

**A Parent's Handbook
for
The Preschool of
Covenant Presbyterian Church
2023-2024**



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MISSION STATEMENT

Covenant Presbyterian Preschool is founded on the conviction that every child is created and loved by God, as declared in the Old and New Testament, and revealed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Our Mission is to minister to preschool age children and their families so that they may experience God's love through opportunities to grow spiritually, physically, mentally, and emotionally. The Preschool supports this ministry by:

- providing an interesting and loving environment which encourages freedom of choice and self expression, recognizing that each child is unique and endowed with special gifts and abilities;
- providing a community of support to parents and assisting them as they help their children to develop into healthy, thoughtful, responsible, spiritual individuals;
- serving the congregation and larger community, including the neighborhood and families with specific needs;
- being effective stewards of church facilities by enhancing and utilizing them to their fullest extent;
- reaching out to non-members who may be seeking a church home.

PHILOSOPHY

Covenant Presbyterian Church extends its ministry to young children and their families through the Preschool. The Preschool operates in close cooperation with an active Parent Council which is composed of parent representatives from each class. This school is under the direction of a Preschool Committee, which reports through the Ministry of Education to the Session of Covenant Presbyterian Church.

The Preschool believes

- that each child, created by God and for God, is unique and endowed with gifts;
- that children desire to share their thoughts and ideas through creative expression;
- that children learn best in an interesting and loving environment which encourages freedom of choice and self-expression.

The Preschool provides

- opportunities to grow physically, mentally, socially, emotionally, and spiritually;
- experiences with open-ended materials that encourage exploration;
- a curriculum with a variety of themes or studies that allow preschoolers to explore their interests and discover their gifts;
- regular, developmentally appropriate opportunities for worship;
- activities in music, art, drama and dance to encourage creative expression;
- interesting classrooms with a variety of scientific materials and developmentally appropriate toys and manipulatives for preschoolers to investigate through play;
- a developmental, child-centered approach to preschool education.

Jesus said, *"Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belong the kingdom of heaven."* (Matthew 19:14)

FAITH DEVELOPMENT

In addition to providing for a child's physical, social and emotional developmental needs, Covenant Presbyterian Preschool encourages the development of a child's faith. The program is guided by the Christian faith as defined by the confessions and doctrines of the Presbyterian Church (USA) as it seeks to reach out to the larger community which includes all of God's children. Appreciation of God's creation and love of one's neighbor are examples of spiritual concepts that are explored by our children. Sharing Bible truths and thoughts ("God made all things" John 1:3) as well as regularly scheduled chapel time, blessings at lunch, and age-appropriate Bible stories are specific ways in which spirituality is nurtured.

CURRICULUM

Covenant Preschool is guided by the standards set by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and offers an age-appropriate, developmental approach to preschool education. The teachers use The Creative Curriculum, a content rich program that supports active learning and promotes children's progress in all developmental areas, to guide their planning, observations and assessments. The classrooms are child-centered and are structured so that children may rely on their natural abilities. Trusting in a child's natural instinct for competence, autonomy and responsibility, the teachers encourage and allow physical movement, freedom of expression, active communication plus individual and group initiative. In turn, a child's decision-making produces interest and motivation, and ensures learning which is meaningful, relevant and life-long. Content areas such as literacy/reading, math, science, writing and social studies are approached through integrated theme or study learning. The classrooms are activity centered and draw directly on the child's sense of reality.

A SENSE OF ORDER

Children need the support of an orderly, well-planned curriculum and loving professionals who respect their individual differences. A well designed and well-equipped classroom tailored to the developmental level of the children prevents frustration, interruption and hazards. It offers privacy, fosters independence and easy adult supervision. A predictable daily routine provides security and few transitions. As adults in a child's world, we listen to what the children have to say; share in their discoveries and rejoice in their triumphs over fears, doubts and the unknown. We lead by example and remember the child's need for clearly stated expectations, logical consequences, and intervention when behavior becomes out of control.

