

Welcome to The Rainbow Connection

The Rainbow Connection was started in 1979 as an outreach program of Shelby Presbyterian Church for the children of the church and community.

We are considered an “Enriched Playschool” because we believe learning can be done in a variety of ways. Our goal is to help your child experience growth through sharing and cooperating, to enjoy the sensation of hopping, skipping and jumping, to watch with wonder at changes in nature and of course, learn that numbers, letters and colors can be fun. Music and art are an important part of each day at Rainbow. Our philosophy is that we learn through play!

As much as your child’s growth is our first concern, we also want you, the parent, to feel comfortable about letting go and allowing your child to join us.

Mission Statement

Through Rainbow Connection, Shelby Presbyterian Church serves our community’s children and families by providing a Christian preschool environment where each child’s unique mental, physical, spiritual, emotional, and social development is lovingly and optimally nurtured.

The Purpose of Preschool

To give the young child an education appropriate to his or her stage of development.

To help children learn to live happily together.

To help children grow in their ability to express themselves through language, art, music
And other media expression.

To provide opportunities for children to enrich their understanding of the world in
which they live.

To give each child an opportunity to develop mentally, physically, spiritually, emotionally and
socially to the best of his or her ability.

Our Expectations of Parents

Place the same importance upon preschool that your child does. Your attitude can help your child enter school with joy and anticipation of happy experiences. Give them your undivided attention when dropping off and picking up- put your cell phone aside for a few minutes.

Be interested in what your child brings home or wants to tell you about his/her day. Appreciate and praise your child's efforts. Encourage their creativity, don't criticize their lack of perfection. DO NOT compare your child's art to that of another child. Display art at home for a reasonable period of time

Refrain from discussing your child's abilities or inabilities in front of your child. Remember, normal has a large range and child develop at different rates. Discuss any concerns you have with your child's teacher or the Director.

Give any information to the teacher which will help her to better understand your child. Changes in the home, such as moving to a new house or death of a beloved pet, can affect your child's time at Rainbow.

Please do not allow your child to have chewing gum or candy at school.

Our program is based on developing partnerships and supporting families. It is rare that a parent/guardian's actions would warrant the need to remove a child from Rainbow Connection. However, there might be occasions that we need to take necessary steps for the protection of our children and staff. Examples of such instances include:

1. The parent/guardian fails to abide by our program's policies.
2. A parent/guardian demands special services that are not provided to other children and which our school cannot reasonably provide, including requests that are outside the philosophy of our program.
3. A parent/guardian is physically or **verbally** abusive to children, staff or anyone at Shelby Presbyterian Church.

Registration and Tuition

There is a **\$50.00 non-refundable registration fee**, and a **\$40.00** non-refundable registration fee for each additional sibling. The registration fee is due at time the application is submitted. Classes are filled first by children already enrolled at Rainbow Connection and their siblings, and Shelby Presbyterian children. Registration is then opened to children of the community. Yearly registration is held in the spring, although children are accepted for enrollment throughout the year if we have openings.

Full tuition is due September through May. **Tuition is due on or before the 15th of each month.** A late fee of \$10 may be charged for consistent late payment. If tuition is not paid, on the 15th day of the third month of non-payment, your child's enrollment will be terminated, unless prior arrangements have been made.

Please check with the Rainbow Connection director for current tuition rates. Although every attempt is made to keep tuition as low as possible, it is subject to change.

Rainbow Connection Hours

The Rainbow Connection meets Monday through Thursday, from **9:00am - 1:00pm.**

If you arrive early, please stay with your child until 9:00. Teachers are preparing for the day and may need to be out of the room collecting supplies.

Our Rainbow Day ends at **1:00pm.** Parking delays or circumstances occasionally arise that may make normal pick-up impossible. If this occurs, please call to let us know so we can make arrangements to care for your child until you arrive. If you are consistently late picking up, after a warning, you will be charged a late fee of \$10.00.

General Information and Guidelines

1. Arrival Time: 9:00am - We will not be prepared for your child before 9:00am.
Dismissal Time: 1:00pm - A late fee may be charged for consistently late pick-up.

