



Parent Handbook

Grace Preschool
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Contents

Introduction	2
Developmental Philosophy Statement	3
Preschool Administrative Procedures	
Ages of Children Accepted	4
Enrollment	4
Drop-off/Pick-up Procedures	4
Hours of Operation	5
Phone Numbers	5
Optional Services	5
Payment/Tuition	5
Records	6
Registration	6
Registration Packet	6
Sign-in/Sign-out Procedures	6
Visits	6
Curriculum/Daily Class Activities	
Christian Education	7
Field Trip Policy	7
Transportation	7
Community Resources	7
Preschool Policies	
Apparel	8
Behavior Management	8
Birthdays	9
Calls to School	9
Communication	9
Cubbies/School Bags	9
Diapering and Supplies	9
Items from Home	10
Lunch Time	10
Parent-Teacher Conferences	10
Parking Policy	10
Snack Time	10
Toilet Training	11
Questions/Concerns	11
Health and Safety	
Plan of Operation for Incidental Medical Services	12-14

Introduction

Welcome to our Los Gatos United Methodist Church family!

Grace Preschool is an integral part of the Christian education program of Los Gatos United Methodist Church. Concern is expressed for the total child with emphasis on God's love and care for each of us. Our program is designed to meet each child's social, physical, cognitive and spiritual needs. It serves the community without regard to color, race, creed, national origin, or religion. Grace Preschool provides a variety of experiences and relationships to stimulate growth. The program's objectives include increased spiritual awareness, enhanced ability to communicate, development of a positive self-image, development of social and physical skills, stimulation of intellectual curiosity and time for good old fashion PLAY!

We employ qualified and nurturing professionals who are committed to enriching the development of each child. We have an open door policy and welcome parent visits. We encourage parents to set up a time with teachers to participate in or lead activities such as: reading to children, cooking, science, art, music, or sharing occupations.

We are pleased to provide this handbook, which describes our program, goals and policies, as well as a myriad of practical details that make the school days for your children happy, successful and secure. Please read this handbook and keep it for reference.

We are delighted you have chosen Grace Preschool for your child. We look forward to sharing an enriching and fulfilling experience with your family.

Developmental Philosophy Statement

We are dedicated to providing an engaging and stimulating hands-on experience for the children of Grace Preschool. In all activities, we emphasize the process of discovery.

Our philosophy involves a three-way partnership between staff, parents, and children. It is based on the following assumptions:

Our Staff

- is knowledgeable of child development and child learning – they meet/exceed CA requirements for preschool educators
- get to know each individual child, understand his/her needs, strengths and interests and skillfully incorporate that knowledge into the classroom program
- works as a team with colleagues, parents, and administrators, as well as consultants that may be called for specific situations
- plans and maintains an enriching, stimulating curriculum and environment
- understands the value of childhood as an important stage in life unto itself and not just as preparation for the next stage
- likes to have fun and PLAY

Parents

- are welcome to visit (as well as grandparents, siblings, and other visiting relatives)
- are encouraged to share skills and interests with the children
- are encouraged to share family traditions with the teacher and the class
- work as a team with teachers and administrators by sharing information and concerns about their child(ren)

Children

- are treated with respect and dignity at all times by staff and administrators
- are nurtured in warm, caring relationships with staff
- are appreciated as individuals

We are dedicated to providing a developmentally appropriate hands-on education for the children of Grace Preschool. Students explore art, science, math, language arts, dramatic play, etc. - in a beautiful indoor and outdoor setting.

Preschool Administrative Procedures

Ages of Children Accepted

Grace Preschool is licensed to serve children ages 2.5 years through entry into Kindergarten.

Addendum to Handbook – Preschool Administrative Procedures;

Enrollment, page 4 (effective 1/2018)

A seven-day grace period will be considered for birthdays near the age cut off. Anything beyond that is at the discretion of the Director and requires a screening with the Director, along with input from the child's teacher.

Class placement is then decided by the Director.

Enrollment

Grace Preschool enrolls children without regard to race, color, creed, religion, or national origin.

Grace Preschool reserves the right to deny admission of a child to a particular class if the staff feels it is not a developmentally appropriate placement for the child. This will be determined by a Parent-Director conference.