Discipline is a personal attitude that develops from within as the child learns to respect him/herself and others. Covenant Preschool seeks to demonstrate positive guidance for the children. Positive guidance includes diverting and redirecting a child's attention when power struggles over toys and territory ensue; giving children the space and time to reflect on appropriate behavior; and encouraging children to resolve conflicts through positive planning, negotiation, and discussion of possible solutions. Teachers at Covenant's Preschool do not use corporal punishment or shame as a form of discipline.

In the event of persistent disruptive or endangering behaviors toward staff or children, the staff member will notify the Director of an ongoing problem which warrants further observation. Staff will

maintain documentation of their observations of any behavior incident. This will provide valuable information needed to plan a strategy for intervention. The Director will be informed of all ongoing documentation. Staff will work with the family to plan for regular communication and strategies for intervention. If necessary, the Director and staff will discuss the ongoing concern(s) of a child's behavior, make further recommendations to parents for evaluation and/or evaluate the program's ability to meet the needs of a child. If, after a reasonable amount of time, a child cannot adjust or whose behavior consistently disrupts the physical and learning needs of the other children, the parents may be asked to withdraw the child from the Preschool. Every effort will be made to work with each child's individual needs and to effectively communicate with parents regarding a potential problem situation.

INCLUSION POLICY

In keeping with our call to minister to all of God's children, Covenant Preschool is committed to the philosophy that including children with differing abilities benefits all the children in our school. We are clear, however, that Covenant Preschool is not a therapeutic preschool, but an opportunity for children with disabilities and typically developing children to interact, learn and socialize.

When a child with an identified special need applies for enrollment in the Preschool, the Director carefully interviews the parents for information about the child's developmental strengths and weaknesses. Any relevant past and current records and evaluations of the child by professionals are requested. The child and parent will often be invited to join a classroom for a visit, where further observations will take place. If the child is transferring to Covenant from another program, the child may also be observed in that setting or those teachers consulted.

Based on this information and in consultation with the child's prospective teachers when possible, the Director makes a decision to accept the child when the child and our Preschool will mutually benefit. When a child with special needs is accepted, the Preschool Committee is given a brief description of the child.

Covenant Preschool does not formally evaluate, by means of testing, any child before entrance. The above outlined evaluative process before acceptance is intended to provide enough information to indicate a beneficial match between school and child.

After enrollment, the child is observed closely for a period of three to four weeks. Teachers, the Director, parents, and professionals working with the child are consulted during this time. If, during this time, the child's needs are determined to put an exceptional stress on the classroom, a third teacher joins the teaching team to provide additional support. It is felt that it is desirable to allow all children this adjustment period except in extreme circumstances. At the end of this period, a determination is again made as to whether the placement is mutually beneficial.

Three possible determinations at this time are:

- the child's presence in the classroom is of mutual benefit;
- Covenant Preschool is unable to meet the child's needs;
- there is a need for professional consultation; with the expectation that appropriate intervention will enable the relationship to be mutually beneficial.

If it is determined by consultation between the teachers and the Director that Covenant Preschool is unable to meet the child's needs, a conference is set up with the parents, and the parents are asked to seek another placement. Attempts are made to help the parents with placement.

If professional consultation is advised and the parents decline to use these services, and it is determined that the child is not to be functioning well in the classroom setting, then the parents will be asked to seek other placement.

If professional intervention is used, the situation is carefully monitored. The decision to continue the child's enrollment is based on:

- the professional advice;
- the behavior of the child;
- the teachers' opinion;
- parental input;
- the Director's opinion.

The Director continues to inform the Preschool Committee of progress.

There are times when a child not identified at admission as having special needs, exhibits such behaviors at some point during the year. At this point, the process outlined above is put into place.

Whenever possible, Covenant Preschool will make reasonable adaptations to meet the individual needs of each child. However, the safety and successful functioning of the class always has priority over the individual needs of any given child within the above outlined policy.

Covenant Preschool believes that there is a range of typical, normal, and acceptable abilities, behaviors, and needs of children. We attempt to accommodate as broad a range as possible in the belief that this diversity strengthens and enriches all children, and the adults who support them.

