

Grace Preschool

Parent Handbook

2023-2024



3700 Cottage Grove Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50311

Preschool Office: 515.279.5942 ext.0

Church Office: 515.255.2131

Church and Preschool Fax Number: 515.255.6500

www.gracesmoines.org/preschool

WELCOME

Welcome to Grace Preschool! We look forward to sharing the joy of early childhood education with you, your child, and your family. The parent handbook is provided to answer any questions you may have regarding our policies and procedures at Grace Preschool. Please take time to read through our new handbook.

We, at Grace Preschool are here to meet the needs of your children and will be dedicating our most intense efforts to your children with whom we are privileged to share our days. It is the responsibility as educators and parents to make sure the program is as effective as possible. We welcome and value your support in achieving our shared goals.

The following poem, by Dorothy Law Nolte, is very special to all of us:

Children Learn What They Live

If children live with criticism, they learn to condemn.

If children learn with hostility, they learn to fight.

If children live with ridicule, they learn to be shy.

If children live with shame, they learn to feel guilty.

If children live with tolerance, they learn to be patient.

If children live with praise, they learn to appreciate.

If children live with fairness, they learn justice.

If children live with security, they learn to have faith.

If children live with approval, they learn to like themselves.

If children live with acceptance and friendship, they learn to find love in the world.

Welcome to Grace Preschool!

Sincerely,
Ashley Wissler
Grace Preschool, Director

Grace Methodist Preschool Committee

It is the responsibility of the members of the Grace Methodist Church Preschool Committee to establish the policies needed for the running of the preschool.

Members; Chairperson listed below.

PRESCHOOL COMMITTEE

Coreen Witke	coreenwitke@gracedesmoines.org
Ashley Wissler	ashleywissler@gracedesmoines.org
Kelly Donnelly	kellydonnelly@gracedesmoines.org
Emilie Nicolai	emilienicolai@gracedesmoines.org
Renee Burnham	renburnham@gmail.com
Alejandro Alfaro-Santiz	rev.alejandro@trinitylasamericas.org
Brittani Shogren	brittsho@gmail.com
Sarah Steward	sstewarddsm@gmail.com
Dianne Fagner	dianneautumn@hotmail.com
Bridget Fagan-Reidburn	bridget.c.fagan@gmail.com
Shannon Draayer	shannondraayer@gmail.com
Kelsey Strohman	kmstrohman@gmail.com

HISTORY

Grace Preschool began on a trial basis in 1966 as an educational outreach program of the church. Grace Preschool's programs provide high quality Preschool for families in our community. Our Preschool includes full-time and part-time care as well as Universal Preschool funded classrooms. Grace Preschool is a non-profit center operated by Grace United Methodist Church. Preschool policies are determined by a committee made up of nine voting members of Grace United Methodist Church.

We are licensed by the Department of Human Services and participate in Iowa's Quality Rating System.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Grace Preschool follows the non-discrimination policy set forth in the Personnel Policies and Procedures for Grace United Methodist Church.

Equal Employment Opportunity

The church is committed to equal employment opportunity for all qualified persons, without regard to race, color, political affiliation, ancestry, national origin, religion, sex, marital status, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, sexual orientation, or age, to the extent required by law. This applies to all employment practices including hiring, benefits, promotions, training, disciplinary action, and termination.

All employees are expected to show respect and sensitivity toward all other employees, and to demonstrate a commitment to the church's equal opportunity objectives. Anyone who observes a violation of this policy should report it immediately to the person's supervisor or to a member of the Staff Parish Relations Committee.

Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, including termination.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html , and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call 866-632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

1. Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
2. Fax: 202-690-7442; or
3. Email: program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider. Honoring the diversity of our faith journeys, our welcome is extended to all – people of all races, sexes, ethnic backgrounds, generations, physical and mental abilities, economic conditions, sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions. No matter who you are, no matter where you are in your life, you are welcome here.

MISSION

Grace Preschool is a non-profit center committed to providing high-quality care and early childhood education for young children ages 2-5 in a safe, caring and nurturing environment.

PHILOSOPHY

We follow the National Association for the Education of Young Children’s guidelines for developmentally appropriate teaching practices. A developmentally appropriate curriculum provides the foundation for the cognitive and social skills that are essential for later academic success. Specifically we believe that:

All children follow a predictable pattern in their development, but each child is unique with his or her own rate and timing of growth and development.

CURRICULUM

Our curriculum is based on the principles found in The Creative Curriculum. This curriculum aligns with Iowa’s Early Learning Standards. Grace Preschool implements the internationally recognized The Creative Curriculum through “**Project Based Learning**” experiences. Project based learning focuses on the students’ interests and supports their ability to become life long learners while meeting all the Iowa Learning Standards. The children

learn through both investigations and interactions with other children, staff, families and their surrounding community.