Drop-off/Pick-up Procedures

Early drop-off, for no extra charge, is available starting at 8:30 AM daily. Unless the weather does not permit, a staff member will be in the play yard to receive your child if you arrive between 8:30 and 8:45 AM. Preschool classrooms open at 8:45 AM. Please refrain from entering the preschool classrooms before this time as teachers will still be preparing their classrooms for the child's arrival. Parents/Caregivers must walk their children into the classroom and sign in the child. It's important to bring your child on time. It's especially difficult for a young child to join in activities that have already begun.

School ends promptly at 11:45 AM (12:00 PM for Pre-K) for those attending only the regular preschool hours. **To ensure the safety of all campus users, we required that families leave the LGUMC campus within 15 minutes of pick-up time. During this time, children must be under your direct supervision (within 20 ft). Children found unsupervised will be signed into lunch bunch and you will be billed for the day.**

If your child will be picked up by someone other than a parent or an established carpool driver or caregiver, you must provide, in person, a signed and dated note to the teacher or office giving permission to release your child to this person.

We have found it necessary to charge those who are consistently late or extremely late in picking up. The charge is \$3.00 for the first 5 minutes you are late and \$1.00 a minute for every additional minute.

Hours of Operation

General drop-in office hours are 8:30 – 9:00AM and 11:30AM – 12:00 noon. Appointments at other times are welcome. Office hours are subject to change during preschool vacations.

Preschool Hours	8:45 AM to 11:45AM
Pre-K Hours	8:45 AM to 12:00 PM

Phone Numbers

Grace Preschool's direct phone number is **(408) 354-7163**.

If you need to contact the Los Gatos United Methodist Church office, you may call **(408) 354-4730**.

Optional Services

Extended Hours

Optional Lunch Bunch **11:45 AM– 1:30 PM**

For an additional fee, children can bring a box lunch (including drink) from home, have an extra outdoor play time, and indoor activity with a dismissal at 1:30. Please contact the office at least 24 hours prior to use. Please remember we are a **NUT FREE** school.

Diapering

For those children still in diapers, a diapering service is provided at an additional cost of \$25 per month. This fee covers the cost of all necessary supplies (diapers, wipes, gloves for staff, etc.) as well as the service itself. For sanitary reasons, we must change all children who come to school in diapers.

Payment/Tuition

Children are our first concern and, indeed, our love. We are dependent on tuition for the operation of our school. Grace Preschool is a non-profit school. We are a part of the church, but we are funded separately. All tuition monies are used to pay teacher salaries, buy and maintain equipment, maintain building and grounds, insurance, and consumables.

Annual tuition for your child is calculated according to school days in the year, and for your convenience is billed in 10 equal payments. Therefore, the payment is the same each month even if the school is open only part of the month. We do not offer make-ups for missed classes due to illness or vacations. **Our policy requires a 30 day notice if you choose withdraw from Grace Preschool.** The first installment of the tuition will not be refunded unless the withdrawing child is replaced by a new student. This first installment is **NON-REFUNDABLE** for any reason after June 1. Monthly payments are due by the first day of each month. Payments received after the 10th day of each month are considered late, and a \$25.00 late fee will be charged.

Please bring payments to the Grace Preschool office and deposit in the **TUITION BOX** mounted inside the office door. Please do not hand to a staff member.

Records

Your child's completed records must be on file before the first day of class. Attendance in class will not be permitted without the completed forms on file. Your records are private. Unless you give approval, your phone number/address will not be shared with other parents.

Registration

1. A non-refundable **\$75 registration fee** is required at the time of registration.
2. A completed registration form is required to register and a first installment of **1/10 yearly tuition** is required.
3. A minimum of 1/10 yearly tuition is due on the first day of every month, starting with September.
4. The completed Registration Pack is due before Orientation.

Registration Packet

Please keep your registration materials safe and bring them in by the published due date. This packet will include: Personal Rights, Parent's Rights, Preadmission Health History, Identification and Emergency Information, Consent for Emergency Medical Treatment, Physician's Report including immunization history, and Admission Agreement including a photo release.