ORGANIZATION OF COVENANT PRESCHOOL

Preschool Committee

The Preschool is a ministry of Covenant Presbyterian Church. It is advised by the Preschool Committee, which reports through the Ministry of Education and the Associate Minister of Christian Education and Spiritual Formation to the Session, which is the governing body of this church. The role of the Preschool Committee is to inform, advise and request action as appropriate from the Ministry of Education which in turn is responsible for making all operating decisions pertaining to the Preschool. The Preschool Committee is to be comprised of no more than 10 members and no less than 7 members and the Preschool Director. The Director is an ex officio or non-voting member of the committee and is to serve as a liaison between the Preschool Committee and the Ministry of Education. Criteria for the committee members include one Preschool faculty member, the Preschool Parent Council Chair (to be appointed annually by the Parent Council), one church member with familiarity of another early childhood setting (to be appointed annually by the Committee on Assignments), and at least four at-large church members (at least two of which have children currently enrolled in a preschool) to be appointed jointly by the Preschool Director and the Chair. Each at-large term of service is to be two years and those terms are based on the school calendar year. It is desired to have the at-large positions staggered with at least three positions appointed at the beginning of each school year. The Preschool Committee will have the authority to elect its Chair and Vice Chair; however, both positions must be filled by church members and approved by the Ministry of Education. The Chair and Vice Chair will serve one-year terms with the Vice Chair serving as Chair the subsequent year. If the Preschool Director position is vacated, the Preschool Committee will work in conjunction with the Covenant Personnel Committee to hire the staff position.

Questions or concerns about the program may be brought to the attention of any committee member. Congregational and parental interest in the school is encouraged and appreciated.

Parent Council

The Parent Council consists of representative parents from each preschool class, committee members and any other preschool parent who is interested and meets one Tuesday or Wednesday morning per month with the Director. The Parent Council Chair serves on the Preschool Committee. The purposes of the Council are to:

- be a communication link between parents and the school via a monthly newsletter, notices, the "Phone Tree" if needed and other appropriate contacts;
- help plan and carry out special events such as Pizza with Pals welcome dinner, the Thanksgiving celebration, Children's Art Gallery, Family Fun Day and Teacher appreciation;
- make recommendations for improving events;
- help implement new ideas.

In addition, Parent Council representatives serve as classroom volunteer coordinators. They work closely with the teachers to:

- arrange for volunteers who assist with field trips;
- organize parents to assist with classroom parties at Halloween, Christmas, Valentine's Day and Easter;
- assist the Parent Council representatives with parent-child events;
- assist the classroom teachers with special events, such as transcribing children's stories, taking photographs, creating documentation panels of classroom projects
- coordinate teacher gifts.

ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

Registration

Registration for each school year is held in late January and/or early February of that year. All tuition payments from the previous year must be paid in full before registration will be processed. Class placement is based on a child's age as of August 31, or the most age appropriate class for your child. Additionally, toddlers must be walking independently and must not require either a morning nap or a morning bottle. Toddlers may not attend unless these requirements are met. If there is a question as to the placement of a child, the final decision will be left to the discretion of the Director with the help of the classroom teachers and the chair of the Preschool Committee. A conference with the Preschool Director prior to enrolling a child is advised. Parents are also encouraged to tour or observe in a classroom before enrolling.

Registration is handled online and can be accessed through our website. These forms will be available in late January or early February, and processed in the following order:

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| First Priority: | Preschoolers currently enrolled |
| Second Priority: | Covenant church member families not currently enrolled, and siblings of preschoolers currently enrolled |
| Third priority: | New families |

For any and all families that DO NOT HAVE a child currently enrolled at Covenant Preschool but have had an older child complete the 3's and/or the 4s/5s class and would like to enroll a younger sibling, you will have entrance priority in the Second Priority after church members and the siblings of currently enrolled students, and before other community members. This rule will apply to younger

siblings enrolling in the toddler or 2's classes only for up to two years after the older sibling has left Covenant Preschool.

