



Parent Handbook

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Introduction

Thank you for coming to EXPLORE with us at Lil' Voyagers Academy, Inc. We are designed for the everyday parent in need of full-time, part-time, and drop-in childcare. We also have one of the best preschool programs available in the local area. We are a quality early education program for children between the ages of 6 weeks to 5 years old and up to 8 years old for Summer School. We hope our program meets your expectations as well as the needs of your child.

Locations

Doctor's Village – Racetrack

111 Doctors Village Dr. Suite 200
St. Johns, FL, 32259
904-262-5084

The Fountains – CR-210

175 Fountain Way, Suite 1
St. John's, FL, 32259
904-679-3234

Social Media

Keep up with us on all our social media platforms! We love interacting with our families.



www.lilvoyagers.com



Lil' Voyagers Academy



Lil' Voyagers Academy

Philosophy

Our philosophy is to provide a quality learning experience and responsive caregiving for children. We believe that every child is a unique individual, and we are committed to promoting each child's physical, intellectual, emotional and social development. We are able to do this through the efforts of our staff who are dedicated to upholding the standards and who, most importantly, are trained in child development and love children.

Mission Statement

Lil' Voyagers Academy, Inc. is an innovative preschool and childcare company. We promote quality education in a safe, family-oriented environment to prepare our children for future learning experiences, emphasizing the development of physical, cognitive, emotional, social, creative and academic skills. Lil' Voyagers Academy, Inc. strives to meet the growing needs of the community with competitive high-quality preschool and academic programs.

Curriculum

Our Curriculum is within the framework of the whole-child philosophy. We are using creative, high quality, developmentally appropriate curriculum materials and teacher resources. We are proud to use the **Funshine Express Early Learning Curricula** across our academy.

Our curriculum provides an enthusiasm for lifelong learning and a variety of activities that is designed to engage and develop various parts of the brain. We focus on achieving developmental benchmarks of expressive and receptive language, appreciation and production of music and art, visual and spatial perception, logical and mathematical calculation, social interaction, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), social studies and use of large and small motor skills. We achieve these goals through hands-on experiences within the program. The curriculum provides a balance of daily teacher and child - directed activities. Your child will continue to learn about themselves and the world around them. Our teachers' goals are to make learning fun and help prepare your child for their voyage throughout life.

Classrooms

Our Classroom is divided into six different age groups. Children are placed in a class based on their chronological age. We continuously evaluate each child as an individual and strive to meet their individual needs in their age-appropriate classroom setting. Once the current developmental milestones and age requirements are met, we transition students to the next classroom. **These times include August through December of the current school year. All other students will transition during summer months, May through June.**

Classroom Name	Age Group
Lil' Explorers	Infants 6 weeks - 12 months
Lil Explorers 1	12 - 24 months
Lil' Travelers	2 years old
Lil' Trailblazers	3 years old
Lil' Adventurers	4 years old
Lil' Discoverers	VPK

Items Needed for First Day of School

We want to ensure your child(ren) is prepared for success at Lil' Voyagers Academy, Inc. Below are items required (by classroom) to either bring at the time of enrollment and regularly throughout the year.

- Mini Crib Sheet or Pack-N-Play Sheet with Elastic (*Explorers*)
- Small Blanket (*Explorers 1 and Up*)
- Diapers (*Explorers & Travelers*)
- Crib Sheet (*Travelers, Trailblazers, & Discoverers*)
- Extra Change of Clothes (*All classrooms*)
- Parent Agreement Form (*All classrooms*)
- Emergency Contact Form (*All classrooms*)
- Registration Form (*All classrooms*)
- Physical and Immunization Records (*All classrooms*)
- Wipes (*All classrooms*)

Fees and Payment

Tuition

- Annual Registration and Materials Fee –
 - **\$220 non – refundable (Fountains), \$200 non – refundable (Doctors Village)**
- **The registration, materials fee, and 1st week's tuition (non- refundable):**
 - Guarantees your child's spot for upcoming enrollment/expected start date
 - Helps us maintain the high-quality products available to your child
- Enrichment Fees – (*see office staff for current rate*) **(added to weekly tuition the regardless of attendance).**
 - Yoga, Sports, Music, Sign language, Literacy Enrichment, and Language Immersion
- Weekly Tuition (*see our office staff for the most up-to-date handout for current tuition rates*)
- Multiple Child Discount - 8% off of fulltime students
- **Days deemed as unpaid through VPK vouchers will be charged at a prorated amount if student is in attendance.**

Tuition Policy

Tuition is due on Thursdays for the upcoming week and deemed late at the close of the business day (6pm) on Thursday.

