



Merritt
ACADEMY

Enjoy the Journey



K2

Orientation





Welcome to

Merritt Academy



Our Approach to Development and Care for Your Child:

Thank you for choosing Merritt Academy to provide your K2 child with a nurturing, loving environment in which to explore and learn. Our dedicated teachers create learning activities, spaces and experiences to foster a rich variety of opportunities designed to facilitate your child's physical, social, emotional, and cognitive growth. From age two to three, play and discovery will be key educational elements helping your child attain new developmental milestones. Stories and more specialty instruction introduce your child to new concepts and experiences.

Your child's teaching team will skillfully guide your child with positive reinforcement and thoughtful redirection as needed. In the K2 program, we will establish a strong bond and truly know your child's preferences and evolving abilities. As your child becomes more capable in many ways, our knowledgeable teachers are ready to support your child and answer your questions along the way.

We will meet your child exactly where he/she is in all developmental areas, providing a safe, inspiring space in which to foster your child's growing drive for independence, as well as offer cuddles and comfort as needed. Our language-rich, stimulating environment will help your child build foundations for lifelong learning while exploring with all five senses. You will find our campus includes ample places to spend time outdoors, along with opportunities to engage with many friends of all ages.

Service to you, as a Merritt Academy Family, stands at the forefront of our school's philosophy. We consider our partnership with your family to be our greatest teaching asset. Together, we will navigate this phase of your child's educational journey, to establish a memorable, comfortable, happy, and successful experience for you and your child.

From the very start, you will find our experienced team of educators ready to help you. Please feel free to approach your child's teachers, our early childhood coaches and our leadership team members, with questions or concerns that come to mind. We are here to help you enjoy the journey.

Christin Soly
Christin Soly, Executive Director

Play and Learning

Merritt Academy's philosophy of learning through purposeful play focuses on five core areas to encourage your child's natural curiosity. These key areas of development will help your child thrive now, while also preparing your child for our constantly changing world in the future. Our curriculum promotes learning across these key areas:

- √ Physical
- √ Social
- √ Emotional
- √ Cognitive
- √ Creative

The importance of play in promoting social and emotional skills as well as development of early literacy and numeracy skills has been highlighted at the World Economic Forum.

During indoor and outdoor play, our staff encourages positive social interactions and active engagement for your child. Your preschooler will experience the joy of discovery, make meaningful connections, develop executive functioning skills essential for success, build healthy relationships, and practice problem-solving for innovative thinking.

Your child will benefit from developmentally appropriate instruction in math, language arts, science, and social studies to prepare for our accredited preschool program.

Students should come to school prepared to play outside. Closed toe shoes like sneakers are recommended for comfort both in the classroom and on the playground.

Dining: Lunch and Snack

Your child will enjoy a morning snack, lunch service with milk and two afternoon snacks which are included in your tuition package. Our monthly menu will be provided prior to the start of each new month.

If you wish to send in a temperature-stable container for lunch or snack, this must be labeled with your child's full name and date. Teachers will help plate/serve food for your child if help is needed.

K2 students will receive assistance as needed and typically feed themselves independently. Your child may bring a sippy cup if needed and will begin to transition to an open cup during the year. Water is provided throughout the day.

Our school provided lunches are nut-free. To ensure the safety of all children, no peanut products should be provided. If your child has any known allergies, you and your pediatrician are asked to complete/sign the Allergy Action Plan and associated medication forms prior to your child's start at Merritt Academy.

Rest

Your child will have a school-assigned cot for nap time. Parents provide a fitted crib sheet and blanket or napping mat. These go home on Friday to be laundered and should return to school with your child on Monday. Cots are disinfected weekly or as needed. Nap time for K2 students runs from 12:30pm to 2:30pm daily.

Stimulating activities throughout the day keep your child busy, so naptime usually comes as a welcome opportunity to rest. If your child is unable to sleep and restless after a 20-minute period, an appropriate quiet activity will be provided by your child's teacher.

Health and Safety

Your child will play with age-appropriate materials that are disinfected and washed daily and rotated as needed. Classroom furniture is disinfected throughout the day and right-sized for your toddler.

Handwashing will be encouraged upon arrival and throughout the day as your child transitions to different activities such as eating, diapering/toileting, and when returning from outdoor or sensory play.

To maintain a healthy environment for all students and staff, we ask you to maintain communication with your teacher when your child is absent, particularly in case of illness. Merritt Academy will provide information about diagnosed cases of communicable illness. A doctor's note may be required for your child to return to school.

First Aid, CPR, and daily health training are provided to Merritt Academy staff. All enrolled students must have an up-to-date Virginia School Entrance Health Form on file.

Please consult our Parent Handbook and any school alerts for information regarding modifications to our health and safety policies.



Potty Training

Each K2 classroom includes a changing table and restroom access to meet the needs of your child. When you feel your child is ready to make the transition from diapers, Merritt Academy will partner with you.

If you are working on potty training at home, please advise your child's teacher right away so we can support your efforts and provide consistency at school. Potty trainers will need extra clothing and underwear provided daily.

If you have not yet started potty training, you will find your K2 teaching team to be a helpful resource for advice and devising training plans.

Our K2 restrooms are equipped with an appropriate-sized toilet and step stool. All children are offered the opportunity to use the potty regularly.

For children still wearing diapers, these are changed regularly and as needed. You are asked to provide diapers, wipes and any diaper creams you would like used and we will notify you when your supply is low. Use of diaper cream requires a "Topical Authorization" form on file. The completed form should accompany the product when provided to school.