Registration and tuition fees are set annually and are non-refundable. A registration payment is due at the time of enrollment. Additionally, one month's tuition is due May 1st to confirm a child's enrollment. Traditionally statements will be mailed in April. The May tuition prepayment is applied to the following May and is non-refundable.

Tuition

Tuition payments are due on the first day of each month. There are no tuition refunds for illness, vacations or acts of nature. Automatic bank drafts for tuition payment are encouraged and are drafted on the 15th of each month. A bank draft application is included in your back to school packet.

A late fee of \$10 is charged for tuition payments received after the 15th of the month. Non-payment of tuition will be handled monthly with a personal call from the preschool followed by a mailed statement of accounts due. If a student bill is not resolved with full payment or an agreed upon payment plan by 60 days the child will be dismissed from the program.

Covenant Preschool has budgeted a small amount of money for families in need of tuition assistance. Families with financial constraints are encouraged to contact the Director as soon as tuition assistance is needed. Tuition assistance can be allocated in three-month increments by discretion of the Preschool Director.

Withdrawals

Notice of withdrawal shall be submitted in writing to the Director thirty (30) days prior to the date of withdrawal. There will be no refunds of monthly tuition. If you are unable to give 30 days notice, you will be responsible for an additional month's tuition.

Program Options – September through May*

One-Year-Old

(Age One as of August 31st)

Must be walking independently; no morning nap, no morning bottle

Toddlers	Tuesday and Thursday (12-24 months)	9 children 2 teachers	\$285/mo
Toddlers	Wednesday and Friday (12-24 months)	9 children 2 teachers	\$285/mo

Two-Year-Old

Two Day 2's	Tuesday and Thursday (2 classes)	10-11 children 2 teachers	\$285/mo
Three Day 2's	Monday, Wednesday, Friday Monday, Tuesday, Thursday	11-12 children 2 teachers	\$335/mo

Three-Year-Old

Three Day 3's	Monday, Wednesday, Friday	15 -16 children 2 teachers	\$335/mo
Four Day 3's	Tuesday through Friday	15 -16 children 2 teachers	\$390/mo
Five Day 3's	Monday through Friday	15-16 children 2 teachers	\$465/mo

Four- and Five-Year-Old

(As of August 31st)

4's and 5's (2 classes)	Monday through Friday	16-18 children 2 teachers	\$465/mo
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All classes meet 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

*Class sizes listed are maximums and subject to change

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Health and safety are matters of great importance. The Preschool requires a Health form and immunization record verified by each child's physician annually. Immunizations must be up to date in accordance with the schedule recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics. **Both the Health Certificate and Immunization record must be on file prior to the preschool attending.**

Parents must inform teachers and the Director in writing of a child's environmental or food allergies and complete an Action Alert Form/ Plan*

Children are required to stay home if any of the following symptoms apply:

- fever within last 24 hours (at or above 101 orally, 100 under the arm);
- vomiting or diarrhea within 24 hours;
- profuse nasal discharge;
- severe congestion or frequent cough;
- first 24 hours on antibiotic;
- conjunctivitis or "pinkeye" ("cold in one eye")

If your preschooler will not be in attendance due to illness, vacation or for any other reason, please call or email the Preschool Director and/or teaching team.

Families will be provided information verbally and in writing about any unusual level or type of communicable disease to which their child has been exposed. Please see COVID Protocol attached.

Minor injuries at school receive first aid from a staff member. Information about the accident will be shared with the parent(s). In case of serious accidental injury, an immediate effort will be made to contact a parent. If parents cannot be reached, the child's physician may be called; if necessary, an ambulance may also be called. Until the arrival of a parent, the Director or a teacher will make decisions about care of the child.

Reasonable precautions are taken to minimize the spread of germs within the Preschool. Use of latex gloves is required for diapering and first aid, along with hand washing afterward. A solution of water and chlorine bleach is used to disinfect and sanitize toys and other surfaces.