- **Environment**

The teachers **establish** the classroom environments **by creating** learning centers where children can decide for themselves what they are going to play, explore, or create. The different learning centers include: art center, writing center, science and discovery center, reading center, dramatic play center, computers and block center. Throughout the day, the students will be able to make choices and select their own themes, materials and activities that will enhance social, emotional, cognitive and physical areas of development. An explanation of what the children can learn in each of these areas is posted in the area and also in the Curriculum Binders for each classroom. The younger the child, the less defined these areas are going to be. The teachers and students will change and/or add different props and materials in the environment as well as rotate toys and manipulatives as often as needed.

- **Curriculum Binders**

The teachers will create lesson plans weekly that reflect the student's interest, daily activities and changes in the classroom environment. The teachers will give their lesson plans to the Director weekly to review and then place them in the Curriculum Binder. The teachers will post the lesson plans on the bulletin boards outside the classroom. The teachers and students may carry out the lesson plan theme or project activity for a week or longer. The lessons may be written by the teacher yet they are child initiated. The teachers will provide the learning tools and allow the students to carry the experience on their own with guidance rather than directive learning. The children are encouraged to, but never made to participate in any activity. Our teachers may also change their lesson plans to adapt to the learning interests and needs of the students.

- **Individual Portfolios**

An important part of our curriculum is the individual planning that the teacher does for the children. Each child has their own individual portfolio that includes their drawings and artwork collected over time. The portfolios also include anecdotal records, where the teachers record the progress of each child by using observation and assessment tools ("Creative Curriculum.") The teacher plans goals and activities for each child in the areas of child development. These activities are based on the individual needs of each child. The portfolio stays with each child as long as they attend Grace Preschool and will be given to the parents once the child graduates or leaves our school. Through the use of these portfolios, the teachers can identify area of needs in behavior and development and adapt their curriculum plans to these needs. If the teachers have any developmental concerns in any of the areas, they will contact the parents to discuss them. Parents are always encouraged to read their child's Individual Portfolio. Portfolio review occurs two times a year at Grace Preschool. The teacher will schedule parental conferences to review the child's portfolio and progress both in the winter and the spring.

COMMUNICATION

- **General Communication**

The staff of Grace Preschool seeks to build a collaborative partnership with our parents in educating and caring for their children. This partnership is based on trust, respect and mutual understanding. We do this informally through communicating verbally about your child on a daily basis. Please take some time to talk to your child's teacher everyday. Be sure to inform teachers of any changes in your child's life (moves, illness, losses, parent out of town, etc.) so that they can be prepared for possible changes in your child's behavior. If possible, please inform your child's teacher in advance of any future absences or please call the Director if your child will be absent unexpectedly.

Most information for parents (newsletter, information sheets, notices, etc.) is sent home directly with the student. Be sure to check your child's bag daily for important notes or information. Also, please read our information bulletin board in the hallway and in the parent info area for any school related issues.

To enhance this partnership further, the staff will provide communication through:

Weekly Lesson Plans – all classes have weekly lesson plans. These will be posted on the class bulletin board along with any other important information related to the class activities.

Newsletters – a monthly newsletter will be written by the Director with important information and calendar events. The teachers will provide monthly newsletters informing parents about the classroom themes and activities.

Parent Meetings – as needed, the Director will plan to have meetings with parents and staff to discuss issues common to a majority of parents. Notices will be sent home informing parents of such meetings and topics. Suggestions for meetings are always welcome. (Example: car seat safety)

Parent/Teacher Meetings and Conferences – formal Parent/Teacher conferences are held twice a year for the purpose of discussing the child's developmental progress. Parent/teacher meetings can be scheduled at the request of the parent or teacher as often as needed if concerns or problems arise. Translators can be provided upon request.

Parent Volunteers – parents are highly encouraged to participate in their child's school program. We welcome parents to our school to help the teachers in the classrooms or to do a special project/activity with the children. If there is a special project you would like to do with your child's class, please coordinate a date/time with your child's teacher.

Orientation, Home Visits and Park Days – All school orientation will occur prior to the first day of school each fall which will include an open house. Home visits and park days are scheduled on an annual basis. Home visits are required by the UPK grant.

Field Trips - An important learning opportunity can take place in the form of a field trip that is relevant and reinforces what has been taught in the classroom. Parents will be informed of

each field trip, and must sign a consent form for field trip permission. A first aid kit, emergency contact information, and emergency transport authorization information for the children in the group will be taken on all trips. Children may only use a public restroom if they are accompanied by a staff member. Children will never be left alone in a vehicle or unsupervised by an adult.

