ready for SUCCESS

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO PREPARING FOR PRESCHOOL

EASTERN CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

AN AWESOME PRESCHOOL EXPERIENCE...

...will help your child lay the groundwork for all future learning. During these important years, students grow cognitively, emotionally, socially, and physically as they prepare for the opportunities and challenges of kindergarten.

It is an exciting season, but most parents feel a little concerned about starting at the right time, finding the right school, and ensuring their child is set up for success. That's why this guide was created — to help moms and dads foster readiness skills in their child and choose the best preschool program for their family.

All children are unique and develop at their own pace

However, the following benchmarks are indicative of readiness for most preschool programs.

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Responsive, follows directions

Can your child follow simple, two-part directions? For example, please put your crayons in the box, then put the box on the kitchen counter. Or, please put your dirty clothes in the hamper, then pick out a bedtime story. This is a skill that children can practice at home to be ready for application in preschool.

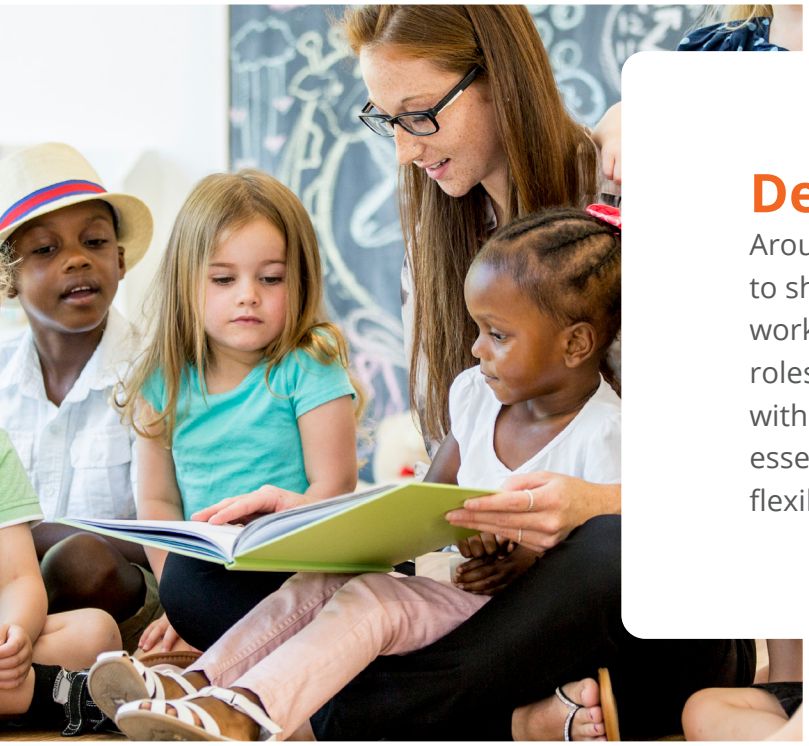
Emotionally maturing

As children enter the preschool years, temper tantrums become less frequent and children are learning how to express their emotions in more socially acceptable ways. Is your child beginning to share and take turns? This indicates emotional maturity. Preschool provides plenty of opportunities to practice these critical life skills.

As your little one is able to do more independently, you will notice a growth in confidence. He or she may even begin to refuse your assistance! This is all a normal part of the transition to preschool.

Actively engaged

Between ages two and three, children typically move from onlooker play (observing others playing but not playing with them), to parallel play (playing alongside peers without actually engaging with them), to engaged play (interacting with others). If your child possesses a growing interest in engaged play, he or she will thrive in a preschool classroom environment.



Developing social skills

Around age 3 or 4, young children are beginning to share toys and ideas. They are beginning to work together to create guidelines and assign roles for their play. As children play cooperatively with one another, they learn and practice essential social skills, such as cooperating, being flexible, taking turns, and solving problems.

Yearns to learn

If your child is interested in exploring his or her world through play, your child is ready to delve into play centers and activities that have been crafted by skilled teachers to promote growth and development.

