

# Grace First Presbyterian Preschool Parent Handbook

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A Mission Focus of Grace First Presbyterian  
Church

# Table of Contents

Welcome to Grace First Presbyterian Preschool	2
Mission Statement	3
Philosophy	3
Goals of the Program	4
Hours of Operation	5
Tuition	5
Registration	6
<hr/>	
The Children's Program	
<hr/>	
Staff	6
Curriculum	6
Share Time	7
Kindergarten Readiness	7
Guiding Behavior (Discipline)	7-8
Rest Time	9
Holiday and Cultural Celebrations	9
Birthdays	10
Nutrition	10
What to Bring and Wear	11
Preparing for the First Day of School	12
Arrival and Departure	13
Pick up Time	14
For your Child's Security	14
Absences	15
Make up Days	15
Health	15
When Am I Too Sick to Attend Preschool	15-16
Guidelines for Exclusion	16
Medications	17
Allergies	17
Fire and Earthquake Safety	17
Babysitting	18
Volunteering in the Classroom	18
We Learn By Doing	19-24

# Welcome

Welcome to Grace First Presbyterian Church Preschool! Our Preschool was established in 1957 as an outreach to serve the children and families of the community. It continues to provide developmentally appropriate curriculum for our children ages 2.6 years to 5 years of age.

As we get to know you and your family, we look to build strong cooperative relationships that will foster mutual respect, understanding, support and sharing of knowledge. We strive to create an environment that cultivates a lifelong love of learning for children and adults alike.

Our program strives to be a place that feels like home. The Preschool at Grace First Presbyterian Church works to create a welcoming environment for families and their children. Children are free to explore, to express themselves, to engage in discovering things that interest them, and to learn at a pace that is developmentally appropriate. We view all activities and daily routines as opportunities for learning. We recognize that childhood can be full of challenges as well as joy, and believe that the most important aspects in dealing with challenges are strong relationships built on respect and love, collaboration, time and patience.

Grace First Presbyterian Church Preschool looks to partner with families in helping children have the best experience here as possible. The preschool program works to support parents in the many roles and responsibilities that they face as parents. In turn, parent involvement is vital to the quality of our preschool and parent involvement is highly encouraged. During your child's time at the center, there will be many ways that you may become actively involved in supporting the preschool program. The time, thought and energy that you put into your involvement will continually add to the diversity of our program and enhance the quality of the preschool community. All members of Grace First Presbyterian Church Preschool are invited to teach, learn, explore and share. We hope that you will enjoy your time with us.

The rest of this handbook will introduce you to the program and the administrative details that are making it work. Please read this handbook carefully and keep it where you can refer to it as needed.

## Mission Statement

The mission of Grace First Presbyterian Church Preschool is to support the community by establishing an affordable, high quality education and care program for young children, in a nurturing Christian environment.

## Philosophy

We believe that all children have a natural desire to play, to explore to learn and to express themselves as individuals. As children engage in their environments, they strive to understand the world and all its properties and mysteries. As they grow, children develop relationships with peers and adults and learn to communicate, to express themselves and their ideas. Their engagement in their environment and relationships with others are experiences that help children build on their understanding of the world and their place in it. At Grace First Presbyterian Church Preschool we want children to explore actively, to express themselves freely, to think critically, to work collaboratively and to live joyfully.

Grace First Presbyterian Church Preschool believes that:

- Each child as a unique gift.
- Each child is highly capable.
- Each child should have the opportunity to discover, explore and to express their curiosity.
- Each child has a right to be valued and respected for who he or she is.
- Each child should explore materials and share experiences.
- Each child should make discoveries that build knowledge, awareness and skills.
- Each child should have the opportunities to share their ideas and feelings, and to listen to others.
- Each child should learn to resolve conflicts and to develop compassion.
- Each child through their interactions with others will develop trust and confidence.



Teach the child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will never part from it. Proverbs 22:6

# **Goals for Grace First Presbyterian Preschool**

## ***For Children...an environment that encourages children to***

- ❖ develop a love of learning
- ❖ be part of a community of friends
- ❖ develop a positive sense of self
- ❖ to communicate ideas effectively
- ❖ to explore, discover, ask questions and find solutions
- ❖ use their whole body effectively
- ❖ practice basic skills and healthy habits and understand why they are important.