Car-line drop-off is from 8:55-9:10 am. Car- line pick-up is from 12:45-1:00pm. If you arrive after these times, you will need to park and come in to bring or pick up your child.
2. Please walk your child to their classroom. Never leave your child unless there is a Rainbow staff member present.
3. Sign your child in upon arrival each morning. Leave the phone number of the person responsible for picking your child up that day. If plans change and there will be someone else picking up, please call to let us know.
4. Parking is difficult some days, but please do not park in the road in front of the playground. It blocks traffic and makes things even more difficult. Please do not park in designated church staff parking spaces. Do not park in handicap spaces unless you are handicapped. We do have some parents/grandparents who need these spaces because of health issues.
5. Please notify us if your child is absence. If your child is out because of a contagious disease (flu; hand, foot and mouth, etc.), please inform us so that we may make other parents aware. Please see the “Illness Policy” in this handbook for more information.
6. We must have written permission to administer medicine, including EpiPens.
7. Snow Policy- We follow the Cleveland County School schedule. If the Shelby District is closed, we are closed. Two hour delay, we come at 10:30am. See Rainbow Snow Policy in this handbook for more details
8. Any change in your child’s schedule or enrollment withdrawal must be made with the director.
9. Birthday parties - You are welcome to have a celebration for your child’s birthday at Rainbow. Check with your child’s teacher for available date/time. Please do not bring gifts, unless it is a gift for the classroom, given in honor of your child.
10. Regarding discipline: Please familiarize your self with our Discipline Policy in this handbook. Discipline problems are limited, however, a little guidance is necessary sometimes. Our steps are as follows: Verbal correction and redirection, then Time Out and finally a visit to the Director’s office. Sometimes children just need a few minutes away from the activity of the classroom. A little quiet time with the Director can do wonders.
11. Please call if you have any questions or concerns. The Rainbow teachers and the Director are always happy to talk with you.

Lunch Notes

You will need to send a lunch with your child each day. Send what your child will eat - leftovers, sandwiches, cereal, finger foods, etc. It must be food they can eat by themselves. **Any food that can be a choking hazard, such as grapes or hotdogs, must be cut into small pieces by the parent.** Foods that need to be served warm should be sent in a wide mouth thermos. **We cannot heat food.**

If you forget your child's lunch, you are welcome to drop it by the Rainbow office and we will see that it gets to your child. We also keep crackers and fruit cups for emergencies. **Please do not order your child's lunch to be delivered from a restaurant. We will not accept food deliveries from restaurants.** The only exception to this rule would be on party days, when pizza is delivered for an entire class.

Snacks

We provide a mid-morning snack for the children. It is usually something like goldfish, crackers or dry cereal, with water. All foods served are nut-free and are prepared in facilities that do not handle nuts. If your child has other special dietary needs, we will try to reasonably accommodate them, but in some instances, we may ask you to send appropriate snacks for your child.

Nut-Free Policy

Rainbow Connection/ Shelby Presbyterian Church is a nut-free environment. We do not serve, or allow children to bring any item containing nuts in their lunches. This includes peanuts and all tree nuts- walnuts, almonds, pecans, etc. We have a number of children with allergies attending Rainbow Connection, but peanut allergies are, by far, the most dangerous. Reactions, ranging from mild to severe, can occur if a child merely touches a contaminated surface and then puts their hand in their mouth. If we find an item containing nuts in your child's lunch, it will be returned to their lunch box, unopened. If you are sending items for a party, please make sure they are nut-free and prepared in facilities that do not handle nuts.

If your child has a food allergy, or if you suspect that they may have an allergy, write it on the Registration form, the Student Information sheet and discuss it with your child's teacher.

If your child has an EpiPen or requires Benedryl for allergic reactions, please fill out the Permission to Administer Medication form. Bring the EpiPen or Benedryl to your child's teacher. It will be kept in a marked cabinet in the classroom so that it can be located quickly in case of an emergency.

Rainbow Illness Policy

Most children with mild illnesses, such as colds, may attend school unless they are too sick to participate in daily activities (require more care than teacher can provide, are lethargic, irritable, fussy...)

Specific times you should keep your child home include:

1. Fever - Children should stay home until they have not had a fever for 24 hours.
2. Vomiting - Children should remain home if they have vomited in the last 24 hours or until their physician states they are not contagious.
3. Diarrhea - Children with diarrhea should stay home. If your child has diarrhea caused by antibiotics, you may bring them, if it is not severe. Please let your child's teacher know about the antibiotics.
4. Strep throat - Children may return when fever is gone and after 24 hours of antibiotics
5. Flu - Children should stay home until their physician states they are not contagious.
6. Conjunctivitis (pink eye) - Please stay home until yellow discharge is gone and/or infection has been treated with antibiotics for 24 hours.
7. Impetigo - Children should stay home until treatment has been started for 24 hours.
8. Head Lice - Children may return the morning after the first treatment. "Nit picking" is essential to make sure lice don't come back. Children must be nit free or they will be sent home.
9. Mouth ulcers - Children should stay home if ulcers cause uncontrollable drooling, unless physician states that they are not contagious.
10. Scabies - Children may return after 24 hours of treatment.
11. Open skin sores - Children with open, weeping sores that cannot be covered should remain at home.
12. HIV - "Exclusion: Since human immunodeficiency virus is not acquired by casual contact, children infected with HIV should be allowed to attend school without restriction unless they manifest aggressive behavior such as biting..." or have any of the problems listed above.