Illness at Preschool: If any child becomes ill while attending preschool, the Preschool staff will call parents and ask that they pick up their child immediately. It is, therefore, required that up-to-date emergency telephone numbers are on file for each child. In addition, parents or their designated child care provider must sign daily sign-in sheets in the classroom.

Peanut Policy

Covenant Presbyterian Church Preschool is a peanut free facility.

Candy Policy

No candy is allowed at the Preschool.

Fire safety:

Fire drills are conducted monthly with individual classroom exit plans. Teachers know the locations of fire extinguishers and alarms, and how to use them. In case of fire, teachers' first responsibility is to get children out of the building.

Inclement Weather

In the event of inclement weather, the Preschool follows the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' closing schedule. In the case of a two-hour delay, the Preschool will open at 10:00 a.m. and will dismiss at the regular time. During the time of inclement weather, and if CMS remains closed, Covenant Preschool will determine when the roads are safe for staff and families to return safely. Parents will also receive a text message or email from the preschool director, your child's teaching team, or your child's assigned room parents with any updates. Parents can also check the church website, www.covenantpresby.org, to see if the Preschool is closed or has a delayed opening.

Air quality will be monitored during the spring and the fall. In the event of a local air quality report in the unhealthy range, outdoor activities will be adjusted.

Emergency Evacuation Plans:

In the event of extreme weather warnings or community evacuation recommendations or other emergencies that do not require evacuation, teachers will follow the procedures indicated and lead children to appropriate areas and remain with them until pick up is completed or emergency warning lifted. These emergency plans will be practiced with the children once a year.

*** In order for our emergency plan to work well, it is imperative that each of you keep your emergency contact information current with the school. Please let us know in a written form when you have a change of address, home phone, or cellular phone number. Please be mindful to keep your cell phones with you and turned on at all times while your child is in preschool. Parents will be asked to sign a release form allowing their children to be picked up by other individuals if the parent cannot be contacted during the emergency.

Level I Emergency

In the event of severe weather, power outage, loss of utilities, or other emergencies that do not require evacuation:

1. Children will be taken to the hallways outside their classroom and away from windows and will be under teacher supervision.
2. The parents will be contacted via text message or phone call.
3. Parents will be asked to pick up their child as soon as possible.

Level II Emergency

In the event of a condition that makes it unsafe to remain in the classrooms:

1. The children will be evacuated to one of the following locations:
 - a. The Fellowship Hall
 - b. Other designated area on the Covenant Campus
2. Parents will be contacted via text message or phone call.
3. If parents cannot be contacted, children will be sent home with other individuals who have previously been approved by the parent for this purpose.
4. A sign will be posted on the door to inform parents of the evacuation if it was not possible to contact that parent via phone call.

Suspected Child Abuse:

Staff will follow legal obligations of reporting suspected child abuse to Mecklenburg Department of Social Services.

PROGRAM POLICIES

Creative expression is essential in the young child's development of a positive personal image. We offer experiences in music and art that encourage children to discover strengths and develop interest and talents. All children meet twice a month with a music teacher for singing, playing instruments, and creative movement. Classroom teachers plan art activities that encourage experimentation with textures, colors, line and shape. A variety of art experiences provides first hand encounters with clay, textiles, stitchery, collage, sculpture, print making, and paints. Original ideas and interpretation are valued over patterns and teacher-directed art. This year the 3, 4 and 5 year olds will have the opportunity each month to work with the Community School of the Arts, who have staff that will come out each month and the lesson will focus on a book/story with 4-5 art activities to enhance their experience of the month's book theme.

Cherub Choir

Our 4's and 5's will participate with Mr. Rob Dicks, Covenant's Associate Director of Traditional Music and Organist, in our Cherub Choir. This music education adds another layer to Christian Education for our oldest preschoolers. In years past this choir has sung at a selected Parent Council family event and was invited to sing at a couple of church services or events throughout the school year. This year we will be creative in how they share with our Preschool family

Conferences

Teachers gather assessment information about each child during the school day through anecdotal records and other observation tools. The anecdotal notes are reviewed and analyzed for use in identifying children's learning, interests, special needs or to evaluate planning and teaching. Information gathered on each child's development and learning is to be shared with parents or guardians during conferences.

