



Barefoot Kids Parent Handbook

2026–2027

Footprints of Faith, Friendships & Fundamentals

"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it." — Proverbs 22:6

Welcome to Barefoot Kids

Welcome to Barefoot Kids Christian Day School! Since 1993, we have joyfully served families by providing a nurturing, Christ-centered environment where children grow in faith, character, and readiness for school and life. We believe early education should cultivate curiosity, independence, and a love for learning—rooted in biblical truth and strong partnerships with families.

Mission

Barefoot Kids partners with families to equip children with Christian character, confidence, and readiness for school and life through developmentally appropriate activities and biblical foundations—empowering them to impact the world for Christ.

Vision

We envision children who stand firm in their faith, thrive academically, and lead with kindness and purpose.

Philosophy

God has entrusted parents and teachers with the profound responsibility of nurturing the children in our care. In today's world, when many parents must work, it is essential that children must be cared for in a loving, Christ-centered environment by dedicated and compassionate educators.

At **Barefoot Kids**, we partner with parents to create an environment where children can develop healthy self-images rooted in Christian values. As children explore, question, listen, build, paint, play, and sing, they are developing the foundation for school readiness and lifelong learning.

We recognize that the quality of a child's early experiences profoundly shapes their growth and character. Therefore, our goal is for each child to realize their full God-given potential while developing Christian character, confidence, and a sense of joy in learning.

We affirm that the **Bible is the source of wisdom**, and we seek to model and teach biblical truths through example, storytelling, and character lessons—always presented in a loving, inclusive manner without denominational bias.

“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” – Proverbs 22:6

Program Overview

Barefoot Kids is licensed by the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Social Services and serves children from infancy through age 10, regardless of race, nationality, or creed. We maintain small class sizes to ensure quality care and individualized attention.

Hours of Operation:

- Over 24 months: 6:45 a.m.–6:00 p.m. (Mon–Fri)
- Under 24 months: 7:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m. (Mon–Fri)

Leadership Team:

- Program Director – Jenifer Barefoot Hixenbaugh
- Assistant Director – Eileen Ecalnea
- Administrator – Kathleen S. Barefoot
- Director of Staff & Supervision
- Teachers & Aides

Licensing information: <https://www.childcare.virginia.gov/>

Goals for Children's Growth

Our program nurtures the whole child—spiritually, academically, socially, emotionally, physically, and creatively. Children will learn to:

- Grow in faith and self-worth
 - Develop independence and responsibility
 - Demonstrate respect, manners, and self-control
 - Strengthen fine and gross motor skills
 - Explore problem-solving and reasoning
 - Express themselves through language, art, and play
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Enrollment & Communication

Enrollment is complete once the Registration Form, Parent Agreement Statements, and the Non-Refundable Registration Fee are received. Barefoot Kids welcomes family partnership and maintains an open-door policy for custodial parents/guardians in accordance with the Code of Virginia (63.2-1813). Please provide any applicable custody or court orders for your child's file.

We encourage family involvement through events such as Harvest Day, Holiday Parties, Easter Festivities, and our Picnic on the Grounds. Sign-up opportunities are posted in advance.

Tuition & Financial Policies

Tuition schedules and the annual school calendar are available at www.BarefootKids.com.

Tuition Structure

Tuition is based on an annual rate divided into **52 weekly** or **12 monthly** payments. Families choosing monthly payments receive a **one-week tuition savings** each year. Payments are made securely through the **MyBrightwheel app**; staff members are not permitted to collect tuition directly.

A **10% sibling discount** applies to the oldest child enrolled.

Late Fees and Delinquent Accounts

- Tuition is due by the close of business on the scheduled date.
- Payments not received by this time will incur a **10% late fee**.
- After two late payments, discounts are discontinued, and the student's enrollment may be placed on hold until the account is current.
- **Returned checks** incur a **\$30 fee**.
- Balances remaining unpaid are subject to a **10% monthly finance charge** added on the first of each month until paid in full.
- **Current MCCYN Participation:** Families receiving MCCYN fee assistance upfront are responsible for completing and submitting all required reimbursement documentation within **24 hours of the request from Barefoot Kids**. If documentation is not submitted within this timeframe, families will be required to **pay the full tuition amount going forward, with MCCYN payments reimbursing tuition**.