Sign-in/Sign-out Procedures

It is very important for your child's safety to sign your child, (and any other children in your care) in and out of preschool every day. This simple procedure, **required by law**, helps us ensure that your child is accounted for in the event of an emergency. To sign your child in or out, sign your **full name** and time of drop-off or pick-up next to your child's name on the sign-in sheet. **This is a licensing regulation.**

Visits

Parents are welcome in our school at any time.

The California State Department of Social Services has the right to view all of our files and to visit with your child without supervision whenever they have a need to do so.

Curriculum/Daily Class Activities

At Grace Preschool, children learn about themselves and the world around them as they participate in a wide range of multi-sensory activities that are based on an anti-bias, multicultural curriculum. Attractive manipulative materials are available so that a child can understand abstract ideas in concrete ways. High self-esteem is promoted through positive social interactions and skill mastery in a caring and stimulating environment.

The classroom is structured so that the children can choose from a myriad of activities which introduce concepts in language, science, math and art. Our teachers reinforce these concepts through activities such as music and movement, cooking projects and free choice activities.

Christian Education

The families at Grace Preschool represent a broad range of Christian and Non-Christian observance. Holiday celebrations help children understand the traditions, customs and ceremonies. For example, the children have a birthday party for Jesus to celebrate Christmas.

An important part of the young child's developing sense of self is awareness of his/her heritage. Our goal is to deepen each child's understanding and appreciation of Christian beliefs. We welcome children and families of other beliefs and denominations as we believe that children learn from one another. Understanding that people have different beliefs is an important concept for children. This is openly discussed and validated in the classroom.

Chapel is conducted in the small, beautiful Grace Chapel located adjacent to the preschool wing. The children attend a 10-15 minute chapel, twice per month, with our Pastor and/or Children's Ministries Director.

Field Trip Policy

Field trips can add much understanding of God's world. Occasionally, walking field trips may be

planned. Parents will be notified of all field trips in advance and must sign a permission slip prior to each trip. Transportation services will not be provided or utilized by Grace Preschool. If a field trip requiring transportation is planned, it is expected that the parents will plan to attend the field trip with their children, or arrange suitable carpooling arrangements amongst themselves. Field trips are seen as a normal class day. If a parent/guardian chooses for their child not to attend the field trip, there will be no class for the child on that day.

Transportation

Grace Preschool does not provide any transportation services.

Community Resources

Upon request, or at the advice of your child's teacher and school Director, a list of resources and referrals is available to assist families with any special needs they may have regarding a child's adjustment to school or general growth and development.

Preschool Policies

Apparel

Children should dress in what is comfortable, simple and suitable for the weather. For their safety and comfort we require that the children wear close-toed, age appropriate footwear (i.e., no clogs, flip-flops, boots with high heels, etc.). **We ask that you send your children in comfortable clothes that are able to get dirty.**

Each student will be asked to send in an extra set of clothes to keep on hand. Generic sets of extra clothing will also be kept on hand by Grace Preschool. In the event that your child's clothing needs to be changed at school, you will be responsible for washing and returning the clothes to the school. Your child's soiled clothing will be sealed and given to you upon pick-up.

Behavior Management

Discipline is the positive and loving guidance given to a child who is constantly learning what behaviors are acceptable and appropriate in everyday situations. At Grace Preschool, we believe discipline is the process of encouraging a child throughout the day to cooperate with others and participate in activities in a safe and fair manner. This begins with assuring that the child feels loved and accepted as an individual and the child is clear as to what is expected. The teachers provide positive role models and set good examples. Parent and staff communication is essential to an effective discipline policy.

When a child is behaving in an unsafe manner towards himself or others, the child is made aware of this situation with a gentle hand on the shoulder, eye contact or verbal guidance, and is then redirected towards proper behavior. When peer conflict occurs, peer interaction and problem solving behaviors are taught to the children by teacher intervention, modeling and encouragement. If a child is out of control, there will be removal to a safe place until self-control is regained and the child is ready to contribute positively to the group. Each of these interactions should end on a positive note so that learning can occur. Physical punishment is never allowed.

Here is an example if a child has difficulty observing the limits; we assist him/her by following one or more of the corrective steps below:

1. Explain the inappropriate behavior.
2. Suggest alternative appropriate verbal and behavioral responses.
3. Redirect him/her to alternative activities if he/she cannot handle the current activity appropriately. The teacher will invite him/her to return in a more appropriate manner.
4. Prevent the child from committing a behavior that might harm himself/herself, another child, or property.
5. Notify the parents of the child's difficulty; develop a plan of action for home and preschool.