Scheduled parent conferences are held at least once a year for all children. Parents are encouraged to contact their child's teachers at any time. Teachers, in turn, contact parents with any special concerns or news. The Director welcomes the opportunity to visit with parents at any time regarding matters that concern parents and children.

Teachers are required to maintain a portfolio on each child. It contains the following:

- Anecdotal records
- Candid photo of child at play
- Sample of child's drawing or writing
- Other pertinent information

Teachers refer to this file during conferences. It is passed along with the child as he/she continues through preschool.

Field Trips

During this day and time, field trips will be planned when it is safe and appropriate to do so. In a normal year, the Older preschoolers (4's and 5's) enjoy year-round field trips. They may visit local businesses, Imagination, Winghaven, The Nature Museum or other areas of interest. Transportation is

provided by the city bus system, light rail or parents. Children in the threes classes and younger do not leave school, but we often welcome special visitors who share hobbies and jobs with them. Preschool is always open to suggestions from parents regarding possible classroom excursions or visitors. Parents may be asked to transport children for field trips if the destination is not easily accessed on the city bus or light rail. Transportation policies meet or exceed North Carolina laws regarding child safety restraints.

Birthday Celebrations

Children's birthdays are observed at school on or near the actual birthday. Summer birthdays are celebrated on a "special day" during the year. Our celebrations are very simple. There are many ways that each teacher makes the birthday child feel "special" on this day. Parents may send a special snack. Prior arrangements should be made with the teacher. Do not consider this a birthday party and please do not send "party favors" for the class. **We do not allow balloons, goody bags, candy or any other item for children to take home.** All that is necessary is a special snack such as a cupcake or cookie or muffin, for example. **Remember: No candy, peanuts, peanut butter or nuts of any kind.**

Family Focus

The Preschool recognizes the importance of the family in the development of self-confident children. We respect the values of the home and encourage the child to honor his/her parents. The Preschool invites parents to share hobbies, interests, jobs and family traditions with the class though this year it will need to be done virtually, from a distance or held outside. The Parent Council has sponsored family events such as Pizza for Pals, Thanksgiving with a family celebration, Art Gallery and in May with Family Fun Day. During this time of covid precaution, we will look at each activity ahead of time to determine whether or not it will be safe to do. Covenant Preschool adheres to the guidelines administered by the Covenant Reopening Task Force as far as health and safety while on campus.

Gym Membership

Depending on COVID guidelines, Covenant Presbyterian Church invites all Preschool families to become affiliate members of Covenant Recreation Wing. Membership fees are set by the Covenant Recreation Wing Advisory Board and are pro-rated to a calendar year. Applications can be obtained at the Recreation Wing desk. Upon joining, families have access to all recreational facilities and scheduled activities. The facility can be rented for birthday parties or other gatherings. Contact Kevin Harper, the Director of Recreation Ministries, for more information. His email address is kevin.harper@covenantpresby.org

Security

At this time, parents are asked to drop their child off at the classroom doors after washing their hands in the bathroom adjacent to their child's room. You are asked to NOT visit other areas in the preschool at this time. For added security, the doors at each end of the hallway and the first floor outside doors are locked from 9:15 until 12:15 each day. If you want to enter the preschool during those hours, you can push the button at the preschool entrance and the door will be unlocked remotely. If the office staff is away from their desks, you can enter through the recreation wing doors. You will be required to sign in at the recreation desk.

Smoking Policy

Smoking is not permitted anywhere inside church facilities or on any playground. Smoking will not be permitted in the presence of children.

Holy Days and Holidays

The Preschool observes the Christian holidays of Christmas and Easter, with special activities celebrating God's love for us emphasizing the family. The church staff plans and directs age-appropriate services for Preschool families at Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter.