- **Procedures for Parents with Concerns**

The staff and preschool committee understand that parents sometimes have questions or concerns about the program or policies. Procedures are in place to make sure problems and concerns can be taken care of quickly and effectively. The following procedures should be followed to address any concerns you may have:

1. Parents should first talk to their child's teacher about any questions or concerns being careful not to talk about children in front of them or other parents. Please feel free to talk to your child's teacher briefly at arrival. If you need more time then please schedule a private meeting with the teacher. Discussions of concerns between families and staff about specific children must be held in private. At any time, the parent or teacher can request the Director to be present at the meetings.
2. If after talking with the teacher a parent feels the issue has not been resolved and/or if questions remain, please contact the Director.
3. If the parent, teacher or Director feel the issue continues to be unresolved, an opportunity to meet with the Grace Church Preschool Committee may be available to address the concern.

- **Custody Concerns**

Grace Preschool will deal with these delicate situations on a case by case basis.

Preschool must be advised of and given a copy of all legal documentation on custody rights before they are implemented. Official documentation of current custody arrangements and visitation schedules must be provided to the Director and the teacher. All changes to custody arrangements must be communicated to the Director and the teacher. It is particularly important for the custodial parent to notify the school if the child will be late or absent. Please call the preschool office at 515-279-5942. In the event the Director and/or the teacher are unable to be reached, a message should be left at the Church office 515-255-2131.

Parent Information, Reports and Assessments: Parent information (such as newsletters, notices, etc.) will be sent home to the primary custody parent. Duplicates of reports and assessments will be given to both parents when they are living separately. Copies of the Curriculum Binders will be made if a request is given to the Director.

Parental Responsibility Clause: We acknowledge that relationships can become difficult, particularly during custody negotiations. Our basic expectations at Grace Preschool of parental conduct on the campus include courtesy to all parents and staff members and age appropriate language at all times. **Profanity, crude and foul language and rudeness to others will not be tolerated.**

For the protection of all of our families at Grace Preschool, students are released only to those who are listed on the school paperwork. When anyone other than the parent is picking up the student an ID must be shown before the child will be released to their care. (Dismissal Form). A PARENT WHO AGREES TO DRIVE A STUDENT(S) ASSUMES LIABILITY FOR THAT/THOSE STUDENT(S).

Access Policy

Centers are responsible for ensuring the safety of children at the center and preventing harm by being proactive and diligent in supervising not only the children, but other people present at the facility.

1. Any person in the center who is not an owner, staff member, substitute, or subcontracted staff or volunteer who has had a record check and approval to be involved with child care **shall not** have **“unrestricted access”** to children for whom that person is not the parent, guardian, or custodian, nor be counted in the staff to child ratio.
***“Unrestricted access” means that a person has contact with a child alone or is directly responsible for child care.**
***It is imperative that centers not allow people who have not had a record check assume child care responsibilities or be alone with children. This directly relates both to child safety and liability to the center.**
2. Persons who do not have unrestricted access will be under the direct **“supervision”** and **“monitoring”** of a paid staff member at all times and will not be allowed to assume any child care responsibilities. The primary responsibility of the supervision and monitoring will be assumed by the teacher unless he/she delegates it to the teacher assistant due to a conflict of interest with the person.
***“Supervision” means to be in charge of an individual engaged with children in an activity or task and ensure that they perform it correctly.**
***“Monitoring” means to be in charge of ensuring proper conduct of others.**
3. Center staff will approach anyone who is on the property of the center without their knowledge to ask what their purpose is. If staff is unsure about the reason they will contact their Site Manager or another management staff to get approval for the person to be on site. If it becomes a dangerous situation staff will follow the “intruder in the center” procedures. Non-agency persons who are on the property for other reasons such as maintenance, repairs, etc. will be monitored by paid staff and will not be allowed to interact with the children on premise.
4. A sex offender who has been convicted of a sex offense against a minor (even if the sex offender is the parent, guardian, or custodian) who is required to register with the Iowa sex offender registry (Iowa Code 692A):
 - a. Shall not operate, manage, be employed by, or act as a contractor or volunteer at the child care center.
 - b. Shall not be on the property of the child care center without the written permission of the center director, except for the time reasonably necessary to transport the offender’s own minor child or ward to and from the center.

