

Providence School Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Belief Statement:

We believe all children are created by God and designed in His image to learn and develop independent skills in order to provide positive contributions in their communities.

At Christian Academy, we remain steadfastly committed to developing every student's heart for God. Providence School allows us to extend our mission and reach children who have not traditionally had access to Christian education in the Louisville area. Providence School is the only non-profit school in the Kentuckiana area with a vision for offering pre-school-12th grade integrated educational opportunities for children with Down syndrome.

What is Providence School?

- Providence School is designed to accommodate children with a primary diagnosis of Down syndrome, with the goal of promoting spiritual, cognitive, adaptive, language, motor and self-help skills.
- Speech and Occupational Therapists will provide consultation to teachers regarding student educational needs and 1:1/group intervention on a weekly/biweekly basis.
 - Additional individual therapy may be provided at school, independent from what the school is providing and at the parent's expense.
- A working relationship will be maintained between Christian Academy and Down Syndrome of Louisville.
- Acceptance into Providence School is based on an application and interview, as well as an evaluation of current level of development.

What is the Providence School application process?

- Please refer to the school description to determine if your child's needs and the program offered matches.
- If you believe your child is a good candidate for Providence School, contact the Admissions Department at (502) 244-3225 for initial information and to schedule a tour.
- The application process will require the following documentation:
 - Primary diagnosis of Down syndrome
 - Current and past therapeutic service notes and evaluations.

What is Down syndrome?

Down syndrome is a genetic condition that occurs in about one out of 800-1,000 births per year. Children with Down syndrome may have delayed physical, mental and social development. Today, with early intervention, advanced medical care, better education and greater social acceptance, children with Down syndrome live full, productive lives.

For more information, please visit <http://downsyndromeoflouisville.org/>

In addition, this six minute video, <http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=I13KxRYqoo0> , provides a general overview of children with Down syndrome.

You may also want to view part or all of this 12 minute video, <http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=5M--xOyGUX4> , which shows valuable friendships between typical students and students with Down syndrome.

What will instruction and the classroom look like? What will be different from today's classroom? experience?

Junior Academy: The instructional day will be from 8:00 a.m.-3 p.m. Monday through Friday. Lunch and two snacks (morning and afternoon) will be provided. Early arrival and late dismissal (7 a.m.-6 p.m.) may be available at no extra cost based on level of independence in the classroom. The Junior Academy classroom will look like any other pre-kindergarten class setting. The notable difference will be children with Down syndrome in each of the pre-kindergarten classrooms. Providence staff will be available to support preschool teachers by providing adaptive curriculum materials to meet the student needs. Many of these materials will be beneficial for all students in the classroom. There may be some adaptive items such as a step stool with rails for the restroom sinks and the water fountain or a few student chairs with arms; however, these classroom items would be of benefit to all students. Research shows that inclusion (including students with disabilities in typical classrooms) is a positive model for all students, as the variety of instructional approaches reaches a broader range of students and improves learning for everyone.

Elementary: Each student with Down syndrome will be assigned to a typical classroom and have a homeroom assignment where they will join the class for Chapel, read alouds and hands-on instructional activities. They will participate in these homerooms as developmentally appropriate for learning activities to develop peer relationships, expand language and cognitive skills and for spiritual development. The school day will be spent working within the typical classroom and a classroom with a specialized teacher and a

teacher's aide trained in skills specific to the child's individual needs. The amount of time spent in each classroom will be dependent on individual student needs.

How will Providence School affect typical children not in the Down syndrome program?

The opportunity for a typical student to grow and develop relationships with someone who has a visible learning difference is powerful. Children will develop a sensitivity and understanding that will influence him or her for a lifetime. Children will have the opportunity to extend empathy, compassion and love first-hand as relationships between students develop. In Zechariah 7:9, we are taught: "This is what the LORD Almighty said: 'Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another'."

Providence School is a blessing not only the families of children with Down syndrome, but to all students, teachers, staff, faculty and families. The Indiana Inclusion Study (2000) investigated the benefits of inclusive education for typical students. Typical students can serve as positive speech and behavior role models for other students, and offer acceptance, tolerance, patience, and friendship. This and other research has highlighted improved academics, social skills, communication skills, and peer relationships as four of the most important benefits of inclusion for typical students.

How is Providence School being funded?

While a substantial start-up grant was received by Christian Academy, the goal is for Providence School to be self-funded. We are hopeful that future additional donations will provide tuition assistance specific to the families of children with Down syndrome.

Grants are written for funding to provide additional resources.

Is Christian Academy a Michele P provider?

Christian Academy is not licensed as a Michelle P. Waiver provider. The Michelle P. Waiver (MPW) is a home- and community-based waiver program within the Kentucky Medicaid program developed as an alternative to institutional care for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities. MPW allows individuals to remain in their homes with services and supports.