## ***For Parents...a program which provides***

- ❖ high quality childcare that supports their family's schedule
- ❖ support of their relationship with their child
- ❖ opportunities to increase understanding of child development
- ❖ opportunities to contribute to their child's program
- ❖ recognition of parent's needs and concerns
- ❖ encouragement to trust their ability to resolve parenting issues
- ❖ mutual support from and for other parents

## ***For staff...a work environment which helps***

- ❖ develop greater understanding of young children
- ❖ foster problem solving through active listening and collaboration
- ❖ interact with children in non-authoritarian, authentic and respectful manner
- ❖ facilitate learning opportunities which are relevant to the children
- ❖ gain insight about themselves and their capabilities
- ❖ to build relationships with children and team members to reach mutually shared goals
- ❖ gain knowledge of professional practices and ethics in the field of early childhood

## Hours of Operation

Grace First Presbyterian Preschool is open all year round. We follow the same holiday schedule as the Long Beach Unified School District.

**Hours:** Full day is anytime between 7:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.  
Part day is 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

**Closure days:** Grace First Preschool follows the Long Beach Unified School District holiday calendar. <http://www.lbusd.k12.ca.us>

New Year's Day

Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday

Presidents' Day

Good Friday at noon

Spring Break (one week)

Memorial Day

Independence Day

Summer Recess (one week before school starts)

Labor Day

Veterans Day

Thanksgiving Recess

Winter Recess

## Preschool Tuition

Each month, preschool tuition is payable in advance on the first school day of every month. **It is considered late on the 5th of the month and a \$35.00 late fee will be assessed.** Tuition can be placed in the lock box located on the wall in the preschool office. Returned checks will be charged a fee of \$25.00.

Tuition payments can be made by check or money order paid to the order of Grace First Preschool.

## **Registration Fee**

An **annual** registration fee of \$100.00 is charged per child upon enrollment. Also, a registration fee each year following in March at reenrollment time. This fee is non-refundable.

## **Stay Days**

Our Stay Day program is a fun and interactive extra block of time for children to enjoy lunch, conversation and play with their friends. Stay Day is offered everyday from 12:00 to 1:00. Stay day is \$5.00 per day. You may decide to be a regular and sign up monthly or use it as needed.

## **The Children's Program**

### **Staff**

Grace First Presbyterian Preschool is designed and implemented by teachers who are educated, trained and experienced in child development and early childhood education.

Staff members:

- work as an effective team to implement the mission and philosophy of the preschool.
- are selected because they have something to offer to the program and are open to learning and sharing.
- are highly encouraged to participate in staff development and professional growth activities.
- are required to complete First Aid/CPR training bi-annually.
- are fingerprinted and cleared to work through a criminal and child abuse background check through the FBI and DOJ.

## **Curriculum – Infinite Learning Opportunities**

**Free play time...Rest time...Singing time...Story time...Project time...Snack time...Time to change your clothes or wash your hands...**all of these times are important for establishing self-reliance, happy relationships, positive attitudes and understanding of self and the world. Learning happens with every experience and every interaction.

At Grace First Presbyterian Church Preschool the teachers plan experiences based on observations of children's interest and on children's developmental needs. It becomes a dance between the teacher and the child...full of wonder, energy, and excitement, as well as the security of understanding what is happening. Activities are offered which give frequent opportunities to experience choice, challenge and success to help build feelings of competence and confidence. The activities include expressive arts, language and literature, math, science, physical development and social studies. By offering choices, we give children the necessary opportunities for them to feel empowered as they learn to take responsibility for their behavior. Making choices also gives them the freedom and encouragement to explore and express their individuality.

Families' cultural identity is interwoven into the program activities, materials and environment; appreciation of diversity is an essential part of the program. Parents can contribute greatly to the curriculum through sharing family stories, traditions, and interests.

Classroom activities also include Bible Stories and Christ centered songs. Chapel will begin in September and will be taught twice per month.

## **Sharing Time**

Most children like to bring a treasure from home. This is a good opportunity for him/her to be the center of a group and relate what is of interest about the treasure. Wonderful language development, development of self-confidence and experience taking turns, all come from this simple daily routine. Books, items that relate to the monthly theme and any nature items may be brought in at anytime.

## **Kindergarten Readiness**

Sometimes parents ask "When will my child begin to learn letters and numbers?" or "When should I send him/her to preschool?" Grace First Presbyterian Church Preschool is sometimes characterized as a preschool, other times as a child development center. It is important to remember that early literacy and age appropriate math, science and social studies concepts are interwoven throughout the daily program.