- i. The center director is not obligated to provide written permission and must consult with their DHS licensing consultant first.
- ii. If written permission is granted it shall include the conditions under which the sex offender may be present, including:
 1. The precise location in the center where the sex offender may be present.
 2. The reason for the sex offender's presence at the facility.
 3. The duration of the sex offender's presence.
 4. Description of how the center staff will supervise the sex offender to ensure that the sex offender is not left alone with a child.
 5. The written permission shall be signed and dated by the director and sex offender and kept on file for review by the center licensing consultant.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT and DISCIPLINE STATEMENT:

The Grace Preschool teachers will create a safe, active, age appropriate environment for your child. They will set clear, consistent, fair limits for classroom behavior. The children will not be "subjected to discipline which is severe, humiliating, frightening, or associated with food, rest or toileting; spanking or any other form of physical punishment is prohibited by all child care personnel." This is per Iowa 281.103.2 Chapter 103 CORPORAL PUNISHMENT BAN; RESTRAINT; char (10) PHYSICAL CONFINEMENT AND DETENTION

- **Discipline/Guidance Policy**

- Our Rules are Simple:**

- Be safe**

- Be kind**

- Be responsible**

When we teach our expectations to the children, we will talk about what it means to be safe, kind and responsible.

Our goal is to help children develop a positive self-image and encourage the development of cooperation with others.

Strategies we use to help guide children's behavior include the following:

- Setting clear limits for the children and reviewing rules frequently
- Providing positive reinforcement (praise) for appropriate behavior
- Helping children develop the vocabulary to express strong feelings and solve problems.
- Providing natural and logical consequences
- Giving children choices when appropriate
- Redirection

The use of physical and emotional punishment or consequences that are too long or punitive are strictly prohibited.

If your child needs to be redirected, we will make every effort to help him/her learn new behavioral strategies to engage in acceptable behavior. This may include working directly with you if the behavior continues to be a

problem. If, working together, we cannot find a way to diminish a behavior that is dangerous, disruptive or unacceptable to the other children, termination may be necessary.

DISCHARGE POLICY

Grace Preschool has the right to terminate services at any time. Termination may occur for any of the following reasons, but are not limited to: failure to comply with the fee agreement and/or payment arrangements, unresolved behavior conflict by a child, or any type of hostile situation. All decisions to terminate services, communication concerning the identified problem and/or appeal or review of the termination shall be handled by the director.

Grace Preschool 2022-2023

Classroom Age	Will Attend	Scheduled Time	Tuition	Enrollment Fees
4 Year Old Part Time UPK Classroom	MWF	8:00 am - 11:30 am	*Free for children that are 4 yr old on or before Sept 15 upon Universal Pre-K funding	\$0
4 Year Old UPK Full Day Classroom	MTWRF	7:30 am - 5:30 pm	\$200 per week for children that are 4 yr old on or before Sept 15 upon Universal Pre-K funding	Registration fee \$25 Supply fee \$75
2 and 3 Year Old Part Time Classroom	T/R	9:00 am- 11:30 am	\$170 per month	Registration fee \$25 Supply fee \$75
3 and 4 Year Old Full Day Classroom	MTWRF	7:30 am - 5:30 pm	\$220 per week for full time 3's \$200 per week for full time 4's 4 yr old on or before Sept 15 upon Universal Pre-K funding	Registration fee \$25 Supply fee \$75
2 and 3 Year Old Full Day Classroom	MTWRF	7:30am - 5:30pm	\$220 per week for full time 3's \$240 per week for full time 2's	Registration fee \$25 Supply fee \$75

Additional child rate for full time students: There is a ten percent discount on the oldest child in attendance.
One week "vacation gratis" per full time enrolled student per school year.

*wait list forms available

*Grace Preschool accepts child care assistance

ENROLLMENT and BILLING POLICIES

Enrollment Procedures – Each family enrolling in the school will meet first with the Director to complete and review the following:

1. **Registration Application** – parent will complete the registration form and pay the non-refundable registration fee.
2. **Admission Overview** – parent and child will visit and tour the school to review the following information: center schedule, hours, fees, meals, health policies, supervision policies, dismissal and pick up policies, philosophy and curriculum, **behavioral expectations** and items the parents need to bring to school for the child.
3. **Health Appraisal** – each child needs an updated yearly health appraisal. A physical exam and an immunization form are required by state regulations. The student cannot attend school without these updated forms. If a form expires during the school year then the child may not return to school until the Director receives the updated forms.
4. **Family/Child Questionnaire** – parents will complete an informational form answering questions about the child and their family, what goals parents may have for their children while enrolled at the school and what traditions or customs the family may have. We use this questionnaire to become more familiar with the family as a whole and to incorporate into our curriculum the unique cultural backgrounds and goals you have for your child.
5. **Parent Orientation** – after forms have been completed; the parent(s) meet with the teacher to discuss the routine and the procedures of the classroom the child is entering. Grace Preschool requires that the child also visit the classroom at least once before attendance begins. The parents will stay with their child for orientation to spend time with the teacher and to explore the centers. All children transition differently so the teachers work with the parents to make each transition as easy as possible.
6. **The first separation can be very upsetting for both the child and the parent.** We want to assure you how quickly this passes. The adjustment is far more successful if we do not have parents lingering in the classroom at drop off. Please plan to drop your child off, give kisses, give hugs, say goodbye and leave.