If a member of your household has a very contagious illness, such as the flu, hand-foot and mouth or a severe stomach bug, please consider keeping your Rainbow child home, even if they are not showing symptoms. They have been exposed and may be contagious before symptoms appear. We want to keep everyone healthy!

Thank you for your help following these guidelines.

Field Trips

Occasionally, our three, four and five year old children will go on field trips to broaden horizons and gain new experiences. We only go to locations within walking distance, such as the fire department or post office. Parents will be asked to sign a blanket permission form for trips. You will be notified in advance of each trip, when it will be, where we will be going, etc. Teachers may request volunteers for our trips. Extra hands are always welcome.

Rainbow Connection Snow Policy

Rainbow Connection follows the **Cleveland County School** (Shelby Attendance Zone) decision for inclement weather.

If **Cleveland County Schools** (Shelby Zone) are closed, **Rainbow Connection** is closed.

If schools are on a **one hour** delay, we open at **9:30am**. We close at regular time, 1:00pm.

If schools are on a **two hour** delay, we open at **10:30am**. We close at regular time, 1:00pm.

If schools are on a **three hour** delay, Rainbow is closed.

If Cleveland County School cancel school during the day, **Rainbow will close 30 minutes prior to the school system's closing time**. Example: If school s are closing at 11:00am, we will close at 10:30am.

Announcements about Cleveland County school closings or delays are also usually on Charlotte TV stations.

Our teachers will send texts to inform you of closings/delays. Please make sure they have your current phone numbers.

Enrollment of Special Needs Children

In its role as a mission of Shelby Presbyterian Church, Rainbow Connection seeks to help or serve children with special needs. These may include, but are not limited to, physical, emotional, mental, developmental and behavioral needs above and beyond the norm.. Some of these needs are easily addressed and do not have the potential to significantly disrupt daily classroom life. Other needs may be a significant challenge and will require careful review, planning and ongoing monitoring should the child be accepted or continued as a Rainbow student. These guidelines should help in addressing these concerns.

A. Simple Concerns

1. May include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Broken bones
 - b. Speech and/or language problems
 - c. Family problems
 - d. Health concerns that are not chronic
2. Decisions will made in a cooperative effort between parents, Director and teacher, with involvement by others if necessary

B. Complex Concerns

1. May include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Hearing impairment
 - b. Diagnosed ADHD, ADD
 - c. Downs Syndrome
 - d. Autism/Autism Spectrum Disorder
 - e. Sensory Integration Disorder
 - f. Severe discipline problems
 - g. Complex diagnosis or needs
 - h. Severe physical disabilities
2. Decisions regarding enrollment will be made in a cooperative effort. When a concern is identified by parent, teacher and/or referring agencies, discussion will then take place between Director and teacher, regarding the feasibility of allowing child to enroll or continue as a student at Rainbow Connection.
 - a. If enrollment is feasible, in the opinion of the Director and teacher, the Director will:
 1. Contact the parents and/or referring agencies and advise them of the feasibility of enrollment
 2. May contact Rainbow Committee chairman to advise of the situation

3. Report to the Rainbow Committee at the next scheduled meeting. Discussion and plans will be confidential as personal, medical, family and psychological information may be shared.
 4. Define with parents and teacher specific goals and criteria for monitoring child's progress.
 5. Define with parents any pertinent information that is to be shared with other parents.
 6. Establish regular contact and meetings with parents, teachers, and therapists to discuss child's progress, classroom behavior and other pertinent issues.
- b. If enrollment is determined to be not feasible, in the opinion of the Director and teacher, the Director will:
1. Notify parents and/or referring agencies
 2. Report to the Rainbow Committee chairman in a timely manner
 3. Report to the Rainbow Committee at the next scheduled meeting
- c. **If the enrollment situation is judged to be feasible, but later becomes unmanageable or uncontrollable**, it is left to the discretion of the Director to determine if enrollment should be terminated. The Director will notify the Rainbow Committee chairman of the decision. The Rainbow Committee will be informed at the next scheduled meeting. Parents may appeal the director's decision to the Rainbow Committee.