In these early years, it is best to develop number and letter awareness and skills in the most natural ways as an integral part of the day. By presenting these important tools in developmentally appropriate play activities, the skills can be assimilated and understood by the children in ways that make sense to their developing minds. Please read the weekly lesson plans posted on the Parent Communication Board in your child's classroom. This will ensure that you are aware of the active learning occurring and how you can participate in the home school connection activities. Children who attend Grace First Preschool will enter Kindergarten well prepared to learn in the most formal school environment.

## **Guiding Children's Behavior at Preschool**

### ***Discipline through Active Listening***

The questions most often asked by parents charged with the responsibility of raising children usually have something to do with "discipline". Grace First Presbyterian Church Preschool is child-centered and flexible; it has important rules and limits by which we all must abide. At times, when a child's behavior threatens their own safety or the safety of others, is potentially harmful to toys or material or interferes with teaching/learning environment in the classroom, it is important that the inappropriate behavior be stopped while keeping a child's self esteem intact, or better yet, enhancing a child's view of him/herself.

The way that we do this is by actively listening to the children. Active listening is a way of first listening to verbal and/or non verbal language and then reflecting back to the child the "message" which we received. Listening in this manner not only encourages children to keep the lines of communication open, it also validates the child's needs and feelings. For example:

When two children are in conflict over use of some equipment, it might go like this...

Teacher: "Sam, I see you're crying. You look sad."

Sam: Megan took my bike and I wasn't finished yet."

After some further clarification and acknowledgment of each child's wants, the children will usually agree to a way they can both win by taking turns.

By acknowledging and accepting children's feelings and by helping them become aware of the feelings of others, we are raising children who feel valued for the very special people they are.

## Setting Behavior Limits – Communicating what is NOT OK

Teacher: “Oh I see, Megan, it looks as though you want to ride that bike right now.”

Megan: “I want it.”

Teacher: “I see, Megan, that you want a turn on the bike. Joe said he wasn’t finished yet.”

By providing a child-centered program, meeting children’s needs, and consistently demonstrating respect for all people; the Preschool has developed an atmosphere in which children do not usually need to act out their feelings in unacceptable ways. It is normal, however, for children to need specific guidelines for behavior, and to need occasional demonstration of the limits. Teachers focus on social skills in their daily interactions with children and in the curriculum.

When discipline is called for, we state the behavior limit in a positive manner, briefly giving the child information about why the limit is being set. When stated positively, the child gets the message, “this teacher cares about me and my safety.” We then work with the child by giving him/her choices or by helping him/her find a safe way to get his/her needs met.

For example,

**A child is climbing over the railing of the climber and jumping to the surface below. This is a behavior limit because it is not safe. The child could get hurt.**

1. Acknowledge the child’s need:  
“You’re really having fun jumping for this high place.”
2. State the limit in a positive manner:  
“This is not a place for jumping because the surface here is hard and you could get hurt.”
3. Help the child find a place to get his/her need met:  
“Can you think of a place where you can jump where you won’t get hurt?”

When dealing with younger pre-verbal children, just offering a safe alternative might be enough.

“You’re having fun, but this isn’t safe. You can jump over here. This is safe.”

## **Rest Time**

Preschoolers are given an opportunity to rest after lunch in the classroom. They rest on individual cots and will use their individual bedding. Children who do not need to sleep are not required to do so, although we are careful to encourage rest for those who need it. If a child falls asleep, we will not awaken them; regulations do not allow us to interfere with natural bodily functions.

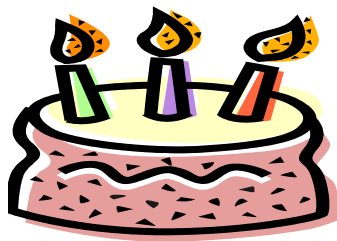
The preschool will provide cot sheets and parents are asked to bring individually labeled blankets for their child to use on a weekly basis.

## **Holiday and Cultural Celebrations**

Every holiday, in every culture, celebrates human values. In choosing how we will recognize and celebrate each holiday, we look for universal values and for the fun in which they can be enjoyed. Thus, we hope to be able to plan activities that are child oriented, full of warmth and pleasure, and which embody the human values of the holiday. In doing so, we hope that all of the children can gain appreciation for the richness of their culture as well as other cultures. Parents are encouraged to offer insight and information regarding cultural practices and/or holidays.

## **Birthdays**

Birthdays are special times, traditionally celebrated in our culture with sweet foods. At Grace First Presbyterian Church Preschool we recognize birthdays with a paper crown, a song and parents are invited to provide a special food to be eaten at our morning snack. It is not necessary to provide party hats, candles, favors and ice cream; a simple celebration is usually easier for the child to handle. In providing treats for birthdays parents are asked to keep in mind our efforts to provide nutritious as well as delicious foods, and to avoid peanut products. Basically...simple is sweet.