Scholastic Book Club

As a service to parents, Covenant's Preschool offers an opportunity to participate in the Scholastic Book Club. Parents may purchase quality children's literature at reduced prices. As a benefit, the school obtains free books and teaching materials. There is no obligation to buy. Participation is strictly voluntary. Book Club newsletters are distributed periodically. Make all checks payable to Scholastic and submit your order forms to the folder marked "Scholastic" outside the Preschool Business Office.

Summer Program

Summer sessions are offered at the discretion of the Director with the approval of the Preschool Committee, depending on such factors as availability of teachers, space, demand, etc.

The Preschool Fund

Preschool families, Covenant Church members, and others wishing to make a financial contribution to the Covenant Preschool may do so through the Preschool Fund. Donations to this account are available for use by the Preschool to help it provide superior early childhood education, and help it fulfill the goals set forth in its mission.

EVERYDAY INFORMATION

Arrival

At 9:00 a.m. classroom teachers are ready to greet your children and begin the morning. This drop off time provides you with an opportunity to view children's work on display, notice favorite work areas and speak with your child's teachers. We ask you to sign the sign-in sheet daily and make any pertinent notes about emergency contact or a change in the person picking up your child at the end of our day.

If pick up plans change during the day, please call the office to inform us of a change in pick up person or time.

*****Please DO NOT TEXT OR CALL YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER WHILE CHILDREN ARE IN SCHOOL. You can call the office and leave a message for the teacher.**

Lunch

The children and teachers sit down together for lunch following a mealtime blessing. We feel that lunch is a special time for developing good nutritional habits, good manners and for just having fun conversing with classmates and teachers.

Send your child's lunch, beverage and napkin in an insulated lunch box with a cool pack. Please label the lunch box with your child's name and the date. While preparing your child's lunch, please consider his/her likes, dislikes and ability to handle the lunch independently.

We want to partner with you in helping your child develop healthy eating habits for life so we have included the USDA "MyPyramid for Preschoolers" to guide you in your lunch choices. Please send nutritious foods. Fruit is a good substitute for a sweet dessert. We suggest water or milk as beverage selections. Do not send candy or gum. (This includes fruit roll-ups.) **We ask that no overt nut products be brought to school**

DO NOT INCLUDE the following in your child's lunch since they are choking hazards:

hot dogs-whole or cut in rounds (safe if each round is cut in half or quarters)

whole grapes (safe if cut in half)

popcorn (safe for children four years old and older)

hard pretzels

chunks of raw carrots or meat larger than can be swallowed whole

Additionally, food for toddlers and twos should be cut in one-half square inch pieces.

Apparel

Comfortable, washable play clothes and appropriate outer wear are necessary. Because of safety issues, we require raincoats instead of umbrellas. Closed toed shoes are recommended. Please send disposable diapers or pull-ups each day for children who are unable to use the toilet consistently.

Theme or Study

Classroom teachers will provide families with news and information on curriculum and lesson plans. They will communicate what happens during the school day in several ways such as monthly newsletters, e-mail, anecdotal notes and photos on classroom websites, displaying children's work along with comments on bulletin boards or documentation boards and on the white boards outside the classrooms.

Backpack

Backpacks or tote bags should be large enough to pack and carry a lunchbox and large items of artwork efficiently down the hall. Dangling toys or key chains from backpacks are discouraged for safety's sake. Backpacks with drawstrings for closure are difficult to pack. Please label pack with your child's name.

Carpools & Pick ups

The school day concludes at 12:30 pm. Late fees are charged to parents of threes, fours and fives arriving after 12:45.

Toddlers and twos are always picked up in their classroom (or the playground) no later than 12:35. Late fees will be charged after that. Our primary concern is that children must be able to depend on being picked up at a certain time. This is a key issue for a

child building trust with adults. We also are very protective of our teachers' planning time. With one or two children picked up late every day, our goals would be compromised.

Car pool pick up begins the second week of preschool for 3s, 4s & 5s. Please look for more information regarding carpool procedures as the time draws nearer.