Our diaper changing procedures follow the sanitary procedures recommended by licensing authorities including VDSS/DOE and VDH. All staff members are trained on proper procedures.





Communication

- Daily reports are sent to you via Tadpoles with photos, information, and personal comments about your child's activities, diaper changes, meals and nap times.
- When a communicable illness is reported in the classroom, we will notify your family via an exposure notice as appropriate. (Note: The VDH regulations state that students must be fever-free, free of vomit/diarrhea for 24 hours without medication before they may return to school. Additionally, we may require a note clearing a student to return to school in our efforts to keep all children as healthy as possible.)
- We follow all regulations and laws regarding health privacy. Please read the Parent Handbook for details.
- You are asked to keep your child's Virginia School Entrance Health Form updated with new immunizations or changes in health status after well-child visits and submit these to our registrar.
- Two parent teacher conferences will be offered annually. Parents and/or teacher are encouraged to request a conference any time, as needed.
- Two progress reports will be sent to you with detailed information about your child's development.
- Each parent will be invited to become a member of your child's classroom photo sharing site at the beginning of the school year.
- The Wednesday Letter, our academy-wide informational letter, will be emailed weekly.
- The Friday Letter, an informational letter pertaining specifically to your child's classroom, activities and updates will be emailed weekly.
- Merritt Academy sends text messages for important operational announcements.



Tadpoles®

Tadpoles® is the online communication tool Merritt Academy uses to share special moments, developmental milestones and daily reports straight from your child's classroom. Family members can also enter important drop-off notes for your child's day.

Using secure technology, we document your child's activities throughout the day. At pick up time, you will receive an email and corresponding app notification featuring curated highlights, photo memories and detailed notes from our teaching staff. Through this powerful daily connection, Tadpoles® gives you easy access to your child's learning experience.



PikMyKid

Merritt Academy provides parents/guardians complimentary access to PikMyKid, an app to facilitate your afternoon pick up service. You may download the app for your phone platform to announce your afternoon arrival. Families not electing to use the app should stop by the front office for an exit slip. Please note that the PikMyKid service will not be activated until your child is registered.

PARENT APP GUIDE

- 1 Download the App**
 The Pikmykid app is available for download on your smartphone's app store (Google-Play, Apple Store). Each user will need to download and register on their own smartphone.
 Scan below to download!
- 2 Registration**
 Select "Register a New Account" and follow the prompts to sign up. You will verify your email address and phone number to complete registration.
- 3 How to Add a Child**
 Schools might connect your children automatically! If you see the "No Children" on screen and the school gave one time QR code, then select "Add Child" to scan the code and add one child at a time, else tap on "Need additional help?" to reach our support desk.
- Secure Way of Connecting**
 *Parents can use our website also - parentapp.pikmykid.com to register and make pick-up changes, report student Absence or check-ins
 Note: Announcement is only available through the parent phone app.

Need Help?
Email support@pikmykid.com
Be sure to include the name of the school, the child's name, the dismissal ID, and your mobile number, with your questions.

PARENT APP GUIDE

- 4 Schedule Pickup Changes**
 Choose the Child from the Children's tab, and choose the date to change the pickup. You will be able to make single or recurring changes.
- 5 Change Default Pick-up**
 Select Default: PickUp from this screen to change your child's default pick-up mode. If the button is grayed out, the schools may have restricted this.
- 6 Check-in**
 On Checkin tab, you will be able to complete the check-in for you or your children. Contact App Support if the Check-in tab is not available for you.
- 7 Announce Your Arrival**
 The app's Pickup tab allows you to see your children, view their pickup mode, and announce your arrival.

App Support
Go to the Account page (at the bottom of your home screen), and then select "Contact Support". Fill out and submit the form to be connected with a friendly customer service human or email support@pikmykid.com

K2 Suggested Supply List

All items must be clearly labeled with your child's first and last name:

- Diaper bag/backpack with full spare set of seasonally appropriate clothing
- Potty-trainers should have multiple sets of clothing changes, including socks/shoes
- Diapers
- Diaper cream, if needed ("Topical Authorization" Form required with product in original packaging)
- A box of baby wipes and a refill package
- A fitted cot or crib sheet and lightweight blanket or nap mat (like Urban Infant Tot Cot®)
- A 4x6 photo of your child and one family picture
- Any over-the-counter or prescription medications must be submitted with paperwork and cleared through the school. Contact us for more information.
- Sippy cup, labeled with your child's name, if your child is not yet drinking from an open cup
- Closed-toe shoes appropriate for play (recommended are sneakers, winter or rain boots)



Sample Daily Schedule



Morning:	Classroom opens at 6:45AM with centers and planned activities Breakfast Snack Morning Outdoor Play Circle Time/Morning Meeting Specialty Class* and transition Morning Snack Learning Centers and Playground for K2
Midday:	Lunch Teacher planned activities for K2 Nap
Afternoon:	Afternoon Snack for K2 Outdoor Playground for K2 Teacher planned activities for K2
Evening:	Evening Snack Evening Playground Time (Daylight and Weather Permitting) Classroom closes at 6:15PM with last pick-up

Specialty Classes

All K2 students take the following school year weekly specialties, as conditions permit:

- Creative Movement
- Music
- Character Education
- STEAM



Administrator Contact Information



- **Latoya Braddock, Infant, Toddler, and Twos Program Director**
LatoyaB@MerrittAcademy.org
703-273-8000 ext. 192
- **Genie O'Hara, Director of Early Childhood Education**
GenieO@MerrittAcademy.org
703-273-8000 ext. 159
- **Christin Soly, Executive Director**
ChristinS@MerrittAcademy.org
703-273-8000 ext. 123



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