## **Nutrition**

Mealtimes, much like many of the routines here at preschool are seen as opportunities for children to socialize, to learn health and nutrition and to enjoy themselves. We want the children to derive pleasure as well as social and nutritional benefits.

All children enrolled in our Full Day program will provide their own lunch. A morning and afternoon snack will be provided with milk or juice. Children who are in the half day program and plan to participate in the Stay Day will provide their own lunch.

Grace First Presbyterian Preschool has a **“NO NUTS”** policy. (This means no nuts of any kind) This will include but is not limited to peanut butter. For example, it includes walnuts, almonds, hazelnuts, pecans, macadamia nuts, pistachios and any kind of food that may include any type of nut.

The reason behind the decision to be a “NO NUT” center is literally a matter of life and death. A few children in the center have a life threatening allergy to peanuts. If the child should advertently come into contact with peanut butter, he/she would immediately develop a sever skin reaction. However, if the child were to ingest any amount of it, the outcome may become fatal.

## **What to Bring and What to Wear**

Send me in clothes I can play and learn in! All clothing worn at preschool should be work-play type clothing, not dress up type clothing. We plan to have fun! That can mean messing around and getting dirty in the process. We can't let clothing interfere with exploring and investigating the world!

At Grace First Presbyterian Church Preschool, the staff has learned by experience that the children need to be free to paint, play etc...whether or not their clothing is carefully covered by an apron or smock. With smocks on hand and the best of efforts and intentions, children have been found to remove smocks, get paint under them and generally undermine their use. We have also noticed that the nature of the learning/exploring can be significantly altered when adults impose our standards of cleanliness. So...we do our best to give your child loving care and lots of attention, a safe and healthy environment, and opportunities to learn. This will sometimes involve getting messy and we will not be responsible for stained clothing. Please dress your child accordingly. We purchase “washable” paint, but you must treat clothes with a stain remover before washing!

***CLEARLY LABEL YOUR CHILD’S SWEATER, JACKET AND SHOES –***

Anything likely to come off during the day. We are sad when clothes go unclaimed for lack of labeling.

***PLEASE BRING A COMPLETE CHANGE OF EXTRA CLOTHING FOR YOUR CHILD*** in a clearly marked zip lock bag or backpack. Mark the clothing, too. When your child uses the extra clothing, a reminder notice will be sent home to replace it.

***CHILDREN’S FEET MUST BE PROTECTED BY CLOSED –TOE SHOES.***

It is extremely difficult to climb safely in sandals, tender toes can be painfully squished if stepped on or bumped while unprotected. For those reasons, do not send your child to school in “flip-flops”, platform shoes or sandals without back straps. We want to take care of their toes while they are here and to let them run, climb and bike without tripping over their own shoes.

***It is OK to bring...***

Bring “blankies” or whatever item your child needs as a security blanket. (Label it) These “transitional items” are marvelous coping mechanisms for children, who created them because he/she needs them for now. It is very helpful for the child who has such a special item to bring it to school. Often the “blankie” will be dropped casually during play then returned to for a brief hug between play times. We will do our best to keep track of these items and return them to his/her cubby when not in use.

***PLEASE DO NOT BRING...***

- Candy or gum.
- “Weapons” such as toy guns or swords.
- Money, such as coins.

## **First Day**

### ***Before the first day of school...***

Every child needs to have a visit to our preschool before arriving for the first time to stay without his/her parent. We cannot make exceptions to this important pre-attendance visit. If a child has one or more visits to the center before the first day, parting will be smoother, and the child will have more confidence.

Parents usually want to remain with their child as long as the child really needs them on the first day. It is wise to arrive early on your child's first day. Age is not a good predictor of readiness for separation. Some very young children will be ready to be independent right way, causing parents to feel a bit rejected! (It helps to remember that this is a sign of confidence and independence in the child.) Sometimes parting is easy the first week, and then later the child clings to you when you expect to leave. The child has realized that you are going to be gone for a considerable time, and has figured out what his new schedule is all about. This turn of events is not a cause for worry -- it's another of the many milestones in the lifelong process of separation from parents. As a parent, you probably know what to expect of your child.

