

Grace United Methodist Preschool

Handbook

LIC # C18BR0111



Grace United Methodist Preschool

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Welcome to *Grace United Methodist Preschool*

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Thank you for allowing us to share in the development of your child. Our program here at Grace United Methodist Preschool will have a strong Christian foundation and present a conscious awareness of God, His creation and constant love. A well-rounded and balanced program of physical, emotional, social, cognitive and spiritual activities will be provided. The Preschool Advisory Board is tasked with monitoring that mission and continuing to improve available services. It is within this context that all areas of learning will be expressed.

Our Promise To You...

We Promise -

- To honor your role as a parent and to partner with you in the care and development of your child.
You will feel completely confident and reassured when you leave your child with us.
- You will know that we value your child as a unique individual to be nurtured, protected and respected at all times.
- You will know that committed, dedicated educators are caring for your child.
- You will watch your child develop a love of learning and a rich imagination.
- You will see your child develop strong bonds with our teachers and other children.
- You will share the joy of your child's experiences in our preschool through regular communication.
- You will be treated as an important member of our family.
- You can expect us to listen carefully and respond quickly to any questions or concerns.
- You will know that it is our privilege to serve your family.

Philosophy Statement

At Grace United Methodist Preschool, it is our desire to provide a safe and nurturing environment that will promote the physical, spiritual, social, emotional and cognitive development of the children in our care.

Our intent is to facilitate a program that is developmentally appropriate for each child.

Our classrooms are designed to provide educational learning experiences that are at the age and stage of your child's development. Incorporated into the daily schedule and curriculum are weekly themes. While being introduced to various topics, children explore by hands-on experiences within the classroom during center and circle times.

The learning opportunities for young children are endless. It may seem as though they are just playing, but in reality, they are developing and polishing many skills needed for formal education. The teacher's role is to scaffold each child's learning experiences. We continuously provide curriculum that fits each individual child's current level of performance, while encouraging developmental achievements. Both child and teacher-directed PLAY are essential components of our curriculum. It is through this vehicle that mental growth, creativity and social skills are stimulated. We encourage children to develop a strong, positive attitude and self-esteem. By enabling children and providing age-appropriate learning opportunities, our environment allows children the freedom they need to move throughout the classroom and focus on their area of interest. Centers provide manipulatives that challenge their abilities and previously learned knowledge. Throughout the year, we observe children organizing and making connections.

In conclusion, one of the most vital and necessary skills that preschool-age children should be developing is his/her ability to function with their peers and other adults. It is within this accomplishment that the child can grow as a whole person.

Incorporated into all lessons are the basic fundamentals of learning:

- Language and Cognitive Thinking, Skills and Concepts Perception
- Gross and fine motor skills
- Auditory, visual and kinesthetic senses
- Christian education
- Art and music
- Pre-math
- Self-help skills
- Social and emotional development

These concepts will be taught through the following methods:

- Problem solving
- Critical thinking
- Logic
- Investigating
- Exploring

Our observation clearly indicates that children absorb information, process and organize this information, and then have a unique ability to convey their learning back to us in a way that makes sense to them.

Social and Emotional Development

One of the ways that we show respect for children is by enhancing their development opportunities. By investing in their development, we are signaling that we believe in them and see them as capable and competent. It is tempting to focus on easily recognized academic skills, but the importance of social and emotional development cannot be underestimated.

Play

By playing, children learn and develop as individuals. Some children prefer to spend most of their time with creative play, some with imaginative play and others with active play. A balanced diet of play is best for development. It is good for your child to play in lots of different ways.

Our Program

Twos - Two-year olds are terrific learners. They are beginning to understand group play and become better at communicating their thoughts. With our twos, we emphasize language development to help children turn their ideas into words and sentences. Children will also have plenty of group activities in which to practice social skills, such as cooperation, sharing and taking turns.

Threes - A preschooler's world opens up in new ways as children improve coordination, learn complex games, and begin to interact more with their peers. In our three-year-old program, we will introduce language, math, science, and social skills in a logical, natural sequence to encourage learning one step at a time. Our teachers also provide plenty of individual attention to support your child's unique needs. Our programs provide a rich classroom environment where children are encouraged to explore and are challenged to learn, while making friends and developing self-confidence. We all know that children learn best by doing. So, we provide opportunities for hands-on experiences, such as making collages, which combines creative expression and a tactile experience.

VPK- VPK is a critical time for children as they begin the adventure of a lifetime of learning. Our VPK program promotes independence while preparing your child for the next exciting phase - KINDERGARTEN!!! We make the transition smoother by helping children become more familiar with an organized environment. We focus on group play to develop social skills such as listening, sharing and cooperation. Our teachers have a passion for what they do and consider it a privilege to partner with you during this special time in your child's life.