Birthdays

Children enjoy having their birthday celebrated in preschool; we want this day to be about your child and his/her uniqueness, not about the giving and receiving of gifts. In order to promote a healthy environment and to minimize allergen exposure, food “treats” will not be allowed for birthday celebrations (food “treats” such as cookies, cupcakes, etc. will still be offered during our school holiday celebrations).

Individual student birthday celebrations will be held on a pre-scheduled day. When it is a child’s birthday, we make it a special day for him/her by giving the child a crown to wear during a brief ceremony. Parents/guardians are welcome to join in the celebration.

To spare feelings, **PLEASE DO NOT USE THE CUBBIES/BAGS FOR BIRTHDAY PARTY INVITATIONS, UNLESS THE ENTIRE CLASS IS INVITED.**

Calls to School

The staff is committed to keeping you updated on your child’s progress. Pick-up and drop-off times are not an appropriate time to speak with your child’s teachers at length. If you need to speak with your child’s teachers, please arrange a meeting time with them, or call the preschool office at (408) 354-7163. We will make certain that the teachers receive the message. The teachers will return your call as soon as they are able.

If no one is available to answer your call immediately during school hours, and you have an urgent message, please call the church office at (408) 354-4730, and have someone deliver a message directly to us.

Communication

Parents will receive periodic church and preschool newsletters. These communications will be posted on the sign-in/sign-out cart and posted on our secure Shutterfly Share site. This is a quick, eco-friendly way to enjoy open communication between home and school.

Cubbies/School Bags

Every child has a cubby and/or school bag inside the classroom. Please check your child’s cubby/bag daily to retrieve important information. To spare feelings, **PLEASE DO NOT USE THE CUBBIES/BAGS FOR BIRTHDAY PARTY INVITATIONS, UNLESS THE ENTIRE CLASS IS INVITED.**

Diapering and Supplies

For children that are not yet toilet trained, a \$25 per month fee will be charged. This covers not only the cost of supplies (diapers, wipes, gloves for the staff, etc.) but the service itself. Once your child is toilet trained, this fee will no longer be charged.

Items from Home

We strongly recommend that you do not send items from home (i.e. toys) to school with your child unless it is for a specified sharing time requested by the teacher. If your child does bring something from home, please label all items with your child's name. These items must remain in their cubby or school bag. We will not be responsible for lost or broken treasures. Please: NO WEAPONS, WAR TOYS, ACTION FIGURES, FRAGILE OR VALUABLE ITEMS.

Lunch Time

For those that stay for the Lunch Bunch program, **parents are asked to supply a nutritious, "NUT FREE" lunch each day.**

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are held formally twice per year for our Pre-K and 3's programs, and once in the fall for our 2's program, unless your child's teacher feels more frequent conferences are appropriate. If you have a concern that you want to discuss with your child's teacher at other times during the year, please feel free to approach your child's teacher directly to set up an appointment.

Parking Policy

Parking hours for Grace Preschool are limited to 8:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. Other parking is available on the street for 90 minutes.

Snack Time

Grace Preschool serves a nutritious mid-day snack to each child, consisting of fresh fruits or vegetables, a grain and water. Snacks are selected for their compliance with licensing standards. Our snack menu is posted, each month, on the bulletin board outside each classroom.

If your child has any allergies, please inform the School Office by noting all allergies on your enrollment forms. In order to protect children with allergies, there is a ban on ALL NUT products. Grace Preschool strives to be a "nut free" school.

Grace Preschool's food allergy policy is as follows: Parents of allergic children will complete a doctor-approved Allergy Action Plan before school starts. Each child with a food allergy **other than peanut** will have a dedicated food box in the classroom for their parent-supplied snacks. Fresh fruit and vegetables will still be served to the child, as appropriate. Students without a documented food allergy will NOT be allowed to bring a snack from home.

Please be sure to provide breakfast for your child. Snack is not a substitute for breakfast.