Please prepare your child in the weeks before starting by talking about the program, always mentioning that you will return and take him home. Read books such as *The Runaway Bunny*; *You Go Away*; *Will I have a Friend*; *Everything Changes*; *Going to Day Care*. Visit your local children's library and ask for books on separation and going to school. Take photos of the Center and teachers to keep at home. Bring photos of yourself and family to keep at the Center.

Whatever the child's feelings on the first day, or any day, it is best to accept and respect their honest expression of these feelings. "It's okay to cry..." The teachers will support you when you are ready to depart, and to help your child deal with the upsetting feelings. Once you make the decision to leave, it is best to say good bye and then follow through. If you start to leave but return when your child protests, it tends to increase anxiety and does little to improve the parting (usually makes it much more difficult). Once you have left, you are welcome to call the office to check on your child. We will gladly let you know how things are going.

## **Arrival and Departure**

Our Staff Must Say Hello to your child upon arrival. Be certain that your child has been noticed...don't let him/her slip in without a greeting.

Always Say Goodbye to your child. NEVER leave your child without clearly saying "good-bye"...if separation causes tears, we can accept the tears.... But don't make the mistake of causing mistrust and confusion by disappearing without the good-bye hug or kiss or your traditional ritual. Do not underestimate the importance of departure rituals! Children sometimes fret a whole day because they missed that good-bye kiss.

Don't Drag It Out Too Long. It is helpful for the parent to show their confidence in the child's ability to adjust by making a comfortably brief departure. Sometimes a child feels the need to prolong the morning's parting, and can work up quite a lot of sad feelings in the process, but is quick to adjust once she/he understands that the parent is leaving.

If your child is upset when you leave, you may be worried. Phone Us! Parents are welcome to call the Center at any time to ask how a child's feeling; we will gladly give you a report on your child's adjustment and present situation. We'll let you know if she/he has worked through the upsetting feelings.

### ***At Pick Up Time***

Parents are asked to complete sign-outs, paperwork, and office communication before picking up their child from the classroom. It's just easier!

Please help your child bring their day at the preschool to a meaningful end by allowing them to finish, briefly, what they are doing, and to say goodbye to a few friends and their teachers. Some children will want to drag it out, and this can be wearing for both of you. So, allow a short time to adjust to leaving, and be sure to say good-bye. Teachers always need to know of departures, so do allow for the teacher to give your child a good-bye hug or at least a wave across the yard.

Please do not stay longer than 15 minutes waiting for your child. Although we encourage you not to rush, all of the children will be affected by departures that take too long.

***Pick-ups after closing time will incur late fees. Late fees will be charged at 12:05 PM for the half day program and at 5:35 PM for the full day program. The following fee of \$10.00 for the first 10 minutes and \$1.00 per minute after the first 10 minutes will be charged.***

**For your Child's Security**

1. Allow your child to say hello and goodbye to the teacher in your presence, or be a role model by doing so yourself if the child isn't ready.

2. Be certain that a teacher, who knows you, has seen you arrive and depart. Take No Chances.

3. Go out of your way to get to know the staff. Don't be shy! Know their names and talk with them so they will know you well. This really helps.

4. Bring a written note to the Office if a different person is going to pick up your child. (They'll need to bring identification so we know who they are.)

5. If you have a court restraining order or other official documentation limiting someone from picking up your child, bring a copy to the office.

Thank you for helping us do all we can to keep your child safe.

**Absences and Extra Time**

If your child will be absent from school, be sure to call the center to report his/her absence. Your call is an important courtesy for those who are waiting for a space for the day, or to the teachers who are planning special activities.

**“Make up days” for Missed Days**

- Only **full days** of absence can be credited. Picking up early or coming late does not count as an “absence”.
- Only time missed for an illness will be credited for a makeup day.
- Vacations taken during school days are not eligible for makeup days.
- Makeup days must be requested and approved in advance.
- Space availability must be confirmed prior to your make up day.



The possibility that the wrong person might try to pick up a child must be considered, so we ask for your cooperation to guard against this unthinkable situation. If someone other than a parent is to pick up your child, please bring a written note (including your signature) to the Office. We will check their ID. Teachers are trained to ensure that only known persons may pick up children.

## **Health**

The preschool is only prepared to care for children who are well. Children who are ill must not be brought to preschool. They need to be at home where they can regain their health and rebuild their resistance to illnesses. Please call the preschool if your child will be absent.

If your child becomes ill at school, you will be notified as soon as possible and required to pick up your child.

### **When Am I Too Sick to Attend Preschool?**

Generally speaking, you're child should stay home if I am not well enough to participate fully in the days' activities, including outdoor play. Specifically, when you're child has had any of the following symptoms in the previous 24 hours...

