



ROCKBRIDGE
ACADEMY

PREPARING FOR KINDERGARTEN AT ROCKBRIDGE ACADEMY

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

Your child is approaching school age, and you desire to prepare him to enter school. If you have concluded that Rockbridge Academy's classical Christian education might be best for your family, please consider the following information carefully. Our curriculum is unique in that it is designed, at each stage of learning, to teach children according to their God-given framework. In light of our unique curriculum, our entrance requirements are likely different from other schools you may have considered. Rockbridge Academy does not simply test for kindergarten readiness; we are looking for students who we anticipate will graduate from twelfth grade.

After going over the information which follows, you may be thinking "How can I do all this?" First of all, pray! God works mightily with us and desires to hear from us about our needs. We encourage you to spend a few minutes each day going over the guidelines below with your child. We have included a small poster which shows the alphabet, numbers, colors, and shapes for you to refer to when encouraging your child's kindergarten readiness.

Academics aside, the most daunting aspect of preparation for entrance to Rockbridge Academy might be character training. This training requires diligent, consistent effort on the part of parents. We have included a short list of resources below which will be helpful.

Finally, a word about too much screen time and preschool. We notice that children with early and over exposure to video games, tablets, television, etc. lack the fine motor ability, focused attention, and pre-reading skills required for classroom learning. We encourage you to see your role as your child's first teacher and nurture their desire to learn, explore, and discover.

Time at home playing, being read to, and becoming ever curious about the world that God has made is invaluable. While attendance at preschool can be a useful service to families, we believe that children who spend their preschool days at home in a loving environment can be just as or even better prepared to enter Rockbridge Academy than students who attend preschool.

CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

The crucial area of preparation for your child is that of training his character. The school-related characteristics of character training are self-control, immediate and cheerful obedience, and respect for authority. While no one is perfect, these are the standards we aspire to daily, from kindergarten through twelfth grade.

Self-control: Age-appropriate self-control exercised by students at Rockbridge Academy is essential. Children entering school should be able to control themselves in situations requiring attentiveness, such as a church service. They should also know how to be patient when making requests and how to wait for the appropriate time to get an adult's attention.

Immediate and cheerful obedience: All students at Rockbridge Academy learn to “Obey right away, all the way, with a cheerful attitude every day!”

Respect for authority: Students at Rockbridge Academy are taught the importance of addressing those in authority with good eye contact, careful listening, and respectful speech.

ACADEMIC READINESS

The following are guidelines. They are not hard and fast requirements for entrance into kindergarten. Our priority for accepting applicants rests far more on the training of the child’s character than on their ability to count or recognize letters.

Reading readiness: Kindergarten applicants should be able to recognize the letters of the alphabet and to demonstrate familiarity with their associated sounds. Recognition of basic shapes and colors is expected. Additionally, applicants should know their birth date, address, telephone number, and the name of the city in which they live.

Handwriting: Applicants should be able to write their names legibly and with proper use of capital and lower-case letters. Handwriting is a good indicator of maturity of the fine motor skills needed to succeed in kindergarten. Fine motor skill development can be encouraged through coloring, by playing with Play Dough, or building with Legos.

Mathematics: Applicants should know the difference between numbers and letters, should be able to count to 30, identify visually the numbers 1-10, sequence numbers 1-5 with manipulatives, and repeat a pattern.

Interest in books: Rockbridge Academy kindergarteners graduate to first grade with a strong foundation in systematic phonics and reading. A child who is interested in books is more likely to be interested in learning to read. An excellent way to grow a child’s interest in books is to read aloud to him. Story books as well as chapter books are recommended for reading aloud. An additional benefit of reading chapter books over several days is that the child is trained in self-control as the chapters build toward the ending.

RESOURCES TO CONSIDER

Understanding classical and Christian education: *Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning: An Approach to Distinctively Christian Education*, by Douglas Wilson

Training Christian character: *Shepherding a Child’s Heart*, by Ted Tripp

Inculcating a love for good books and reading: *Honey for a Child’s Heart*, by Gladys Hunt