Extended Care and Attendance Fees:

- Children under 24 months may be assessed an additional **\$5 per minute** when attending during extended care hours.
 - A **\$10 daily fee** may apply if a child remains in care for more than 10 hours in a single day.
 - For all age groups, a **\$5 per minute late pickup fee** applies after Barefoot Kids closes. After three late pickups, the school reserves the right to **terminate care**.
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Arrival, Departure & Safety

To support consistent learning, children must arrive before 9:00 a.m. Please escort your child to and from the classroom, sign in/out via MyBrightwheel, and communicate any alternate pick-ups. Before signing your child in, and once a child is removed from the supervising staff member's care, it becomes the responsibility of the person picking up the child to supervise him or her. Late arrivals require prior notice and may require a doctor's note. Excessive lateness or interruptions may result in termination of care.

Pick-up times: Over 24 months by 6:00 p.m.; under 24 months by 5:00 p.m. A late fee of \$5 per minute applies and repeated late pick-ups may result in termination of care.

If a child is not picked up at closing and the parent/guardian cannot be reached, emergency contacts will be called. If no one can be reached within 30 minutes, social services and/or local authorities will be contacted for guidance.

A child will only be released to a person authorized by the custodial parent. Children will not be released to siblings without written parental consent. The staff will question those persons with whom they are unfamiliar and check authorization and identification according to the child's record before releasing a child.

Curriculum & Daily Rhythm

At Barefoot Kids, our curriculum is rooted in faith and focused on the whole child. We believe, as Luke 2:52 says, that children should grow "in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." Each classroom uses a developmentally appropriate, Christian-based curriculum that nurtures spiritual, academic, social, emotional, and physical growth.

Infants and Toddlers

Our youngest learners grow through exploration, movement, and meaningful interaction. Daily activities encourage curiosity and support color and shape recognition, fine and gross motor development, and early communication skills. Teachers provide individualized care and daily communication with families to ensure consistency and connection.

Preschool & Pre-Kindergarten

Our thematic, Christian-based curriculum—Experience Early Learning Curriculum—is a VDOE-approved Early Childhood Program that provides engaging, hands-on learning experiences. Through monthly themes, children explore God's world, build early literacy and math foundations, and develop pre-reading, pre-writing, and reasoning skills. The curriculum supports each area of development: spiritual, cognitive, emotional, social, and physical. Learning occurs through purposeful play, structured centers, and small-group instruction, all in a joyful, low-pressure environment. Our goal is for children to gain a love of learning, independence, and readiness for Kindergarten—while developing kindness, patience, and cooperation.

Kindergarten

Our Kindergarten program provides a solid academic foundation grounded in faith. Language Arts: UFLI Foundations teaches phonics and early reading skills through an explicit, systematic approach that builds mastery and confidence. Mathematics: Horizons Math uses a spiral-learning method where concepts are introduced and revisited regularly, helping students make strong, lasting connections. This structure supports a variety of learners, including those ready for advanced challenges. Sonlight K teaches kindergartners that past civilizations existed, and people live in various ways around the world. Sonlight's science curriculum helps develop a solid understanding of science by encouraging curiosity. It engagingly introduces STEM concepts. Together, these programs help each child flourish academically and spiritually in a nurturing, Christ-centered environment.