Fever	Nausea or Vomiting	Impetigo
Earache	Severe coughing	Step Throat
Diarrhea	Green runny nose	Unexplained rash
Lethargy	Lice	Conjunctivitis

Your child can return back to preschool when he/she has been prescribed antibiotics for 24-48 hours, when my runny nose is much milder and doesn't require frequent wiping, when my stool, tummy or fever has returned to normal and is stable.

### **Grace First Preschool Guidelines for Excluding Children with Illness**

1. Respiratory illnesses and colds: Children with fresh colds will be excluded for 2-3 days. Children with runny noses will not necessarily be excluded from the Center. However, if the mucous has color, such as green or yellow, or it is profuse and cannot be controlled by normal wiping, then the child can be excluded at the teacher's discretion. A child will also be excluded from the preschool if the runny nose is associated with a fever, an infected throat, congestion, persistent cough, or general irritability.
2. Diarrhea: A child with a loose or water stool will be observed. If it is repeated, the child must be excluded. Children must be free of diarrhea for 24 hours AND have had at least one normal bowel movement before returning.

3. Vomiting: children need to stay away from the Center for 24 hours after vomiting.
4. Other symptoms which might warrant exclusion or special attention include earaches and/or ear drainage; unusual listlessness; red or watery eyes; unexplained rashes or sores; difficulty in breathing; vomiting; headaches; croupy coughs, etc. If your child is not well enough to participate in all normal activities, including outdoor play, he or she may be excluded at the discretion of the teacher.
5. If your child develops a childhood illness or other contagious illness, the staff should be notified at once. For example, notify the staff if your child has measles, rubella, chicken pox, impetigo, conjunctivitis, etc. We will alert the other teachers and parents to watch for possible symptoms in other children.
6. Children with a temperature above 101 and no other symptoms may be sent home at the teacher's discretion. The child must be free of fever for 24 hours before returning to the Center.
7. Children with conjunctivitis (i.e., "pink eye") must see a doctor and have been taking medication for at least 24 hours before returning to the center.

## **Medications**

Children receiving medications must have written consent from the parents, permitting staff to give prescription medication. The teachers can only give medications out of the original prescription bottle with the drug name, the physician's name, date, child's name, dosage, and times to be given. Other non-prescription drugs will only be given under exceptional circumstances and with the written permission of the physician and parent.

- Parents drop off medication with the Director in the office.
- Parents will complete the medication permission slip in the office
- Medication will be stored in the staff lounge locked medication box located on top of the staff lounge refrigerator.

## **Allergies**

All allergies, food and other, must be reported upon enrollment. Environmental allergies, such as dust, pollen, other, should also be brought to our attention.

We will inform our staff of the foods to which a child is allergic and we need your help in learning the particulars.

We can provide substitute foods for allergic children. Arrangements should be made with the Director, in writing.

- It is vital that we know of allergy to bee stings, peanuts, any substance that could be life-threatening to your child.

## **Fire and Earthquake Safety**

### **Evacuation Routes**

Parents should familiarize themselves with the Evacuation Map in order to be prepared in case of emergency. is available for downloading.

### **Emergency Contact Information**

Emergency Information Phone Line: 562-425-0080

Grace First Presbyterian Church Office Line: 562-420-3393

### **Fire Drills**

Fire drills are carried out once monthly, as a center. An alarm will sound, and following the plans posted in each room, children leave the building accompanied by their teachers, who also bring the classroom pack, first aid kit and sign-in sheet.

At the designated outdoor meeting place, the director or disaster drill coordinator will meet each class and call roll before the class returns to its yard or room.

### **Earthquake Drills**

Earthquake drills are carried out once monthly. At the first tremor, staff are to say loudly and firmly, "Earthquake!". She/he then drops and covers, wherever she/he is, and verbally encourages/helps all

those children nearby to do the same. It is imperative that the adults protect themselves first in order to be available to help the children after the quake is over.

### **Shelter in Place Drills**

Shelter in Place drills are carried out once quarterly, as a center. An alert will be sent out, and teachers will proceed with the 4 S's – SEEK shelter, SECURE environment, SILENCE any sounds, STAY where you are until you have been advised it is safe to leave.

In the event of a threatening person on campus, we will “shelter in place”. This means that we will lock the Preschool gates and close windows and blinds, and protect the children. The preschool will receive warning information, and no parents should come to the preschool until the threat is removed. Parents will be contacted thru emails and/or a phone call.

