-appropriate bible story weekly that may include but is not limited to a song, a reading, a craft or coloring page or other hands on activity related to the story.

"God we thank you for what we eat, bread, vegetables, fruit and meat in Jesus name Amen."

Prohibition Policy

The use of tobacco products including vape, alcohol, illegal substances and firearms are prohibited on site. If your job requires you to carry a firearm, please discuss this with the director so expectations can be set with staff prior to your child starting.

If an authorized member of your child's pick-up list comes to pick up and is deemed to be intoxicated or impaired, they will not be able to leave with the child. The director, or person in charge in their absence, will call the next person on the contact list to come claim the child. If the impaired person takes the child against our recommendations, the police department will be notified. A meeting will then be set prior to the child returning to our care to ensure incidents like this do not happen in the future.



I, _____, the

Parent or Guardian of _____

Have received the parent handbook and understand that I am responsible for reading and following the policies and procedures listed in the handbook while my child is enrolled at Destiny Christian Academy.

X _____

Parent Signature

Date: _____/_____/20_____