When a child enjoys an activity, he or she begins to focus for longer amounts of time. Preschool environments should be filled with exciting and stimulating activities that foster growing attention spans and critical thinking skills.

Fine motor skills

By age 3, most children can turn pages in a book, put on their shoes (without tying laces), build a block tower, and open and close lids that twist. In preschool, your child will continue to develop fine motor skills, which helps them write, draw, cut, and accomplish many other school-related tasks.

Open-minded and flexible

These may not be the first words that come to mind when you describe your three-year-old; however, at this age young children are beginning to demonstrate more flexibility. While they voice their preferred activities, they are open to a wider range of tasks and experiences, seek out new challenges, and ask a multitude of questions.

Respectful of self and others

Does your child demonstrate care for others and their feelings? In preschool, respect looks like following instructions from teachers, responding to conflict in a healthy way (avoiding hitting or name calling), and being kind to those who look different or have different ideas. Preschool students can be impulsive by nature, so instilling respect is an ongoing process.

Stamina to finish the day

Each child's stamina and experience prior to preschool is unique. Therefore, it is important to choose a schedule that your child can meet with success. Will this be your child's first time away from you? Would your child do best with a consistent schedule five days a week? You may want to look for a preschool with multiple schedule options.

Utilizes Gross Motor Skills

Is your child capable of performing more complex motor skills such as balancing on one foot, alternating feet on stairs, walking on tiptoes, pedaling a tricycle, or climbing age-appropriate playground equipment? These significant improvements in gross motor skills will help your child engage in the classroom, on the playground, and in physical education.

Confident

From entering a new social environment to problem solving during interactive lessons, preschool requires self-esteem. You can build your child's confidence by giving him or her tasks to help with around the house (followed by praise), focusing on strengths, and creating opportunities for participation in daily decision making.

Concentrates throughout short activities

Most three-year-olds are capable of concentrating on a task for 8 or 9 minutes. The ability to focus is foundational for school success. Can your child remain engaged through distractions or interruptions? Does he or she work to complete tasks that present a moderate challenge? These skills will continue to grow and develop throughout the preschool years.

Early literacy

Does your child enjoy listening to you read books at home? He or she may be beginning to understand that the text of a book tells the reader what to say, or noticing print in everyday environments and pointing out familiar letters. These are the foundations for early literacy training in preschool, which includes:

- Listens and responds to stories and poems
- Recognizes and names many upper and lowercase letters of the alphabet
- Makes letter-sound associations
- Writes letters with proper formations, creates class books, and identifies some words that rhyme or start with the same sound

Self-care and independence

Common self-care milestones for three-year olds include established bladder and bowel control, dressing and undressing (with assistance for buttons and laces), feeding oneself with utensils, washing and drying hands, and walking up stairs. In preschool, they will need to carry out self-care independently, but will be encouraged and supported along the way.

Speaks clearly enough to be understood by most adults.

At age three, there is much variance in speech and language skills; however, their comfort level and academic success in preschool is dependent on how well they can be understood by adults. Three-year-olds can typically use all vowels correctly, as well as several consonants.

Keep reading to learn more about the flexible pre-school schedule options at Eastern Christian School!

All About Our Preschool

Pre-K 3

- **Age 2 by April 1**

  2 days a week, Tues. & Thurs.

  3 days a week, Mon., Wed., & Fri.

  5 days a week

Pre-K 4

- **Age 3 by April 1**

  3, 4, or 5 days per week, parents may select days

Transitional Kindergarten

- **Age 4 by April 1**

  For older four-year-olds who missed the kindergarten cut-off date or those with summer birthdays who may benefit from the gift of time before entering kindergarten

Half-Day

8:30 a.m. – **11:30** a.m.

Full-Day

8:30 a.m. – **2:45** p.m.

Can't decide? *No problem! You can opt for your child to spend a few full days on campus and a couple of half days. Our schedule options were designed with flexibility in mind.*

Before and After School Care Available

Beginning at **7:00** a.m.
and running through **6:00** p.m.