We have an evacuation plan and a large quantity of emergency supplies stored in the preschool office. In the event of an emergency requiring evacuation, please come to the preschool as soon as you are able. Our staff will stay with the children as needed, and will provide food, water, shelter and first aid.



### **Babysitting**

In order to avoid conflicts of interest, the Grace First Presbyterian Preschool staff is not allowed to provide babysitting services to families.

### **Helping in the Classroom**

Helping in the classroom is highly encouraged! Come volunteer in your child's classroom and see how he/she relates with his/her peers, how they relate to himself/herself. Observe their relationships with adults in the preschool. There is time for a conference with the teacher to discuss what you have observed and his/her growth in general. Please speak to your child's teachers to schedule time in your child's classroom.

We also encourage you to volunteer at the preschool during special events, share a cooking project or come and read a story to your child's classroom.

If you have a concern, a complaint, a compliment, a suggestion or an idea,  
Please share it!  
Drop a note in the fee-payment box, or speak with the Director.

## **WE LEARN BY DOING**

We are here to make every event of the day and each happening during the day a real learning experience for your child. Of course, preschool is not a substitute for a good home, but it supplements and enriches the home in the following ways:

- Group experiences help children learn to live and work with adults other than their parents.
- Preschool gives children a wide selection of materials and activities not usually available to home and affords the child the opportunity to use them freely and creatively.
- Working in a group helps the child learn and respect their own rights and those of others.
- Children learn from each other... when they see other children being independent, resourceful, or creative; they are encouraged to do the same.
- The preschool provides a wide range of experience on the young child's level, including stories, music, creative activities, science, motor development, enrichment programs, etc. in order to lay the groundwork for later school experiences.
- We recognize that we have a three-fold responsibility, to the child, to his/her parents, and to be an extension of the Christian nurture of the church.
- We shall give to each child affection, acceptance, and approval; so that he/she may grow emotionally, physically, spiritually, cognitively, and socially.
- And perhaps the most important of all... we will have fun with your child. We want him/her to know that school is a happy place to be.



When I easel paint I learn:

1. To develop my imagination and creativity.
2. Hand-eye coordination.
3. To distinguish and purposely create shapes.
4. To express my feelings and ideas.
5. That my ideas have value.
6. Relationships of space and size.
7. Concepts of symmetry balance and design.

When I cut with scissors I learn:

1. To control the small muscles in my hand.
2. Concepts of shape, size, color and location.
3. To exercise my imagination and creativity.

When I scribble and draw I learn:

1. To hold a pencil or other drawing implement and to control the pressure.
2. Hand-eye coordination
3. To exercise my imagination and creativity.
4. That my ideas have value.
5. Concepts of shape, size, color and location
6. To express myself with words when describing my drawing.

When I finger paint I learn:

1. To exercise my imagination and creativity.
2. About how colors mix to make new colors (science)
3. Concepts and shape, size, color and location.
4. Hand-eye coordination
5. An acceptable way to make a mess, and have fun sharing ideas with others who are near.

When I paste, glue, and collage I learn:

1. To exercise my imagination and creativity.
2. Concepts of shape, size, color and location, and design, relevant to reading.
3. About different texture.
4. How to create patterns and designs, a math skill.

When I play with play dough or clay I learn:

1. To see the shape against the background of the table, a reading skill.
2. Concepts of shapes, sizes, length and height.
3. To see negative space when cookie cutter shapes are taken away.
4. To express feelings, especially negative feelings with squeezing and pounding.
5. To exercise my imagination and creativity.
6. That the amount of a substance remains the same even when the shape changes.

When I play with sand I learn:

1. To exercise my imagination.
2. Concepts of size, shape, and volume, empty and full.
3. How to use tools.
4. To solve problems.
5. Concepts of warm and cool, wet, damp, and dry, heavy and light.
6. How to play socially with others.
7. To create my own patterns and symbols, reading and writing skills.
8. To observe changes, a science skill.

Examining objects at a nature table helps me learn:

1. New vocabulary.
2. Concepts of texture, color, weight, and size.
3. To group objects into categories.
4. To observe likenesses and differences.
5. To appreciate nature and develop a sense of wonder.

When I sort things I learn:

1. To notice details, likenesses, differences and to form categories, essential reading and math skills.
2. Concepts of color, size, and shape.
3. Numeral concepts more and less.
4. Logical reasoning.

When I string beads I learn:

1. Hand-eye coordination.
2. Concepts of color, shape, and location.
3. Number concepts like more, less, longer, and shorter.
4. To create and reproduce patterns.
5. Pride in accomplishment.