Registration Preferences

Grace Preschool will first accept children who are:

1. Siblings of families currently enrolled
2. Sons and daughters of teachers and staff members have priority after siblings.
3. Active Grace United Methodist Church Members
4. Children on waiting list/application list. Parents will be notified as to a student's acceptance or placement as spaces become available.

We will serve the public as space allows. Some students may not be accepted because the school's educational program and facilities are not able to meet the needs of the child. **In matter of admission and registration, the decisions of the Director are final.**

In order for your child to pre-register for the following year, a parent/guardian is responsible for completing the registration form and submitting the nonrefundable, registration fee per student by the deadline noted on the registration form.

The following is the age requirement per class:

- Children in the 2 year old program must be 2 by September 15th
- Children in the 3 year old program must be 3 by September 15th
- Children in the 4 year old UPK program must be 4 by September 15th

(The Director reserves the right to adapt classroom age guidelines listed above as necessary to avoid scheduling/classroom occupancy conflicts.)

Fees

Your tuition check is due by Friday of each week. **Please make checks payable to Grace Preschool.**

The registration (non-refundable) and the supply (non-refundable) fees are exclusive of your weekly tuition and are paid once a year.

There is a **\$10.00 late fee for payments received more than 2 weeks after the charge date** unless alternative pay schedule has been arranged with Grace Preschool. A student's attendance at school may be terminated if tuition is one month in arrears unless the Committee approves a payment plan. **Parents who foresee a payment problem, are responsible for contacting the Director.** Please drop your tuition checks into the drop box located in the Parent sign in area of the school. Please ask the Director for assistance locating the drop box.

Notification of Withdrawal – We consider your child to be enrolled for the entire school year. **We require a thirty (30) day notice in writing if you wish to withdraw your child from school. Tuition must be paid for the two weeks following withdrawal notification.** Parents may request to change the days a child attends school. Request will be granted if the space is available and the Director approves of the change.

Fees MUST be paid whether or not a child is in attendance. Consideration will be given to reduce or waive fees when a child has been ill for an extended period of time and due to

1. the nature of the illness and
2. upon physician's orders that the child is unable to return to child care.

Parents wishing to take their children on holidays and vacations may do so but are still responsible for the child care fees. This applies to both part time and full-time enrollment.

Late Fees Parents who fail to pick up their children on time (5:30 PM) will be charged a late fee of \$1.00 a minute per child for every minute after the 5:30 PM closing time. In cases of emergencies or uncontrollable circumstances (flat tire, traffic accident) parents need to notify the staff at the center to prevent being charged a late fee. The director of the center reserves the right to terminate child care services of children whose parents are late on a consistent and regular basis.

Notification of Absences If a child will be arriving early or late or the child will be absent, the Director or the child's teacher should be notified. In the event the Director and/or teacher are unable to be reached, a message should be left at the Church office 515-255-2131

SICK CHILD POLICY

- **Plan for Managing Illness/Contagious Disease.**

Grace Preschool promotes the protection of well children by preventing illness whenever possible. We encourage children to practice and develop good hand washing habits to prevent the spread of germs. We encourage the development of healthy habits through good nutrition, exercise and rest.

Children are observed by the teacher upon entering the classroom for any possible health problems. If the teacher observes any of the following symptoms below, the parent will be asked to take the child home.

We ask that you keep your child at home if any of the following are present:

- fever of 100 degrees or higher
- persistent diarrhea
- undiagnosed rash
- vomiting
- flu or severe cold symptoms (mucus is green)
- head lice
- any contagious illness
- conjunctivitis

Please notify us if your child has a contagious disease so we can inform other parents.

Your child may return to the center after:

- Your child is free of all communicable symptoms.
- **The temperature has returned to normal for at least 24 hours.**
- There has been no vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours.
- Child is being treated for disease and has a doctor release to return to school.

Plan for meeting the needs of ill children while at Preschool

If your child becomes ill at school, he or she will be kept isolated and comfortable with a staff member present at all times. You will be notified immediately.

Plan for the Administration of Medication

If your child needs to be given medication while attending the center (including diaper cream /sunscreen), please complete a **Medication Permission Form**. The permission form will be kept with your child's records. Medication must be in the original container. **Original pharmacy label must include: prescription number, date filled, physician's name, direction for use, and child's name.**

All medication is kept out of the reach of children and refrigerated, if necessary.