- Monthly Payments: Due on the last Thursday of each month
- Biweekly Payments: Due every other Thursday

All payments will be automatically debited from your account with authorization for using our Brightwheel app. Payments are accepted by debit/credit cards or checking account

with automatic withdrawal. Parents are responsible for any credit card processing fees. Unfortunately, in the event your check is returned for any reason, you will incur a \$40 Non-Sufficient Funds (NSF) fee. *Please note: If your tuition becomes past due, Lil' Voyagers Academy, Inc. reserves the right to withdraw your child from enrollment.*

Late Payment Policy

If your tuition is not paid in full by the end of the business day on Thursday, a late fee of \$25 will be added to your child's account. As a reminder, we reserve the right to withdraw your child from enrollment until payment is received in full. You also may be subject to re-enrollment fees.

Other Fees

Summer Program

\$75 non-refundable registration fee *per child for ages 2 years to 4 years old*

\$100 non-refundable registration fee *per child for school-age children.*

Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) Graduation

\$100.00 non-refundable fee for VPK graduating students in order to participate in graduation. This fee will be assessed 90 days before graduation.

Late Pick Up Fees

A \$15 late pick-up fee for up to the first *15 minutes* late per incident, will be applied after your scheduled pick-up. An additional \$10 per minute will be charged for any time late after the first 15 minutes. Lil' Voyagers Academy, Inc. reserves the right to terminate services if recurring lateness occurs.

Operational Policies

Hours

Normal business hours at all locations are Monday through Friday from 7am to 6pm.

Holidays

The following are holidays Lil' Voyagers Academy Inc. Will be closed. **Parents (including those with drop in students)** are still responsible for weeks including holidays with no proration of the normal tuition. Please note that holidays can be revised based on the school year, such as when a holiday falls on a weekend. We reserve the right to close the Friday prior or the Monday after a holiday that occurs on a Saturday or Sunday. Upon any changes to the holiday schedule, parents will be notified in a timely fashion.

- New Year's Eve
- New Year's Day
- Labor Day
- Veterans Day

- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Presidents' Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- Independence Day
- Day before Thanksgiving (12 - noon)
- Thanksgiving
- Day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day

Emergency Closings

Inclement Weather

If the threat of a natural disaster, such as a hurricane, tornado, flooding, etc., is imminent, we will follow the local county's public school system for closure guidance. Once the storm passes and is out of the area, we will assess the center for damage and re-open as soon as possible.

The following steps must be confirmed before opening the center:

- The center must have power and any physical damage must be repaired.
- There must be available staff in the center to provide appropriate and required staff to child ratio.

Normal tuition will be charged as normal during times of inclement weather that requires our center to close.

Meals

A nutritious breakfast, morning snack, lunch, afternoon snack and late afternoon snack are provided for all children who are on solid foods. To ensure the health and safety of all children, food items may not be brought into the center, apart from special classroom events. In this case, any items must be store bought. This helps prevent exposing children with allergies to foods, which could be harmful.

Dietary Restrictions and Allergies

Please note that we are a **peanut-free facility**. To ensure our staff is aware of any special dietary needs, make sure to complete the Food Allergy Notification form found on our website and return for necessary actioning. Children with specific food preferences have the option to supply their lunch and/or snacks in a lunch box or a thermos (The center will not be responsible for warming students' food). A doctor's note will be necessary as well.

Attendance

Open Door Policy

Lil' Voyagers Academy, Inc. maintains an open-door policy with all parents of enrolled children. Parents will have immediate access without prior notice to the center. In the event that there is a custody issue the center will follow the order of the court.

Arrival

Each parent and/or authorized adult will have a code to enter the building. **Please, do not share your code with your child.** Parents and/or authorized adults are required to sign their child(ren) in the center daily via the Brightwheel app or use the iPads located in the lobby. Parents should ensure their child(ren) is/are received by center staff before exiting the center.

Due to COVID-19, children may be dropped off and/or picked-up at their classroom door or in the lobby, whichever is best for the children's well-being.

Due to limited space, no car seats are allowed to be stored in the center.

Pick Up Policy

Parents and/or authorized adults are required to sign their child out of the center daily via the Brightwheel app on their phone or using the iPads located in the lobby. Parents and/or authorized adults are responsible for the supervision of the child(ren) after being signed out of the center. request that any center business (payment, conferences with the director, etc.) is handled prior to checking the child(ren) out of the center.