When I play with pegboards I learn:

1. One to one correspondence, one peg for one hole, a math skill.
2. To make and repeat patterns, a math skill
3. Possible left to right progression, a reading skill.

4. Concepts of addition as I add one peg at a time.
5. Colors.
6. Symmetry, shapes, order, and design.
7. Hand-eye coordination.

When I do cooking projects I learn:

1. About nutrition, tastes and food groups.
2. How heat and cold change things.
3. Concepts of volume and measure.
4. Vocabulary.
5. Whole-part relationships, math concepts.
6. Awareness of my own and other cultures.

When I play with blocks, cars, and trucks I learn:

1. Concepts of shape, size, length, and location, all reading and math skills.
2. To create and repeat patterns, a math skill.
3. To exercise my imagination.
4. To express ideas.
5. To cooperate with others.
6. To solve problems.
7. About the properties of wood.
8. To see myself from a different perspective, that of a giant.



When I play on riding toys I learn:

1. Strength, balance, and large muscle coordination (legs, torso and arms).
2. To use my energy in a constructive way.
3. Concepts of speed, direction, and location
4. To use my imagination as I pretend to be different characters and to make different “road” noises.
5. To negotiate and take turns.
6. Self-confidence, as I master new skills.



When I play on climbing equipment I learn:

1. Physical strength, coordination, and balance.
2. To use my imagination.
3. To cooperate with others when involved in group play.
4. To solve problems.
5. Self-confidence as I develop new skills.

When I participate in circle time activities I learn:

1. To listen, sit still, and understand spoken words.
2. That my ideas added to the discussion have value.
3. To wait when others are talking.
4. New vocabulary words.
5. To remember the words of songs and poems I have learned.
6. The names of others in the group.
7. To cooperate and be considerate of the needs of others.

When I look at books and listen to stories I learn:

1. That learning to read is important and enjoyable.
2. That letters on a page represent words.
3. To express my own thoughts, feelings and ideas better.
4. To exercise my imagination.
5. To interpret pictures to represent words and ideas.
6. To listen well to spoken language.
7. To make my own stories.
8. To handle books with care.
9. To recognize certain words when I see them in print.
10. To use more complex language patterns in my own speech.
11. To follow the development of thoughts and ideas in the plot of a story.

Reading to children frequently is one of the surest ways to ensure that they themselves will become eager and capable readers.

When I sing songs I learned at school I learn:

1. Principles of music and rhythm.
2. Vocabulary.
3. Memory skills and sequencing.
4. To be conscious of others.
5. Various concepts emphasized in songs.
6. "Auditory discrimination" recognizing differences in sounds, necessary for learning to read.
7. Awareness and identification with my culture and other cultures.
8. I become aware of the sounds of my language by manipulating them through rhymes and chants. (phonological awareness)

When I play rhythm instruments I learn:

1. To be conscious of rhythm in music.
2. Concepts of fast and slow, loud, and soft.
3. To express myself in new different ways.
4. Listening skills.
5. "Auditory discriminations" recognizing differences in sounds necessary for learning to read.
6. To interpret and understand signals and cues.

When I play letter games I learn:

1. To recognize and name upper and lower case letters.
2. To associate letters with the sounds they represent.
3. To recognize my name and other words.
4. I learn to isolate sounds of specific words. (phonemic awareness)
5. I learn that letter names are different from the sounds they represent.

When I dance I learn:

1. Balance and coordination.
2. To be conscious of the moods and rhythm of the music.
3. To express myself physically.

When I play with puppets I learn:

1. To express my ideas with words.
2. To take on the role of someone else.
3. To use voice tones as well as words.
4. I learn empathy by stepping into another character's shoes seeing an event from another perspective.

When I play in the dress-up corner I learn:

1. To be flexible in my thinking and to make decisions.
2. To express myself with my words.
3. To try different adult roles.
4. To solve social problems through negotiation with friends.
5. To sort and organize playthings.
6. To improvise and use things in a symbolic way to represent something else, abstract thinking.
7. To carry out my ideas with the cooperation of other.
8. To exercise my imagination and creativity.

**Acknowledgment Receipt & Review of  
Grace First Presbyterian Church Preschool Parent Handbook**



I acknowledge receipt of Grace First Presbyterian Church Preschool Parent Handbook and I have reviewed and understand its contents.

\_\_\_\_\_ Child's Name

\_\_\_\_\_ Parent's Name

\_\_\_\_\_ Parent's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_ Parent's Signature