General Discipline Policy

We have few discipline problems because our children are kept happy and busy. However, there are a few occasions when we must offer guidance.

1. Our first method is verbal correction and redirection to an appropriate activity.
2. If this goes unheeded, or the behavior warrants it, we put the child in a “Thinking Chair” at the side of the room for a few minutes.
3. Should a child continue to misbehave, the teacher may take the child to the Director’s office for a few minutes of quiet time. Sometimes, the activity of the room is too much and all that is needed is a little quiet time.

Aggressive Behavior Policy

Some behaviors, such as tantrums, sharing issues or mild physical aggression, are typical and expected developmental issues seen in preschool settings. Aggressive behavior is defined as behavior which is above and beyond normal expected behavior of a preschool child.

For safety and health concerns, we take aggressive behavior seriously. While biting, spitting, hitting, pushing and kicking can be natural responses to frustration in young preschoolers, children above the age of two are expected to have outgrown these behaviors. Displays of such behavior by older preschoolers will be treated as aggressive behavior.

When a behavioral problem is determined by the teacher and Director to be aggressive, our policy for handling such behaviors challenges is as follows:

1. The parent will be contacted by the teacher/Director and will be advised of the incident.
2. The child may be removed from the room to the Director’s office until judged to be in control and able to rejoin the class.
3. A written report will be completed by the teacher.

After repeated incidents (determined by the problem):

4. The parent will be immediately contacted and required to come and take the child home for the rest of the day.
5. Upon child’s return to school, the teacher, Director and parents will meet to talk and develop a plan in support of the child.

6. If these measures do not bring about desired behavioral changes, the child may be sent home for a period of one week. While suspension seems extreme, it is a useful and common tool in handling preschool misbehavior. It gives the child a chance to forget his/her old behavioral pattern and learn a healthier one. Help from an outside childhood consultant or other professional may be recommended.
7. If all of our interventions, as well as those made by the family outside of school, have not been successful, we may determine that the situation has become unmanageable. The teacher, Director and Chairman of the Rainbow Committee will meet to determine if we can still meet the needs of the child. At this time, the family may be asked to find an alternative placement for the child.

Rainbow Connection celebrates the individuality of each child. We are committed to responding to a wide range of learning styles and needs. It is only on a very rare occasion that a child's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for care. Examples of this include:

1. A child appears to be a danger to him/herself, other children, and/or staff.
2. Medical, psychological or social service personnel working with our school determine that continued care at Rainbow would not be in the best interest of the child.
3. Any other situation in which the accommodations required for a child's success and participation in school would place an undue burden on our resources.

Biting Policy

While biting is considered aggressive behavior for older preschoolers, it is normal behavior for toddlers and two year old children. We do take biting at any age seriously. It can be scary, stressful and frustrating for children, parents and teachers. Children bite for a variety of reasons - simple sensory exploration, panic, seeking to be noticed, desire for another's toy... Knowing that the effect of biting will hurt another person is not yet a part of the mind-set of a very young child, so the "cause-effect" relationship is not understood. Our teachers plan activities and supervise carefully in order to prevent biting. There are times, however, when everyone cannot be within immediate reach to prevent a bite.

The following procedures will be followed should a child bite another child during school:

1. Biter is immediately separated from the bitten child with a firm "NO BITING. IT HURTS."
2. Attention is returned to bitten child. The bite is washed with soap and water. First aid will be given as needed (ice pack, etc).

3. The biter is not allowed to return to play for a few minutes and is talked to on a level that he/she can understand. They will then be redirected to another activity without further mention of the biting incident.
4. A written report is recorded and given to parents of all children involved. The name of the biter is not given because it serves no useful purpose. A copy of the report is kept in Rainbow's office.

Procedures for repeated biting incidents:

5. Biter may be isolated in the classroom for a portion of the day. Child will be in sight of the teacher at all times, but not allowed to have close contact with other children.
6. If necessary, the parent may be called and the child sent home for the day.

We make every effort to extinguish the biting behavior quickly and to balance our commitment to the family of the biting child and that of other families. Remember, it is stressful for everyone, the parents of the biter, just as much as the parents of the children bitten. The biting phase usually passes quickly. If biting incidents cease for a period of time, the biting is probably over.