Daily Schedule (Times may vary slightly by classroom)

Time	Activity
6:45–9:00	Gathering Time – Outdoor Activities
9:00–9:15	Prepare for the Day
9:15–9:30	Circle Time: Pledges, Prayer, Calendar, Concept of the Day, Bible Time
9:30–9:45	Snack Time (Remember to wash hands again!)
9:45–10:00	Transition & Creative Expression
10:00–11:00	Centers & Individual Development
11:00–11:45	Gross Motor Activity / Outside Time
11:45–12:00	Prepare for Lunch
12:00–12:30	Lunch Time
12:30–1:00	Prepare for Rest Time (Remember to wash hands again!)
1:00–3:00	Rest Time (Quiet activities offered for non-sleepers)
3:00–3:30	Rise & Shine / Snack Time (Remember to wash hands again!)
3:30–4:30	Art & Afternoon Activities
4:00–6:00	Outdoor or Extended Activities

At Barefoot Kids, we guide behavior through biblical principles that nurture self-control, kindness, and respect.

Five Main Classroom Rules

Watchful Eyes – Psalm 123:2
Listening Ears – Isaiah 30:21
Kind Words – Ephesians 4:29
Helpful Hands – Ecclesiastes 9:10
Caring Hearts – Ephesians 4:31–32

Each classroom also creates three additional “Plus Three” rules tailored to their age group, promoting shared responsibility and teamwork. All rules are posted in the classroom and modeled by teachers daily.

Potty Training Policy

At Barefoot Kids, we understand that each child develops at their own pace and in God's perfect timing. Our teachers partner closely with families to encourage children as they develop healthy, confident toileting habits through consistency, patience, and positive reinforcement.

Potty Training Expectations

Children who are actively potty training are required to wear **diapers or absorbent pull-ups while at school** until they have demonstrated consistent success. Families are not required to switch to pull-ups simply because potty training has begun, recognizing that pull-ups may be more expensive for families. For health and sanitation purposes, underwear is not appropriate during the early stages of potty training when frequent accidents are still occurring.

Children who are potty training or preparing to potty train may be offered the opportunity to use the restroom **approximately once each hour**. If a child refuses to sit on the potty, they will never be forced or pressured. We celebrate every step of progress, including wanting to enter the bathroom, sitting on the potty, communicating the need to go, urinating or having a bowel movement on the toilet, staying dry for longer periods, and becoming increasingly independent.

While wearing diapers or pull-ups, children are encouraged to participate in the process by pulling clothing up and down as able, using the toilet on a regular schedule, and practicing proper handwashing. Our goal is to build confidence and independence—not delay the transition to underwear.

The decision to transition from a diaper or pull-up to underwear at school is made collaboratively by the child's family, classroom teachers, and administration based on the child's demonstrated readiness and consistent success. Barefoot Kids reserves the right to require a diaper or absorbent pull-up until a child consistently meets the readiness expectations outlined in this policy.

Lightweight training pants or training underwear that allow urine to leak through clothing are not appropriate for school until a child is demonstrating consistent daytime dryness.

Once a child transitions to underwear, they must arrive each day with **2–3 complete changes of clothing**, including underwear and socks. We also recommend keeping an extra pair of shoes at school in case they become wet or soiled.

A Child Is Considered Fully Potty Trained When They:

- Recognize and communicate the need to use the restroom.
- Independently manage clothing with minimal assistance.
- Stay dry throughout the awake portion of the school day.
- Consistently use the toilet for both urination and bowel movements with no frequent accidents.
- Demonstrate consistent success for at least **two consecutive weeks** at both home and school.

For purposes of this policy, a child may still be considered fully potty trained while using a pull-up during nap or rest time. Staying dry while sleeping is a separate developmental milestone and is not required for daytime potty-training success.

Accidents

We understand that occasional accidents are a normal part of learning and are never viewed as punishment or failure. Children who are not yet consistently potty trained will be changed as needed to ensure their health, comfort, and well-being.

However, **two or more significant accidents in one school day, or a repeated pattern of accidents over several school days, may indicate that the child needs to temporarily return to a diaper or absorbent pull-up while continuing to practice toileting.**

A significant accident is one that requires a clothing change or results in urine or stool leaking outside the child's undergarment.