Authorized / Emergency Pick Up

Only authorized persons listed on the "Authorized Persons for Pick Up and Emergency" form is permitted to have access to your child(ren) and to remove your child(ren) from the center. The following procedures apply:

- It is the responsibility of the registering parent(s) to notify the center in writing of all persons authorized to pick up your child(ren) from the center.
- Parents are required to complete the "Authorized Persons for Pick Up and Emergency" form at time of enrollment. Only persons listed on this form will be permitted to remove the child from the center.
- Persons on the authorized list who are unfamiliar to the staff will be required to show proof of identification with a picture I.D.

- Changes/updates to the Pick-Up list must be made on the Brightwheel app by the parents.
- Individuals must be at least 18 years of age in order to sign a child in or out of the center.
- In the event of an emergency, the center will contact the parent(s) first. If the center is unable to reach the parent(s), the staff will call the person(s) on the listed form until someone is reached.

It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that an authorized person is available to pick up the child on time.

If a parent and/or authorized adult appears to be under the influence of alcohol and/or controlled substance, the staff will attempt to contact the other parent and/or authorized adult on the pick-up list. Lil' Voyagers Academy, Inc. does not have the right to deny the parent access to their child, but the staff will contact the police immediately if the center is not able to contact another parent or authorized adult to pick up the child.

Absences

Parents are requested to notify the center (the morning of) if a child will not be in attendance.

Vacation/Illness Credit

Full-time families are allowed to take up to two weeks of vacation at half price of their normal tuition rate each calendar year. This is equivalent to **2 weeks of consecutive days**. ***Student Vacation Request Form*** must be completed and turned in **2 weeks prior** to the planned vacation. To be eligible to receive half price tuition, your child must be enrolled for **at least 6 consecutive months**. Please note that enrichment will be charged regardless of attendance.

Termination

Lil' Voyagers Academy, Inc. reserves the right to terminate childcare services at any time, with or without cause. Childcare services may be terminated for willful destruction of property, if the child poses a threat to the safety and welfare of other children in care, physical or verbal abuse by the parent upon the center staff, and/or refusal to follow center policies. Parents are responsible for any charges incurred leading up to the time of termination of services and any outstanding balances.

Withdrawal

Two weeks' written notice is required from parents regarding the withdrawal of their child from the center. Parents are responsible for any fees and any past due balances are

due on the last day of enrollment. Balances remaining after 30 days will be referred to the center's collection agency.

If a child is absent for two consecutive weeks without proper notification to the office, the child will be considered withdrawn from the program and the reserved classroom space will be filled. All tuition and any related charges are due and payable during this two-week period. To re-enroll, normal registration fees may apply. The child will then be considered for enrollment upon space availability.

Program Policies

Standards of Conduct

Lil' Voyagers Academy, Inc. has guidelines of acceptable conduct that all parents, volunteers, visitors and staff must abide by while on premises. It is expected that all parties will follow these guidelines. We strive to provide a safe learning environment for parents and children. Volunteering in the classroom is strongly encouraged when we are not under COVID-19 restrictions.

- Respect and promote the unique identity of each child and family. Refrain from stereotyping based on gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, or disability.
- Follow program confidentiality policies concerning information about children, families, and other staff members.
- Always supervise children. Children will not be left alone or unsupervised while in the center or under the center's care.
- Use positive methods of child guidance. Any use of corporal punishment, emotional or physical abuse or humiliation is prohibited. Methods of discipline that involve isolation, the use of food as a punishment or reward, time out, or the denial of basic needs are prohibited.
- Refrain from the use of any threatening physical contact or verbal abuse towards individuals connected with the program, other parents or volunteers.
- Refrain from smoking on the premises and during all center or parent activities. Lil' Voyagers Academy, Inc. prohibits theft, firearms, alcohol, explosives, and illegal substances on the premises and during all center or parent activities.
- Refrain from harassment. Any cause of disharmony of any kind will not be tolerated.
- Refrain from playing in community areas, such as the parking lot and sidewalks, once your child has been signed out from school.

Visitor Policy

All volunteers and visitors shall check-in and obtain permission for the visitation and obtain a visitor's pass. Visitation by a non-enrolled child unaccompanied by his/her

parent(s) or legal guardian is prohibited unless prior approval has been granted by the Center Director.

To ensure the school is a safe environment, all visitors on the property shall comply with all policies while on property and shall conduct themselves in a manner that is not disruptive, threatening or abusive.

- In extreme cases, a person shall be informed in writing that he/she may be prohibited from returning to the property.
- Any person who believes that he/she has wrongfully been asked to not return to the property must first leave the property as requested but may subsequently appeal the decision in writing to the center.
- A final decision will be made, and the person will be notified in writing that he/she may not return to the property except under expressed conditions.
- Notwithstanding the above, center personnel shall always have the authority to notify appropriate law enforcement personnel should any person to property violate criminal statutes.