Dedicated Staff

Grace United Methodist Preschool has high standards, in which we carefully screen and select candidates who will teach your children. All teachers comply with the Grace United Methodist Preschool Child Protection and Safety Policy. We have assembled a staff of sensitive, loving and caring professionals that encourage continued growth and development for your children. Each member of our staff, including substitutes, are mandated by the state to finish 40 hours of childcare classes which include Rules and Regulations, Child Abuse and Neglect, the Ages and Stages of Child Development and Health/Nutrition. In addition, they are certified in First Aid and Infant/Child CPR. In addition to meeting these requirements, it is mandatory that our teachers do 10 hours of in-service each year. This ensures they have proper up-to-date training and the ability to implement age-appropriate curriculum within the classroom.

Families

Grace United Methodist Preschool encourages parent participation. It is an important aspect of a child's educational experience. During special activities, parents are invited to sign up to join and participate in class events. We encourage parents to come to Family Chapel and be present during any parade we put on throughout the year. We will also have opportunities for moms and dads to have special times with their child at school for Mother's Day Tea and Donuts with Dudes.

Statement of Non-Discrimination

Grace United Methodist Preschool does not discriminate in providing services to children and their families, qualified applicants, or its employees on the basis of race, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, sex, age or marital status. Our employment practices and school policies are consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Grace enrolls children of any race, color, national and

ethnic origin with all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students of this program.

Discipline

Prevention, redirection and positive encouragement are key when dealing with children in behavioral situations.

- We encourage children to use their words and work out conflict situations among themselves.
- When needed, teachers, or the Director, will step in and help resolve conflict.
- "Quiet Time" or "Safe Place" is used only after the above is attempted.

Teachers have a unique ability to observe children and will do their best to ensure their safety. No child will be allowed to harm another in any way. Discipline will be respectful and within appropriate, developmental expectations.

Our policy will consist of gentle reminders, redirection and quiet time, if needed. If your child's behavior makes it impossible for teaching and learning to continue, you will be notified. If appropriate, a conference will be scheduled, and a behavior strategy will be implemented. Suspension or expulsion could occur if any harmful behavior happens consistently.

In accordance with state rules, the following WILL NOT be used:

- Severe humiliating or frightening discipline
- Discipline associated with food
- Spanking or any other form of physical punishment

VPK Requirements

As you may know, VPK is funded by the state and has very strict guidelines that we must follow to comply with their regulations. Please read these requirements carefully and comply with them closely.

*** Attendance requirements for VPK are 80/20. Which means your child needs to attend class 80% of the month and 80% of the total school year which is 540 hours. The ELC reserves the right to dismiss a child from VPK due to excessive absences. Each VPK student has 36 days for the entire school year that they can miss. Once a child misses 36 days they will be dropped from the program.**

Tuition Policy

Our Tuition Fees are calculated on a 10-month payment schedule and are due for each child on the 1st of the month. Written or verbal notice will be given if

payment is not received by the 10th of the month. If tuition is not received by the 10th of each month there will be an additional late fee charge of \$25.00.

Since our costs remain consistent for salaries and operational expenses, no deductions in tuition can be made for days a child does not attend school, whether for illness, vacation or school holidays.

Grace United Methodist Church offers a Scholarship program on an as-need basis. If you need further information on this program, please contact the Director.

School Calendar

We follow the Brevard County Public School calendar closely. Due to unexpected changes in the public-school calendar, our calendar is also subject to change throughout the school year. Please note, for any natural emergencies, such as hurricanes or climatic weather, we ask you to listen to the local news and if Brevard County closes the public schools, we will be closed as well. We will follow the same schedule as they do for openings and closings...

Hours of Operation

Our preschool hours of operation will be as follows:

Before Care Hours: 7:30 am - 9:00 am

Preschool Hours: 9:00 am - 12:00 noon

After Care: 12:00 noon - 2:00pm

Please pick up your child each day, on time, to ensure that our schedule each day is not disrupted and our classrooms run smoothly.

Before Care / Aftercare

After care is from 12:00-2:00pm and will take place with the aftercare teachers. Before and aftercare will be in room 123 the first room on the right, also known as the music room. Children will gather to have lunch together with combined age groups. The teachers use this time to discuss health topics and other manners with the children. Lunch will be provided by you, the parent. Remember to label lunch boxes, cups, sippy cups with first and last name. Please do not send food that requires refrigeration or heating. Environmental health does not permit the use of microwave ovens. You can purchase these cards in the front office. The cards come in increments of 5 day and 10-day cards.

The cost of aftercare is \$15.00 a day.

5-day card for \$75.00

10-day card for \$150.00.

After care and before care cards must be used by the end of the school year. After care and before care cards do not carry over from year to year, nor are they refundable or transferable.