If frequent accidents occur after transitioning to underwear, Barefoot Kids may require a temporary return to a diaper or absorbent pull-up while the child continues practicing toileting. This is not considered a setback, but rather an opportunity to support continued success while maintaining a healthy and sanitary classroom environment.

Children must have sufficient extra clothing available at school each day. If a child has multiple accidents and runs out of clean clothing, a parent or authorized emergency contact will be required to bring additional clothing to the school. If additional clothing cannot be provided promptly, the child may need to be picked up for the remainder of the day.

Supporting Potty Training at Home

Potty training is most successful when home and school use a similar, consistent approach. Families are encouraged to offer the potty approximately once each hour, keep the routine calm and positive, and allow enough time in the daily schedule for potty training to be practiced consistently.

Taking a child to the restroom every 20–30 minutes is not encouraged. While this may help keep the child dry, it is often difficult to maintain consistently and can result in the adult managing the toileting schedule rather than the child learning to recognize and respond to their own body signals.

Consistency is more important than intensity.

Families may also find success with simple at-home strategies such as sticker charts, a special bell, praise or high-fives, a small reward, allowing boys to aim at Cheerios in the toilet, or providing a fun activity nearby while the child sits on the potty. These are optional ideas for home and are not necessarily classroom practices.

Pre-K Classroom Placement Requirement

To join the Pre-K classroom, children must be fully potty trained for both urination and bowel movements. While we understand that an occasional accident may occur, frequent accidents—particularly bowel movement accidents—may indicate that a child is not yet developmentally ready for the Pre-K environment.

In these situations, Barefoot Kids may temporarily transition the child to a younger classroom while we continue partnering with the family to reinforce consistency at home and at school.

Open and ongoing communication between families, classroom teachers, and administration is essential to a successful potty-training experience. Our staff will provide recommendations as we see fit to help each child achieve lasting success.

Our goal is to make every child's transition joyful, successful, and filled with confidence. We approach each stage of development with patience, understanding, and the belief that, with encouragement, consistency, and God's guidance, every child will flourish in His perfect timing.

Health, Medication & Nutrition

Submit the Virginia State Health Form within 30 days of enrollment (updated every 6 months until age 2). Keep your child home if they exhibit fever, vomiting, rash, heavy nasal/eye discharge, persistent cough, lice, or other contagious symptoms. If a child is sent home, they may return after 48 hours or with a doctor's note, per Barefoot Kids' discretion and VDH guidance. [VDH Communicable Diseases](#)

REMINDER: We will be outside on all but rainy and extremely cold days. PLEASE DO NOT SEND A NOTE: REQUESTING THAT YOUR CHILD STAY INDOORS FOR THE DAY. Children who are too ill to participate in outdoor activities will be happier at home.

Prescription medications are limited to emergency care with written authorization from a parent and physician using the Authorization to Administer Medication Form. Medications must be in original containers with proper labels. Uncollected medications will be disposed of 14 days after authorization expires. Sending medicine to school in your child's backpack or cup is strictly prohibited!

Nutrition: We provide two snacks and lunch aligned with USDA guidelines. Breakfast is not served. We maintain a strict no-nut policy for safety. Birthday treats must be store-bought and labeled with ingredients.

Infant feedings should be completed in a timely fashion in the mornings to ensure a smooth transition. If your child is due for a feeding shortly after arrival, please ensure you have a warmed bottle *ready to feed*. *This ensures the child can be fed promptly, without waiting for the bottles to warm up.*

Please notify the school and ensure that any food allergies are listed in your child's Brightwheel app.

Barefoot Kids acknowledges that it is virtually impossible to guarantee an absolutely safe environment for those with life-threatening allergies. Therefore, to create the safest possible environment, we maintain a "no-nut" policy. Some children may be so allergic to peanut and nut products that even the slightest trace of a substance, such as peanut butter, can cause a potentially fatal reaction. We therefore ask that no peanut butter or nut products be brought to school for snacks, parties, lunches, etc.