Toilet Training

Toilet training is both an exciting and challenging time for children and parents. As teachers, we are committed to facilitating each stage of your child's growth and development.

Please send your child to school in underwear only after they have been able to stay **dry at home for a minimum of 1 week**. If a child has repeated accidents in his/her underwear at preschool, the teacher and Director will meet to determine a more helpful approach. We may require you to put your child in pull-up diapers or regular diapers if he/she has repeated potty accidents. This is for health and sanitary reasons. Please be patient with your child during this process. Each child will be toilet trained when he/she is ready.

Questions/Concerns

In the event that you have a concern regarding the preschool or your child's classroom, please address the staff member directly involved. If you feel the need to take further action, please see our Director. In the unlikely event that further action is necessary, please share your concern with our Grace Board Chairperson.

Health and Safety

When to Keep Your Child Home

Do not send your child to school when he/she is ill. A sick child does not enjoy preschool and endangers the health of other children and staff. It will be up to Grace Preschool staff to determine if you need to pick-up your child for any concerns we have with his/her health or well-being.

According to the Santa Clara County Health Department, Grace Preschool is required to send your child home or call one of your emergency contacts if your child has any of the following symptoms (This list may change with updates from the Santa Clara Co. Health Dept.):

Symptoms observed while at preschool

- **Unusual Behavior**: Child is cranky or less active than usual; child cries more than usual; child feels general discomfort or just seems unwell, loss of appetite.
- **Excessive Running Nose**: Along with abnormal behavior (runny nose due to allergy is acceptable with a doctor's note on file in the preschool office.)
- **Fever 99.5 or Above Auxiliary**: Few exceptions will be decided by the Preschool Director. Ex: Immunizations with normal behavior. ***The child can return to school 24 hours after the fever subsides without medication.***
- **Diarrhea**: (More than one abnormal, loose stool.) This is mandated by the Center for Disease Control. This child can return to preschool after 24 hours of firm stool. **There are NO EXCEPTIONS to this RULE.**
- **Vomiting**: The child may return to preschool after 24 hours of NO vomiting.
- **Eye Discharge**: Pink eye-tears, redness of eyelid lining, irritation, followed by swelling and discharge or pus.
- **Severe Coughing**: Child gets red or blue in the face; child makes high-pitched croupy or whooping sound after he/she coughs. Difficulty with breathing or rapid breathing.
- **Skin Rash**: Unusual spots or rashes. Child may return to preschool **ONLY** with a doctor's note stating the rash is **NOT** contagious. Severe itching of body or scalp or scratching of the scalp (these may be signs of Head Lice or Scabies).
- **Infected Skin Patch (es)**: Crusty, bright yellow, dry or gummy areas of skin.
- **Pain**: Headache or stiff neck.
- **White or Gray Stool**: Unusually dark, tea-colored urine.

It is the preschool program's sole determination to reserve the right to ask you to pick up your child if there are any concerns.

If we notice your child has any of the above symptoms, he or she will be brought to the office and must be picked up right away. A preschool representative will attempt to contact a parent first. If the parent is not available, we will begin calling other emergency contacts listed on your child's emergency form.

Contagious Diseases

If your child contracts a contagious disease, please contact the preschool office as soon as you receive the diagnosis. The preschool will then send an exposure notice to all the parents in your child's class.

The notice lists symptoms of the illness so that parents can be alerted.

This policy is for the protection of all children and is mandated by the state of California.

In compliance with a new law SB 277, beginning January 1, 2016, children who have not received all of their mandated vaccines will be excluded for the duration of possible exposure or until they are protected from that disease by immunization. (Unless a current exemption is on file)
– Updated 3/2016

Accident Reports

It is our utmost concern to keep your child safe. However, accidents resulting in bumps or scrapes do occur. If a child is injured, the staff person tending to your child will complete a report and inform an administrator. A copy of this report will be sent home and another copy will be kept on file in the preschool office. If an injury requires more than cleansing and a bandage, the parent will be notified immediately. If a parent is unreachable, the emergency contact(s) will be called.

Child Protective Services

According to State Penal Code 11166, all teachers and childcare workers are mandated to report actual or suspected child abuse. Failure to report may result in criminal action. Child abuse includes physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, as well as physical neglect. Grace staff is trained to assess situations which may lead them to make a child abuse referral.