Before care is \$10.00 a day.

5-day card for \$50.00

10-day card for \$100.00.

Once you have purchased your card we will take it to your teacher. In each classroom there will be a designated spot for these cards to stay where you are able to check and see how many days you have on your card. Each day our child stays your teacher will date and sign a box on your card and put it back in your aftercare card slot. A reminder will be sent home if you have used all the days on your card.

Nutrition

Grace believes in instilling good nutrition habits for children. You will provide a morning snack and a lunch for those children who will be staying for After Care. Snacks need to be healthy options. All preschoolers need to bring a water bottle to school. No juice please. If you forget to bring water or snack, we can provide a cup for water and a small snack.

FOOD ALLERGIES must be in writing from a doctor and given to the Director. These will be posted throughout the school to ensure all staff are aware of any allergy a child may have.

Grace is a peanut free school.

Arrival and Departure Procedures

Your child's safety is our primary concern. With your cooperation, and with the policies below, we hope that you will feel assured when leaving your child with us. At drop off, we ask that each child be brought to the door of their classroom at the beginning of the day, so that their teacher can personally greet them and sign them into the classroom.

At dismissal time, we will never release your child to anyone unless we are sure of the identity of the person. All children are to be picked up from their classrooms or designated spots like playground or side yard. Those people picking up your child/children should be prepared to present ID and need to be authorized to pick up the child on the enrollment form and emergency contact form. The child will only be released if you have notified the Director/Assistant Director

and/or the Teacher if permission is given in advance for names not on the enrollment form. A parent, who has sole custody, must inform the director and provide documentation. It is the teacher's job to make sure that parents sign in and out their children as they enter and leave the classroom each day. Always make sure that you sign your child out every day before you take them from the classroom, special program or event. For the safety of all, to reinforce our classroom procedures, please monitor your child in the hallways to ensure they use walking feet and are respectful of the artwork in our halls and other items that may be on display. Also, when your child is here playing on our "Front Lawn"; before or after school, please remember that these rules also apply.

We love to see your children playing, however, we ask that you remember the following rules when playing before or after school on the "front lawn"

- 1) Your child is in "parents care" and they need to be watched at all times
- 2) Please, no rough housing in the grass, mean tackling or wrestling
- 3) Please, No climbing the trees, and benches, or flag monument around the Fellowship Hall. We would hate to have your child fall
- 4) Please, No playing around the shed
- 5) Please, No jumping from the picnic tables
- 6) Please, NO PLAYING IN THE BUSHES
- 7) Please do Not let your child climb the fence
- 8) To respect the Memorial Garden, located by the "pumpkin patch" area, there is **absolutely no playing in the Memorial Garden.**
- 9) If your child needs to use the restroom or get a drink, they **MUST** have a parent bring them back into the building.

Thank you for helping us with this. We would hate for anything to happen to your child/children. We want them to be safe while they are here on the church/preschool campus.

Confidentiality Policy

Due to confidentiality, teachers and parents will discuss student progress or daily behavior privately.

Therefore, hallway and/or classroom discussions during preschool hours will not be allowed unless a time and private location is established between the parent and teacher. Please contact your child's teacher to set up a conference time and location.

Illness

Please do not send your child to school if they are not well enough to fully participate. A sick child risks exposing others to illness. No child can come to

school that has had signs of illness within 24 hours before their class day. Please note: preschool staff does not dispense any medication or non-prescription medication.

We will not accept a child with:

Fever

Vomiting Diarrhea

White, yellow or green runny nose

Cough

Strep-throat (They are still contagious until they have been on antibiotics for 48 hours!)

Impetigo (skin infection)

Rashes with fever

Head lice

Thrush

Inflamed eyes

Chicken Pox

If your child becomes sick while at school, he/she will be isolated from others, and you will be immediately notified to pick them up.

Accidents/First Aid

All injuries and incidents will be reported to the parents on the Accident Report form provided by Environmental Health. Out of respect and confidentiality, we do not name children involved in an accident or incident. The person supervising the children during the time of the accident will complete, date and sign the form. This form does require a parent signature. The Director will initial the report to ensure parents are properly notified. First Aid will be administered to minor cuts and bruises.

Please remember, it is critical that your Emergency Contact information stay up to date to ensure speedy notification for serious accidents or illnesses. If your personal information changes or those named in the Emergency Contact portion of your enrollment form changes, please make those changes in the office with the Director and with your child's teacher. Note: Most of our Preschool staff have been certified in CPR and First Aid training.