Distinctives

Christ-Centered Community

As a community entirely made up of Christian families and educators, Christian values and behaviors are taught, modeled, and promoted at home, church, and school. Children learn God's Word through daily Bible teaching and worship.

Developmentally Appropriate Program

Our approach is rooted in child development research.

Teachers design challenging, achievable learning activities for each age and stage.

Play-Centered Learning

We recognize that children learn best through play.

All lessons include an interactive or tactile component to foster cognitive growth.

Certified Teachers

All of our preschool classes are taught by certified teachers. Specialty classes (physical education, music, art, and library) are also taught by certified teachers.

Preschool- Grade 12 School

Our preschool shares a building with the lower elementary school. A nurse, school counselor, and special education teachers are on campus and available for consultation.

A Preschool Q&A with

Director Karyn Baitzel

At what age can students enter preschool at Eastern Christian School?

Children must be 2 years old by April 1.
We offer a variety of classes for children ages 2 ½ to 5.

How should a family go about choosing the best school for their child?

I always advise parents to choose a school that mirrors what you are teaching at home and has similar goals for your child. When choosing a school for my daughter, I kept coming back to one question:

"Who can I trust to partner with me in the development of my child?"

Ultimately, I chose a school that could walk with us as we uncovered and developed her God-given abilities and talents to prepare her for whatever God leads her to become, whether that is a writer, an engineer, a missionary, a social worker, a chef, or a singer. That is why my daughter is a student at EC today.

How can parents prepare their child to transition from home or a daycare setting to a more formal school setting?

Take advantage of opportunities to visit the school. EC offers personal campus tours, Open Houses, and a "Mommy/Daddy and Me" preschool preview day.

Begin talking about starting preschool two or three weeks before the first day of school. If you choose EC, your child's teacher will send your little one a note welcoming him or her to school. Read the note together and begin talking about preschool in a casual, upbeat manner.

A week before school starts, we hold an Open House for all of our preschool students. Visit with your child and let your child play and get comfortable in the space. Before you leave, have your child use the school bathroom and play on the playground.

Providing a routine at home with structure and rules helps children transition to school. Establishing a morning and bedtime routine will provide your child with reassurance when the school year begins.

Last but not least, understand that separation anxiety is natural at this age. There may be a few tears during the first few weeks of school. Stay positive and stay calm.

How can parents pray for their child as they prepare for this big step?

- Pray for your child's salvation and spiritual growth. Pray that your child would possess a desire to know God and obey Him.
- Pray for peace for your child (and yourself) as you prepare for this transition.
- Pray for your child's future friends.
- Pray that your child will grow in love, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.
- Pray for your child's teachers.
- Pray for your child's continued physical, cognitive, social, and spiritual growth and development.

What is the student—teacher ratio?

The ratio varies from 6:1 - 8:1 depending on the ages of the children. This ensures each child receives the benefits of individual attention and small group learning.

What does a typical day look like in preschool at Eastern Christian School?

Our morning program includes a balance of circle time (including stories, songs, large group games, and rich conversation); one-on-one and small group instruction (developmentally appropriate learning games, activities, and art); and center time (play in dramatic play area, sand table, block area, etc). Our AM program also includes snack time, recess, chapel, music, physical education, library, and art classes.

The afternoon program includes lunch time, teacher led learning games and activities, rest time (Pre-K 3 and Pre-K 4 only), gross motor time (playground, gym, or movement and music), snack, storytime, and playtime.

What are some special events for preschool students and their families?

We offer a bunch of special events throughout the year. Abma's Farm Field Trip, Thanksgiving Feast, Dad's Pizza Night, Mom's Valentine's Day Tea, Grandfriends' Day, Super Saturdays, Touch-a-Truck, St. Jude's Trike-A-Thon, Preschool Graduation & Closing Program, and a lot of PTO events.

Schedule Your Tour!

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EASTERN CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Engaging • Nurturing • Transforming

Contact Us Today

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PRESCHOOL & ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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8:00 AM – 3:30 PM

easternchristian.org