Emergencies

Any situation evaluated by the preschool staff that requires *urgent medical treatment* is considered an emergency.

In these cases we will take the following actions:

1. We will immediately attempt to contact the child's parents/emergency contact, unless it is life threatening and in that case we will first call 911.
2. If we are unable to speak with the parent or emergency contact within 5-10 minutes, we will arrange for transportation of the child to a local hospital by ambulance. Staff will not drive children to the hospital.

Emergency Forms

You must complete and return all medical information and emergency forms before the first day of preschool. Emergency forms must have at least two local contacts listed in addition to the child's parents.

Minor Injuries

Scrapes are cleansed with soap and water, and then covered with a bandage if there is bleeding.

Any accident resulting in a fall or bump to the body will have a cold pack applied to it. The child will be watched for any change in symptoms for the time the child is at preschool. In the event of a continuation of symptoms for over 15 minutes (swelling, redness of injured area, crying or noticeable discomfort), the parent will be notified. If the parent is not available or reachable, the emergency contact will be called.

Medication at School as per California Education Code 49423

Any pupil, who is required to take medication prescribed for him/her by a physician during the regular school day, may be assisted by the preschool personnel if the preschool receives:

- **A written statement from such physician detailing the method, amount, and time schedules by which such medication is to be taken and a written statement from the parent or guardian of the pupil indicating the desire that the preschool assist the**

pupil in the matter set forth in the physician's statement.

Medication Procedure:

1. The parent is urged, with the help of the physician, to work out a schedule of giving medication outside of preschool hours whenever possible.
2. The form "Administration of Prescribed Medication" must be completed and signed by the parent and the physician.
3. Medication must be brought to preschool in the original container clearly labeled with the name of the medication, the dosage, and name of the prescribing physician.
4. It is desirable that no more than two weeks of medication be sent to school.
5. Bring the medication to the preschool office, not the classroom. **DO NOT** give your child medicine to self-administer during the day.
6. Inform the preschool immediately of any changes/discontinuation of the prescription.
7. Over-the-counter medication can only be given to your child by the preschool staff if a doctor's note is on file with the preschool office.

It is a *strict policy* that no medication, including vitamins, be allowed in the child's lunch box, backpack, or anywhere in the classroom.

**Plan of Operation for Incidental Medical Services:
Persons Providing Care:**

- Director
- Office Administrator
- Qualified Teachers assigned to enrolled child

Medical Services Trained to Provide:

- EpiPen, and EpiPen Jr.
- Inhaled Medications

***All of the medications listed above must be accompanied by a doctor's prescription, along with an action plan signed by both parent and physician.**

Parent Responsibilities

Termination of Services

Grace Preschool reserves the right to dismiss or refuse admission to anyone unwilling to comply with the school's requirements. Reasons for termination shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Any account delinquent for more than 30 days.
- Three incidents of Late Tuition payment.
- If the parent or guardian refuses to sign forms required for the entrance or the continued enrollment of their child.
- Refusal by the parent, guardian or emergency contact to pick up a child deemed unable or unwilling to participate cooperatively in classroom activities due to illness, possible impending illness, lethargy, or uncontrollable harmful and/or disruptive behavior.
- When a child is causing repeated harm to himself/herself or others due to dangerous or unsafe behavior.
- In the event LGUMC Grace Preschool is unable to meet the needs of the child and/or parents or guardians.
- Failure to provide LGUMC Grace Preschool with current work and home telephone numbers and to report any such future changes which would enable LGUMC Grace Preschool to contact parents/guardians in the event of an emergency or illness in the most expeditious manner.
- LGUMC Grace Preschool closes promptly at 12:00 p.m. (or 1:30 p.m. with lunch bunch). If parents fail to notify LGUMC Grace Preschool of their delay and an emergency contact (as authorized in your child's emergency records) cannot be reached Child Protective Services will be called. They can be reached at 408-299-2071.
- Behavior of the parent/guardian that may be reasonably interpreted as harassment, verbal abuse, or physical abuse toward the LGMC Grace Preschool staff or others present at the school.
- Refusal to comply with the policies and procedures outlined in the LGMC Grace Preschool Parent Handbook.