

Covenant Community Preschool an outreach ministry of First ARP Gastonia

Inclusion Policy

In keeping with the call to minister to all of God's children, Covenant ARP is committed to the philosophy that including children with differing abilities benefits all the children in our school. We are clear however that Covenant is not a therapeutic preschool, but an opportunity for atypical and typical developing children to interact, learn, and socialize.

- Children who have been evaluated and identified as having special needs prior to their enrollment at Covenant will be considered for admission on an individual basis. Any relevant past and current records and evaluations of the child by professionals must be provided to the school at the time of application, including an IEP, if available. The Director will interview the parents for information about the child's developmental strengths and weaknesses. The child and parent will also be invited to join a classroom for a visit, where further observations will take place. If the child is transferring to Covenant from another program, the child may also be observed in that setting, or those teachers consulted. Based on this information, and in consultation with the child's prospective teachers when possible, the Director makes a decision to accept the child when the child and Covenant will mutually benefit.
- Covenant does not formally evaluate, by means of testing, any child before entrance. The above outlined evaluative process before acceptance is intended to provide enough information to indicate a beneficial match between school and child.
- The behavior and maturity of the child may also influence the child's success in school.
- The child's ability to maintain the class group scheduled activities is crucial. The child must be able to stay with the class group during course of the school day unless the parents provide an assistant to care for the child during the times the child cannot maintain the schedule.

After enrollment, the child is observed closely for 30 days to determine the effectiveness of the program and the ability of Covenant to meet the needs of the child. Teachers, the Director, parents, and professionals working with the child are consulted during this time. A timely conference schedule between the child's parents and teachers will be established to discuss the child's progress, participation in the program and any other identified needs. Any pertinent notes will be taken and provided to all participants. The purpose of a 60-day period for evaluation and a swift decision process is to allow all children this adjustment period, except in extreme circumstances, and to facilitate timely placement in a new program if necessary. At the end of this period, a determination is again made as to whether the placement is mutually beneficial and if the child's needs are being met.

Two possible determinations at this time are:

- The child's presence in the classroom is of mutual benefit to the child and Covenant,
- Covenant is unable to meet the child's needs.

If it is determined by consultation between the teachers and the Director that Covenant is unable to meet the child's needs a conference is setup with the parents, and the parents are asked to seek another placement.

A child not identified at admission may need to be evaluated after acceptance to Covenant. The recommendation for the evaluation could originate with the parents, medical or allied health personnel. To continue enrollment at Covenant, parents will be expected to arrange for this evaluation. We can offer guidance with this process. The resulting evaluation must be shared with the Director. Covenant also requires that the Director and/or teacher be permitted to participate in any placement and/ or IEP meetings. Based on information received and consultations with parents, teachers, and professionals, decisions will then be made concerning the child's continued enrollment in Covenant, and the process outlined above may be put into place. If parents decline evaluation of their child, and it is determined the child is not functioning well in the classroom, then the parents will be asked to seek other placement.

Some children may concurrently attend school, and receive special therapy (e.g., physical therapy, speech therapy, occupational therapy, etc.) outside the facility. To ensure the most positive outcome for the child, our staff needs to understand treatment goals of the therapies. This will allow teachers to guide the child in a way that supports those objectives. This can be best accomplished by providing the school with a copy of the treatment goals and, if questions arise, allowing teachers to speak with therapists to collaborate on the treatment plan and identify things teachers can do to help the child.

Whenever possible, Covenant will make reasonable adaptations to meet the individual needs of each child. However, the safety and, successful functioning of the class unit always has priority over the individual needs of any given child within the above outlined policy.

Covenant believes that there is a range typical, normal, and acceptable abilities, behaviors, and needs of children. We attempt to accommodate as broad a range as possible in the belief that this diversity strengthens and enriches all children, and the adults who work with them.

We (I) have read and understand the procedures described in the above policy, if necessary, I will follow this policy in order to provide my child with whatever best meets his/her needs.

Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian _____

Date _____

It is our policy to make all enrollment decisions without discriminating on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, sex, physical disability, mental disability, age, marital status, sexual orientation, citizenship status, national or ethnic origin, and any other protected status.