Clothing

Children are encouraged to wear casual, comfortable, and washable clothing. They will be involved in many activities, some of which will be messy. We suggest clothing with elastic waistbands and easy fasteners and sturdy rubber-soled shoes. Please, **no flip-flop sandals, Healy's or Crocs should be worn for your child's safety here at school.** Children use the playground every day, so please

dress your child appropriately for the weather. You may want to apply sunscreen or bug repellent on your child at home before coming to school. All children must have a complete change of clothes in their cubbies for "life's emergencies". We ask you to label all items of clothing and place them in a zip-lock bag. Please do not allow your child to bring personal items which could be lost or damaged

Diapering And Toileting Procedures For Two Year Olds

Diapering:

Diapers are changed when soiled or wet or will be changed according to the schedule for the group. (Parent provided)

Disposable wipes are used as each child is changed. (Parent provided)

Teachers and children's hands must be washed after each change. Children will practice using paper towels to dry their hands and turning off the faucet.

- Diaper changing area may not be used for any other purpose. The changing table must be cleaned with disinfectant after each use.

- Clothing, blankets or linens soiled by feces, urine, vomit or blood will be cleaned to the best of our ability, and placed in a double plastic bag to take home at the end of the day.

- Disposable diapers must be put in a double plastic bag and thrown away.

A change of clothing must be available for each child and must be provided by the parents.

Toilet Training:

Please make sure all clothing is properly labeled with your child's first and last name.

Children are toilet trained in accordance with the request of their parents and in a manner consistent with their physical and emotional abilities.

Children will not be punished for soiling or wetting their diaper or for not using the toilet, nor will they be coerced into toilet training.

Children will be supervised during toilet training.

Children and TEACHERS MUST WASH HANDS AFTER TOILETING. Soap and running water must be used, as well as paper towels.

Soiled clothing and diapers must be taken care of as described above.

3 year olds need to be potty trained before the beginning of the school year.

No pull ups or diapers for 3 year olds.

Celebrations

Holidays will be celebrated throughout the year. Parents are invited to come and participate in the fun. Sign-up sheets will be posted in your child's class for party donations. We ask you to send nutritious drinks and snacks, as well as

"treats" too! We encourage you to celebrate your child's birthday by sending in a special treat. Treats must be store bought.

Note: If your child is having a Birthday party outside of the school, and you wish to pass out invitations, please make sure there are enough for the entire classroom.

There are times that we will order Pizza for the children or have a special treat, and these foods will not be prepared here at school.

Field Trip Policies

Each parent will be given a permission slip for each field trip. It must be signed and sent back to the child's teacher by the due date. Some field trips may require payment.

Each Parent will drive his/her own child to the field trip location and stay with the child throughout the entire field trip.

Please let the child's teacher know with whom the child will be riding if it is not going to be with the parent.

In the event of a car accident, while on a preschool field trip, the parent's personal insurance will be primary and the church's insurance will be secondary.

No Teacher will transport a child in his/her personal vehicle, due to the churches insurance policy.

Policies may vary for certain field trips. We will let you know far in advance as to what we will be doing for each field trip.

Severe Weather and Drills

As part of our Emergency Preparedness, we practice fire and severe weather, drills on a monthly basis, so that your child will react in a calm and safe manner. In case of a hurricane alert, tornado warning or any emergency, listen to your radio. **If for any reason Brevard County Schools are closed because of severe weather, Grace Preschool will also be closed.** If severe weather occurs during preschool hours, the children will be kept safely in the Education and Administration building until it is safe for them to return to their classrooms.

Miscellaneous

1. Pets: There are times that there may be family pets at preschool. If your child has allergies to any pets or animals, please make sure you tell your child's teacher and the office so that can be noted in your child's official file

2. Smoking: Pursuant to Chapter 386, F.S., Smoking is PROHIBITED within the child-care facility, all outdoor areas, during field trips, and in vehicles being used to

transport children.

3. Changing/ Switching Classes: It is our policy not to change or switch children from one classroom to another AFTER our school year has started. It sounds like a very simple thing to do, however, it is very disruptive to the student getting moved and to the classroom they are moving into. The classrooms are all unique and the children within them form a very tight bond, and when change happens it can affect the learning process to slow down or stop. **For VPK, once the year has started, NO CHANGING WILL TAKE PLACE.** For the 2's and 3's, there may be a need based on developmental achievement by a student, and if so, both parent and teacher, along with the Center Director, will be involved in this process.

4. Termination /Withdrawal: If at any time you want to terminate or withdraw your child from our care, we will ask that you let us know.

5. Special Requests: Any special requests, such as teacher assignments, or friend requests, must be submitted in writing before the next school year starts. All requests must be in writing, and we will do our best to make sure your request is granted.

6. Parking: The preschool car parking lot is located in the main parking lot. Please drive slowly in and out of the parking lot area. There will be children coming and going from this area and our main goal is for everyone to be safe.



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