- **Injury Prevention Plan**

We make every effort to prevent accidents by teaching and reinforcing safety rules with the children. Our staff-child ratio is generally below what the state requires thus allowing us to supervise the children very carefully. In addition, a staff member in each room maintains current certification in First Aid, CPR, and Universal Precautions. However, even in the best of situations, accidents do and will occur.

If the accident is minor, first aid will be applied at the center. Cuts and scrapes will be washed with soap and water and a bandage applied. An accident report will be completed and given to the parent at pick-up time.

If the accident is not life-threatening, but requires further treatment, we will make every effort to contact you first. We will contact other emergency numbers in the event we can't reach you.

In the case of a life-threatening injury, one staff member will contact you while another member contacts emergency personnel. If the parent can't be reached, we will call other emergency numbers on your medical information sheet. A familiar staff member will accompany the child to the hospital and will remain there until a parent arrives.

Accident reports will be completed for all accidents that leave a mark or involve a hard fall. You will receive a copy at pick-up time.

Recording incidents. Incidents involving a child, including minor injuries, minor changes in health status, or behavioral concerns, shall be reported to the parent on the day of the incident. Incidents resulting in an injury to a child shall be reported to the parent on the day of the incident. Incidents resulting in a serious injury to a child or significant change in health status shall be verbally reported to the parents, guardian, and legal custodians immediately as well as 911 if necessary. The parents, guardians, and legal custodians of any child included in incidents involving inappropriate, sexually acting-out behavior shall be notified immediately after the incident.

- **Biting Behavior Procedure**

In a group care setting, we recognize that toddler biting may occur, and are ready to help young children who bite learn more appropriate behavior. When biting occurs, these are our three main responses:

1. Care for and help the child who was bitten. If the skin is not broken, we apply a cold pack. If the skin is broken, we cleanse the wound with soap and water and apply appropriate first aid. We call the child's parents and give them a copy of the incident report, which is filled out by the teacher who witnessed the incident. The incident report is also kept in the child's file. The name of the child who bit is kept confidential.
2. Help the child who bit so that he/she learns other appropriate behavior. We address the child in a firm, calm voice, stating our disapproval of biting. We give the child's parents a note that same day informing them of the biting. In general, we ask parents to keep us informed if their child is biting at home or in other situations. Children who bite in program do not necessarily bite at home. If the child is biting in other situations, it is important for all of us to correct them consistently. Communication is very important in order to help the child stop biting.
3. Examine our program to stop the biting. The staff will meet with the parent regarding a plan for resolving the behavior in a positive manner.

- **Special Health Care Needs (*We are a peanut free center*)**

- Parents must provide information regarding any allergies or health concerns at registration.
- A list of allergies is posted on the refrigerator. All staff will be made aware of the list and children identified. The list is updated as needed.
- Grace Preschool will provide reasonable accommodation to meet special health care needs.
- If needed, a special health care plan will be completed by parents before a child attends.

GENERAL POLICIES

- **Dismissal**

Children will only be released to individuals authorized by the parents of the child. When an authorized individual, other than the parents are to pick up a child, the parents **MUST** contact the center prior to the day of pick-up. Parents may send a note, fax a note, e-mail the director at kellydonnelly@gracedesmoines.org. A note accompanying the person picking up a child (other than the parent) will not be accepted.

Anyone who is picking up a child and is not familiar with the center staff must have proper photo identification (if using a drivers' license, the license must be current). This includes parents who may not normally pick up their children. All individuals authorized by parents to pick up their children must be at least 18 years of age.

- **Open Door Policy**

As a parent or guardian, you are afforded unlimited access to your child(ren) and to the providers caring for your child(ren) during the center's hours of operation unless parental contact is prohibited by a court order. **If parent contact is prohibited, please provide the applicable portion of the no-contact order to your teacher so that it can be included in your child's file.**

- **Supervision of Children**

Parents are responsible for the safety and well being of their child (ren) any time in which they are together at the center (special events, drop-off and pick up times).

- **Field Trip and Transportation**

Children will have the opportunity to participate in several field trips throughout the school year. Consent forms will be given to parents and must be signed and returned for your child to take part in the field trip. Two year old classroom will participate in onsite field trips only.

- **Universal Precaution Training**

Grace Preschool Staff receives training on a number of universal precaution procedures. These include administering first aid, prevention of choking, and CPR.

- **Inclement Weather Policy**

If the Des Moines Public Schools are closed, have a late start, or early dismissal related to the weather, the same will apply to Grace Preschool. Notice of closings will be posted on the WHO-TV web site under "other closings".