Dress Code

We request that children arrive at school in comfortable, easy to launder clothing. While we make every effort to protect their clothing, children can experience accidental spills during planned activities. In case of accidents, we request every child keep a change of clothes in their cubbies or backpacks. Label each item with the child's first and last name. For the safety of the children, we do not allow open-toe shoes, flip flops, or sandals.

Toilet Training

This is a task where teachers and parents need to work together as partners. When you feel that your child is ready to begin potty training, we recommend that you bring in at least four (4) extra sets of clothing each day. Please, no pull-ups during potty training. Each child is a unique individual and has their own pace when it comes to potty training. We all need to have patience and encouragement for your child. By working together as partners, we will see success in time. ***If your child turns three and is not potty trained, they will not be allowed to move into the three-year old classroom, and you will be required to pay the two-year-old tuition rate until your child(ren) is/are fully potty trained.***

Toys From Home

To prevent special toys and personal items from being lost or broken, we ask that toys and special personal items not be sent to school with your child. On certain days

throughout the year, we allow children to bring personal items and/or toys to share during a special part of the day's activities. Your child's teacher will inform you about these "Show-N-Tell" days.

Digital Communication Consent

Lil' Voyagers Academy, Inc. publishes a variety of information about the center on our website and social media platforms. Occasionally, we may wish to include your child's work and/or photo on our website, bulletin board, newsletters, flyers or promotional materials. No other personal information about the student will be published. We may also videotape and occasionally use portions of video for educational purposes.

Screening and Assessments

Screenings conducted at the center may include vision, hearing, speech/language, nutrition, dental, and overall development.

Children at every age level will be assessed using an on-going portfolio assessment system for the purpose of identifying developmentally appropriate learning outcomes met throughout the year and creating individualized learning goals based on the results of the assessments.

Transitioning Children from Class to Class

If it becomes necessary during the year to move a child up to the next class, Lil' Voyagers Academy, Inc. will strive to make as smooth a transition for the child, the parents, and the teachers. Parents will be informed both verbally and in writing. The child will transition slowly over the course of 2 weeks on average. Transitions are executed August to December and during the summer months, May through June.

Discipline Policy

Positive redirecting is our priority with any child's behavior. All staff, volunteers, and parents will use the positive guidance methods listed below.

- **Help children to learn problem-solving skills.** Give them the language they need to communicate feelings and needs to others appropriately. Work with them to come up with solutions to conflicts.
- **Offer positive alternatives to negative behavior.** If a child's behavior is unacceptable, our staff will suggest alternative choices.
- **Re-direct or divert the child.** Our staff may substitute an appropriate activity for the unacceptable one.

- **Time out:** There will NOT be any identified space, or chair, reserved for “time out.” Children are not to be isolated indefinitely due to behavior problems. **If all else fails, parents will be called to pick up their child from the center.**
- **Defacing property will result in the replacement at full price of time of purchase. The price of the item will be added to the current invoice to be paid on the upcoming Thursday.**

Health and Safety

Illness Policy

Notification of Illness

Parents are encouraged to inform the center if their child(ren) becomes ill from a communicable disease and of any other health/safety concerns.

If it appears that a child may have a communicable disease, the child will be isolated away from the other children and the parent will be immediately contacted. Your child may not return to the center without a physicians’ authorization releasing them to return to school. The physician’s authorization must indicate the date of authorized return and be on the physician’s letterhead.

- Influenza
- Hand, Foot, Mouth
- Pink Eye
- RSV
- Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Parents will be asked to ***immediately*** pick up their children if the following signs, symptoms, or conditions are present:

- Fever AND sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, earache, irritability, or confusion. Fever is defined as having a temperature of 100°F or higher taken under the arm or 101°F taken orally
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Severe coughing
- Eye discharge
- Difficult of rapid breathing
- Ear discharge
- Untreated infected skin patch(es)
- Head lice (including nits)

- Conditions that commonly require parameters from a physician detailing when a child may return include, but not be limited, chickenpox, strep throat, scabies, impetigo, meningitis, Hepatitis A, and COVID-19.
- Child is irritable
- Colored and draining nasal discharge

If your child(ren) is/are absent from school due to illness, they must be fever and symptom free for at least 48 hours to return to the center. *Please note that a doctor's note may be required upon returning.*

Communicable Disease

Parents are requested to notify the center if their child(ren) has a communicable disease. This notification will assist with contact tracing any illnesses that may occur at the center. Information regarding illnesses will be shared with other families, visitors and staff on a "need to know" basis. Only information about the communicable disease will be shared with no identifiable information about your child(ren). The center will follow the center's Confidentiality Policy and procedures.