Behavior & Guidance

We teach self-control, respect, and problem-solving using positive guidance. Staff first redirect behavior and coach better choices; if needed, a brief reflection time is used. Physical punishment, rough handling, demeaning remarks, and food withholding are strictly prohibited.

Suppose the processes mentioned above are not successful. In that case, a conference with the teacher, director, and/or parents may be called to discuss positive methods, such as short and long-term incentives, which may be used at home and school to promote more appropriate behavior. Staff shall promptly inform parents when persistent behavioral problems are identified; such notification shall include any disciplinary steps taken in response.

Injury & Emergency Procedures

Minor injuries are documented via MyBrightwheel and reported the same day. Serious injuries or emergencies: certified staff administer first aid, parents are contacted immediately, and 911 is called if needed. For weather or closures, we follow Virginia Beach Public Schools when Barefoot Kids cannot be reached.

Parent Responsibilities in Emergencies

If you can safely reach the school without interfering with disaster workers, please pick up your child immediately. Children will be released to parents/guardians or designated persons only. Wait for a phone call from Barefoot Kids; if lines are down, follow local news and official instructions.

We love to hear from you!

Please share positive feedback via our monthly Footnote link.

For concerns or suggestions, contact **Ms. Jenifer Barefoot Hixenbaugh, Director**, at **757-449-3479**. Most issues can be resolved through open conversation; all complaints are handled confidentially and with care.

If a resolution isn't reached, a **conference** will be arranged. Should you remain unsatisfied, you may choose to **discontinue care**. We respect each family's unique expectations and want every child in an environment that fits their needs.

Parental Agreements

By enrolling, parents agree to: promptly pick up their child when notified of illness, emergency, or irregular behavior; keep contact and custody information current; and support school policies for safety and learning. Consent includes participation in school activities, media permissions, and communications via MyBrightwheel and email. Consent is also given for Barefoot Kids to send information about your child's care via text message, and Barefoot Kids will not be liable for charges.

Records, Reporting & Withdrawals

Records: Barefoot Kids may charge for records requests or additional information and professional time for legal cases. **Mandated Reporting:** Staff comply with Virginia law (Code §63.2-1509) to report suspected child abuse or neglect.

Withdrawals: Two weeks' written notice is required. Barefoot Kids may terminate care for unresolved issues, safety risks, or unpaid balances; re-enrollment depends on availability.

What to Bring on the First Day

- Completed registration and health forms
 - Birth certificate (for documentation)
 - Seasonal change of clothes (labeled, in a zip bag)
 - Crib sheet and small blanket
 - Water bottle (max 14 oz, labeled)
 - Backpack
 - Infants: diapers, wipes, formula, bibs, burp cloths, and one-day emergency supplies
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Parent Testimonials

"Everyone I encounter at Barefoot Kids has a great attitude. They make Gabrielle have a positive, fun day. I am truly blessed to have Gabrielle around such great role models."

"We have been impressed and satisfied with the school's program ever since we enrolled both our daughters nearly 4 years ago. It has been remarkable to see the growth in our children spiritually, academically, physically, and emotionally."

"All three of our children have attended Barefoot because of their ability to enrich our children's social, emotional, and developmental needs. I know when I drop them off they are not just safe, but also in an environment that nurtures while also encouraging independence. My kids all have very different personalities, and their needs have all been met in ways unique to each."

“Really can’t say enough wonderful things! From knowing the students well to providing a safe, caring, learning environment. Each teacher really knows each student. Barefoot Kids provides multiple learning approaches and activities to foster student needs, from playing outside, reading stories to teach lessons, to bringing in outside groups for extension of learning.”

“Love how quickly everyone responds to my questions. I like to know how the kids are doing, whether it's good or bad so that I can work on it at home. I wish maybe some more photos throughout the day, like Ms. Mira used to do. Always brightened my day when I saw those. But I do understand how busy the teachers are.”

Contact Information

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