- **Dress Code**

Your child will be comfortable in PLAY clothes. Bear in mind that we will be playing in the sand, water and with paint that may not wash out. Please **do not** send your child to school in flip flops, jelly shoes, water shoes or open toe sandals because they are unsafe particularly on the playground. Children must

wear closed toe shoes (i.e. tennis shoes, sandals with straps, etc.). We do allow the children to go barefoot on occasion for special activities.

We go out almost everyday, even in cold weather, so please dress your child appropriately according to the weather. Please label all clothing that can be lost such as mittens, scarves, hats and boots. It is highly recommended that you label all other items that could get lost or misplaced such as backpacks, and rest items. Accidents and spills do occur; please have an extra change of clothing for your child. Most children feel more comfortable in their own clothing.

- **Diapering/Toileting**

It is the responsibility of parents to provide us diapers for those children in diapers. The diapers will be stored in a container with your child's name and only be used for your child. We provide the wipes. Our children are taken to the bathroom every 2 hours or as needed. When children are in the initial stages of potty training, it is helpful to send them in clothing that is easily removable. Please send an extra change of clothing with your child. Wet clothing will be placed in a plastic bag with your child's name written on it.

- **Nutrition**

We follow the guidelines set forth by the federally funded USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The staff is required to go through the training provided by CACFP. This assures that we are providing our children with well-balanced, nutritious snacks and meals. All Grace Preschool meals follow family style regulations, and menus are posted weekly by the parent sign-in area. If you would like to join your child for a meal please contact us 24 hr in advanced for the meal count.

AM Breakfast – 8:30 am to 8:45 am

Lunch – 11:30 am to 12:00 pm

PM Snack – 2:30 to 2:45 pm

No outside food, gum, or candy is allowed. If a parent is bringing a healthy group snack for the preschool program, it must be commercially bought and pre-packaged. No home-baked treats are allowed. Grace Preschool is a peanut free facility, so please be aware of any commercially bought items made in a peanut facility.

How does CACFP work?

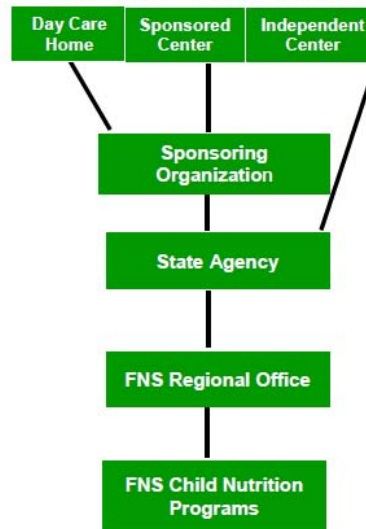
Day care homes and centers receive money for serving nutritious meals. The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) oversees CACFP.

States approve sponsors and centers to operate the program. States also monitor and provide training and guidance to make sure CACFP runs right.

Sponsoring organizations support day care homes and centers with training and monitoring. All day care homes participate in CACFP through a sponsor.



CACFP Partners



FNS-319
USDA is an equal
opportunity provider,
employer and lender.

Building for The Future



in the



Building for the Future in the CACFP

What is CACFP?

CACFP is the Child and Adult Care Food Program. It is a Federal program that pays for healthy meals and snacks for children and adults in day care.

CACFP improves the quality of day care. It makes the cost of day care cheaper for many low-income families.

Besides providing meals in day care, CACFP makes afterschool programs more appealing to at-risk children and youth. Serving afterschool meals and snacks attracts students to learning activities that are safe and fun.

Children and youth who are homeless can also receive meals at shelters that participate in CACFP.

State Agency Contact Information

Iowa Department of Education
Bureau of Nutrition and Health Services
Grimes State Office Building
400 E. 14th St.
Des Moines, IA 50319
Phone: (515) 281-5356



Who is eligible for CACFP meals?

- Children under age 13,
 - Migrant children under age 16,
 - Children and youth under age 19 in afterschool programs in low-income areas,
 - Children and youth under age 19 who live in homeless shelters, and
 - Adults who are impaired or over age 60 and enrolled in adult day care
-

What kinds of meals are served?

CACFP meals follow USDA nutrition standards.

- Breakfast consists of milk, fruits or vegetables, and grains.
- Lunch and Supper require milk, grains, meat or other proteins, fruits, and vegetables.
- Snacks include two different servings from the five components: milk, fruits, vegetables, grains, or meat or other proteins.

Where are CACFP meals served?

Many types of facilities participate in CACFP.

Child Care Centers:

Licensed child care centers and Head Start programs provide day care with meals and snacks to large numbers of children.

Outside-School-Hours Care Centers:

Licensed centers offer before or afterschool care with meals and snacks to large numbers of school-aged children.

Family Day Care Homes:

Licensed providers offer family child care with free meals and snacks to small groups of children in private homes.

"At-Risk" Afterschool Care Programs:

Centers in low-income areas provide learning activities with free meals and snacks to school-age children and youth.

Emergency Shelters:

Homeless, domestic violence, and runaway youth shelters provide places to live with free meals for children and youth.

Adult Day Care Centers:

Licensed centers provide day care with meals and snacks to enrolled adults.

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- **Personal Items**

Children should not bring toys from home except for security items, such as stuffed animals, blankets, and pillows for naps.

- **Mandatory Reporting Policy**

CHILD ABUSE – Iowa law requires that persons who work with children and “have reason to believe, on the basis of their medical, professional, or other training and experience, that a child coming before them in their professional or official capacity is a victim of child abuse” are required to report suspected child abuse to the Child Abuse Hotline. They are also required to notify the person in charge of the institution of suspected abuse and to make a written report.

All staff members are oriented as to this policy. **Child Abuse is defined as:** serious physical or mental injury that is not explained by the available medical history as being accidental; or sexual abuse or sexual exploitation; or serious physical neglect of a child under 18 years of age.

We require for all children while on Grace Preschool property to be safely buckled into the backseat or in a car seat. Our children are our primary concern and we never like to see them not safely restrained in a car seat in the back seat of a vehicle.

CONFIDENTIALITY – The DCF regulations state that a staff person “may not disclose information concerning a child or family, except in the course of inspections and investigations by agents of the Department.” Therefore, the staff must keep confidentiality concerning children at all times. The staff will not disclose information regarding the children as to which the child has an illness (although, the illness itself will be posted), which child is biting or behaving inappropriately in the room, or the developmental progress of other children.

In order to provide mutual respect and consideration for other children and families, we ask that parents not discuss other people’s children, classroom situations, or teachers while within the Grace United Methodist Church grounds or on campus. Please follow the PROCEDURES FOR CONCERNS if any questions or problems arise.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- **Use of Student Pictures**

Parent(s) or Guardian(s) of students who attend Grace Preschool grant permission for all photographs taken during the school year to be used by Grace Preschool for either publicity or advertising. Grace Preschool reserves the right to use pictures and student information in reporting school publications on the Grace Preschool Website for publicity and/or advertising. If you object to this policy, you may exclude your child(ren) by written request to the Director.

- **Fingerprinting**

According to the Department of Children and Families all staff are required to be fingerprinted and background checked before hiring. Any parent or adult who intends to have routine contact with the students is required to be fingerprinted and background checked before working with the students. Parents who are not fingerprinted are not permitted to be left alone with the students for any reason; therefore, a teacher should accompany the parent while with the class.

Preschool Staff training

- **Preschool Staff trainings**

- Within the first 90 days of employment staff need:
- First aid (renew every 2 years)
- CPR (renew every 2 years)
- Mandatory reporter (renew every 3 years)
- Universal precautions (renew every year)
- Essential training
- ISU New Staff Orientation
- Physical Exam (renew every 3 years)
- SING criminal history check done prior to starting (renew every 2 years)
- FBI fingerprint check done prior to starting (renew every 4 years)

*10 hours of professional dev training during the first year

*Every year after minimum of 8 hours for director and onsite supervisor and 6 hours for all other staff

- **Cell phone**

In an effort to reduce distraction and disruptions, we ask that parents refrain from bringing cell phones into the school building. If you must bring your phone into school then please have it adjusted it to a “silent” setting.

- **Web Site**

Please check out our website to view all of our preschool information, activities and events at <http://www.gracedesmoines.org/preschool/>.

- **Parent Volunteers**

We believe our school is built upon the relationships between our parents and our school. Parent involvement is one of many factors which contribute to the success of our school. Parent volunteers are not left alone with any student but their own. Grace Preschool staff are always present with parent volunteers.

- **Handbook Agreement**

The last official act of enrollment and acceptance of each student for Grace Preschool is the signing of a contract that states this handbook has been read and accepted. This contract must be returned as soon as possible. The form “Handbook Governance agreement Clause” can be found at the end of this Parent/Student Handbook. Both parents/legal guardians are required to sign this agreement. If handbook agreement form is not signed and returned, a conference with the school administration will be scheduled to determine appropriate action.

PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

Handbook Governance Agreement Form

We have read the Grace Preschool Parent/Student Handbook and we agree to be governed by it. Parent Signatures are below and we understand that my child's form will be kept on file in the Preschool office.

Student's Name (Please Print) _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Parent/Guardian Name (Please Print) _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Parent/Guardian Name (Please Print) _____

Date _____

Please return this form to your child's teacher as soon as possible (within the first week of school) after you have read the Parent/Student Handbook. If you have more than one student, please fill out a form on each student in your family. **Thank you! We appreciate your cooperation.**