Medication Administration

If your child needs medication while in our care, it may be brought to school by the parent. Please note the following requirements when medicine administration to a child is needed.

- Medication Authorization form **must** be completed and signed by the parent then returned to Lil' Voyagers Academy, Inc. We reserve the right to refuse administering the medicine if the necessary information and documentation is not provided.
- Each bottle of medicine must be labeled with the child's full name and provided to Lil' Voyagers Academy, Inc. in the original bottle.
 - Over the counter medicine must have the age-appropriate dosage directions on the package. If it does not, we must have a note from the doctor stating the dosage the child may have. This can be a one-time note and kept on file for future use.
- Any medication must be provided to the center director or designated person in charge, who will be responsible for storing and administering properly and safely. All medication is kept in a locked box in the lobby.
- Medication **must** be picked up **at the end of each day** (unless it is allergy related: children Benadryl, epi-pen, etc.).
- Please do not place medication in your student sippy cup nor bottle.
-

Child Health Emergencies

In the case of accidents and incidents, staff will contact parents and complete an incident report in which both staff and parents will sign. This serves as documentation that parents were informed of the accident/incident and any necessary follow-up. It is very important that you make sure that the center is aware of changes in phone numbers or emergency contact persons. Please keep this information up to date.

In the event your child needs immediate medical care, we will contact 911 and the parents and/or authorized adult to advise of the situation. We will also notify the necessary personnel to include dialing 9-1-1 to get the child the proper medical care and/or call the medical personnel included on your enrollment form. Parents are responsible for any ambulance transport fees and any other medical fees.

Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting

Lil' Voyagers Academy, Inc. has the responsibility for the prevention, identification, and reporting of child abuse and neglect (sexual, physical, emotional). Under Florida Law, cases of possible child abuse and neglect are reported immediately to the Department of Children and Families. The abuse hotline is **1-800-96-ABUSE**.

Confidentiality of Records

The center maintains the policy that all records of children and families are confidential. Lil' Voyagers Academy, Inc. monitors facility premises and activities with surveillance cameras. These cameras are solely for the use of Lil Voyagers Academy, Inc.

Parent Involvement

Parent Volunteering

Lil' Voyagers Academy, Inc. has an Open-Door Policy with all parents of enrolled children. Parents are highly encouraged to volunteer in their child's classroom (when not in a pandemic). All parents are required to sign in at the front desk before proceeding to the classroom. The Discipline Policy, Standards of Conduct, and Visitor Policies will always apply to all volunteers. Siblings of children in the program may not attend when a parent is volunteering in the classroom.

Parents may be asked to help with certain tasks, such as cutting out items for the classrooms, sharing information about their job, hobby or culture, chaperoning on field trips, donating items, or reading to a group of children.

At Home Activities

Although Lil' Voyagers Academy, Inc. does not assign "homework" for preschoolers, we do send home suggested activities to enhance the learning taking place in the classroom.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parents are encouraged to request formal parent/teacher conferences to review the child's progress, needs and set goals for the child. Teachers are available for conferences at your request. All conferences must be scheduled through the office staff.

Parent Rights and Responsibilities

We believe that parents have rights and that their concerns are reasonable and important.

A Healthy Learning Environment

- Parents have the right to know that their child will be safe at school, both physically and emotionally.
- Parents have the right to know that all children will be treated fairly regardless of race, creed, national origin, economic status, gender, or age and that each child will be treated as an individual.
- Parents have the right to know that the staff is experienced and trained in child development.
- Parents have the right to know that any negative or cruel behavior among students or between students and staff will not be tolerated.

Clear, Courteous Communication

- Parents have the right to be treated with courtesy by all members of the staff.
- Parents have the right to participate in meaningful parent-teacher conferences to discuss their child's school progress and welfare.
- Parents have the right to know that they can approach a staff member with a concern and that the staff member will listen carefully and will do everything possible to address the issue.

Your Responsibilities are to:

- Be involved in your child's education and learning
- Let the teacher know you are concerned and interested in your child's development.
- Set goals with the teacher and share in decisions about your child's care.
- Share information about the child and home that may affect behavior.
- Discuss problems and concerns with the teacher first.
- Show appreciation for teachers.

- Volunteer to assist the teacher where applicable.
- Follow the childcare program's policies and read the contract and parent manual.
- Keep your child home when sick unless sick care is provided.
- Read to your child and spend time talking and playing together.



This page remains on file in the center

I, _____, parent of _____
(parent/guardian name) (child's name)

have read and agree to the contents of the Lil' Voyagers Academy, Inc. Parent Handbook.

Parent/Guardian Signature:

Date:

Director Signature:

Date:
