



Preschool Parent Handbook

Grace Early Childhood Center
8225 Worthington Galena Rd
Westerville OH 43081
614-431-8228

Statement of Purpose

Grace Early Childhood Center is a ministry of the Grace Brethren Church of Columbus, Ohio. Our Preschool ministry is to families who are professing Christians, as well as families who may not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. During the time our families are involved in the preschool, we trust that each one comes to know Jesus Christ in a personal way. We also trust that our families continue or begin to worship at a church that is theologically compatible with the Bible teaching that occurs at Grace Early Childhood Center. Our purpose is to reinforce the principles that are taught about God, His Word, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit in the home and in the church, offering a Biblically integrated and developmentally appropriate curriculum. Christ-centered education reflects the Christian worldview in every area of student, staff, and faculty activities (Col. 3:17, 23).

Our center exists to help parents meet their God-given responsibility of caring and educating their children, not to assume that responsibility. It is imperative the parents and children be supportive of this philosophy as practiced in the day-to-day operation of the school. We seek to work closely with parents in meeting the needs of their children. We recognize that caring for children and their educational training is an ongoing process of which Grace Early Childhood Center is one integral portion.

Educational Philosophy

The Grace Early Childhood Center's philosophy of early childhood education is that young children learn best through play, through use of concrete materials, and through involvement in activities that help them to acquire knowledge and to apply knowledge meaningfully in creative and constructive ways. For learning to occur, children must actively participate, explore, and discover. This requires that children be encouraged to ask questions, experiment, make choices, and propose solutions. In so doing, children will learn to assume responsibility for their own actions and feelings as well as gain confidence in acting on their knowledge of the Bible and their physical and social worlds.

While recognizing that each child develops in a unique way, it is our philosophy that the curriculum components include careful arrangement of the classroom environment, daily presentation of structured and unstructured opportunities for play, and recognizing and taking advantage of opportunities for both structured and incidental learning. Developmentally appropriate means nurturing a child's learning process at their maturation (process of maturing) level. Play experiences are structured to allow an optimal mix of individual, one-to-one, small group, and large group experiences. Curriculum areas are approached in an integrated manner to facilitate the development of "the whole child". Daily activities are provided which not only enhance each child's ability to care for himself and to initiate and complete activities, but which also promote within a group context more skillful levels of communication, social interaction, and perceptual and motor development.

Purposes of the Curriculum

A Grace Early Childhood Center curriculum is created to provide an overall framework for learning in all developmental areas to young children from six weeks to five years of age. It is intended to address all developmental domains in an integrated and cohesive manner. Curriculum areas for young children overlap because skills overlap. Curriculum content areas are skills. Within each curriculum area, skills are presented in a general developmental sequence, ranging from early to more advanced

skill levels, providing a general progression of stages that many young children follow. For the purposes of educating young children, the skills are turned into play-based activities that are stimulating and fun.

Curriculum Content Areas

Cognitive

The ability to solve problems, make comparisons, explore, understand and utilize facts is developed through all the senses and using the whole body and a variety of interactions. Children learn about the world around them through structured and unstructured play opportunities that build upon a child's readiness, enthusiasm, and natural curiosity.

Gross Motor

Large muscle skills are developed by offering children opportunities to move through space, balance, stretch, strengthen muscles, and improve posture. Children can learn to combine sensory feedback from their bodies with information from their environment.

Fine Motor

Small muscle (especially hands, fingers, and wrists) skills are developed through opportunities to manipulate a variety of textures, sensory materials, reach, grasp, use tools, transfer and combine materials, and coordinate visual motor skills (the ability to coordinate visual information with movement). This area also includes the development of small muscles in the mouth, which are needed for eating and talking.

Self Care/Adaptive

Dressing and personal hygiene are developed through opportunities to move toward independence in one's own care.

Communication/Language

Communication is developed through interactions with others. It consists of receptive abilities (hearing and understanding), expressive abilities (sounds, gestures, words, signs and alternative communication), articulation (clarity of sounds and words), and social skills (use of language with peers and adults). Children develop communication skills by listening, turn taking, and interacting with others.

Bible

Living a Biblical world view is developed through exposure to God's Word and using daily interactions as opportunities to practice thinking and responding in a Christian way. The curriculum reflects the Bible as foundational in every subject area, not just as a "part of" but rather as "the source of."

Social/Emotional

Social skills are developed through opportunities to interact, share and help others, problem solve, and recognize and express feelings. Children are offered opportunities to interact and resolve conflicts in ways that will foster independence and increase a sense of being capable.

Transitions

Skill in this area is demonstrated by the ability to adapt to change in one's environment, whether the change is mental, physical, or emotional.

Creative Arts/Aesthetics

This area integrates skills from each of the previous areas and allows children the opportunity to create, control, explore, and express through creative arts projects using a variety of media. Appreciation for and contact with God's creation cannot be "taught", but children are exposed to a rich and varied environment and opportunities in and outside the classroom.

Biblical Integration and Spiritual Emphasis

Our Mission Statement

We exist to be used by God to disciple students to learn in harmony with God's Word so they may know, love, and serve Jesus Christ.

Family Life Values Statement

We honor the family roles and principles taught in the Bible.

Genesis 1:27 So God created people in His own image; God patterned them after himself; male and female He created them.

Specifically, we teach that men and women are created with equal value in the image of God and that He loves them intensely.

Mark 10: 6, 7 But at the beginning of creation God made them male and female. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.

Specifically, we teach that God's plan for the family includes a father and a mother who are husband and wife

who share responsibility and submit to one another out of love for each other and respect for their Creator. Due to a variety of circumstances, many children live in single parent families, blended families, or extended families. Care is given to be sensitive to each child's family structure while reinforcing biblical family lifestyles, affirming for the child acceptance of his/her family while laying foundations for that child to build expectations for his/her own family in the future.

Colossians 3:20 Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

Exodus 20:12 Honor your father and your mother....

I Timothy 5:4 ...these should learn first of all...caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents.

Specifically, we teach that children's biblical obligations include obedience, reverence and grateful requital.

Chapel Programs

Chapel for our preschoolers will be held every other week. The schedule/location, specific themes, and speakers will be communicated in the monthly newsletter of Grace Early Childhood Center. Chapel programs are designed to encourage and challenge us to walk with the Lord. Children also

have opportunities to minister to others during chapel. Parents are welcome to attend any of the programs.

Prayer

Prayer is critical to our daily walk with the Lord, and occurs at various times in the classroom. As a staff, we also pray for children regularly and consistently.

Code of Conduct

Grace Brethren Church has adopted the following policy concerning conduct of students and staff. This policy will apply to conduct on school premises, property, and buses and at all school related events. It is our desire that our lives reflect positively on the Lord Jesus Christ both in and out of school.

As the Bible is the foundation of all academic courses at our center, the same is the standard for student and staff behavior. For this reason, the following principles are adopted for students and staff (James. 1:22; 1 John 1:6-7; 2 Cor. 3:2-3).

1. We will pattern our conduct after that of the Lord Jesus
(1 Pet. 2:21; 1 John 2:16; 1 Pet. 2:23).
2. We will regard our physical bodies as temples of God, dedicated to Him
(1 Cor. 6:19-20).
3. We will be careful to make the best use of the time available
(Col. 4:5; Eph. 5:15; Matt. 12:36; 1 Cor. 13:11).
4. We will not participate in activities where there is danger of addiction and/or habituation
(1 Cor. 6:12).
5. We will consider others first, rather than ourselves
(Rom. 14:13,21; 1 Cor. 8:8-13; Rom 15:1; Phil. 2:3,4).
6. We will avoid deliberate confrontation with temptation
(Js. 1:14; Phil. 2:5; 4:8).
7. We will engage only in activities, which are of positive benefit
(1 Cor. 10:23; 1 Thess. 5:21).
8. We will avoid activities, which are offensive to others
(1 Co. 10:31-33).
9. We will do only those things, which we know, honor Christ
(Col 3:17; Rom. 14:23).

Overview of our Services

License / Charter

Grace Early Childhood Center is licensed by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) and we agree to follow the rules and laws that have been written by them. We feel that those laws have been written to ensure that children are cared for in a safe environment and receive a quality education. It is our desire to go beyond those standards to supply you and your child with quality childcare. Parents may request in the school office copies of the laws and rules governing childcare and copies of compliance reports. The ODJFS toll free number is posted in the office and is available to any person who wishes to report a suspected violation by the center.

Accreditation

Grace Early Childhood Center is accredited through the Association of Christian Schools International.

Ages of Children in our Care

The preschool accepts children from 3 years old (by September 30th) to five years of age.

Hours of Operation

The center is open from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday for the full day, year round program. Half day preschool is from 8:45 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. or 12:45 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.

Staff to Child Ratio

We believe strongly that the ratio of children to adults directly affects the quality of the early learning experience. Due to this belief, we follow the standards listed below whenever possible.

3-year-old preschool: 10 children to one adult (state allows 12:1)

4-year-old preschool: 12 children to one adult (state allows 14:1)

We do not Discriminate

Grace Early Childhood Center recruits and admits students of any race, color, or ethnic origin to all its rights, privileges, programs, and activities. In addition, the center will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational programs and athletics/extracurricular activities. Furthermore, the center is not intended to be an alternative to court or administrative agency ordered, or public school initiated desegregation.

Grace Early Childhood Center will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or ethnic origin in the hiring of its certified or non-certified personnel.

Regulations

In compliance with Grace Early Childhood Center, ACSI (Association of Christian Schools International), and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, we are required to have the following information in your child's file. It is necessary to have this information updated on an annual basis.

Health Status

A dated, written statement of the child's current health status, signed by an approved health professional, shall be obtained at least annually for each child less than six years old, or whenever the director shall have reason to suspect that a child participating in the program may have a condition hazardous or potentially hazardous to others, or finds that the child's general condition indicates the need for such examination. The statement of health status shall be obtained at the time of admission or within 30 days after admission.

Immunization Form

Information regarding all immunizations the child has had, including month, day and year each immunization was administered, shall be on file. The immunization form shall be obtained at the time of

admission or within 30 days after admission.

Emergency Information

Information including parents' home and work emergency contact information, known allergies to foods or medications, release for emergency medical treatment, and a release for emergency transportation shall be obtained at the time of admission. **Please be sure to advise the school of any change of address, business, and/or telephone numbers as changes happen.**

Authorization for Pickup

This is information giving permission for person(s) other than the parents to pick up the child. The persons authorized to pick-up the children must be at least 18 years of age and able to show valid photo identification. Any person other than the child's parent will be asked to show identification. In the case of custody issues, we must have a copy of the custody agreement to remain in the student's file so we may comply with court orders. Grace Early Childhood Center takes a neutral stance in all custody matters. It is a good practice for the parent to notify the staff or director when another authorized person(s) is picking up the child on a given day. In emergency situations, parents sometimes need another person(s) not previously authorized to pickup. In such cases, the parent must give written authorization or verbal authorization over the phone. The authorization for pickup also includes information indicating anyone who is not allowed to pick up a child.

Handbook Verification

A parent/guardian signed verification that the parent has received, read, and agrees to abide by the policies and practices in the Parent Handbook is part of the application and is kept in the child's file.

Photo Release

Parent/guardian signed consent for your child to be photographed shall be in the child's file.

Video Release

A parent/guardian signed consent for each child to watch preschool approved videos shall be in the child's file.

Agreement to Follow Sign-in / Sign-out Procedures

Each child upon arrival must be accompanied to the classroom where the parent shall make eye contact with and speak to the teacher. This insures that the teacher knows the child is present in the classroom. Each child must be picked up at the classroom door (for half day children, please do not enter the classroom for pick up) where the parent again shall make eye contact with and hear the teacher dismiss the child to the parent. This insures that the teacher knows the child has left with the parent. Parents of full day preschool students must sign their child in and out on the Sign-In / Out Sheet that stays with the teacher at all times. Parents who remain in the building beyond dropping off and picking up a student must sign in at the office.

Agreement to Follow Security Procedures

Weekdays, parents are to enter and exit the building through the Early Childhood Center East main Entrance. To maintain security, locked doors must not be opened for others seeking entrance nor propped open. Parents will be advised of building events that dictate open door practices. The building is monitored indoors and outdoors by camera surveillance. The school may not be used as a setting for solicitation.

Re-enrollment

Re-enrollment for preschool students enrolling for preschool the following year is held during the month of February. There is an annual re-enrollment fee for the following school year. All students wishing to enter Worthington Christian Schools Kindergarten must apply as first time students of WCS. Kindergarten application forms are available in the Grace Early Childhood Center and Elementary School offices.

Withdrawal Procedures

Parents planning on withdrawing their children should do so in writing (including email) prior to the 15th of the month. There will be no penalty, although the full month's tuition will still be due. Those who withdraw after the 15th of the month will be assessed a penalty of \$250 per student due to the center's loss of revenue.

Fees and Payment Procedures

Tuition Policy

Tuition is due whether or not a child is in attendance. Credit is not given for absences, calamity days, or school calendar changes. Monthly payments are requested for all programs and must be paid by the 1st of each month and considered past due after the 15th of the month. Accounts not paid in full by the 15th of the month will be assessed a \$25 late fee. If the 15th falls on a weekend or holiday, the next business day will be the last day to pay accounts in full. Tuition that is not paid by the 30th of the billing month will result in the child being withdrawn from the center and their position given to a family on the waiting list. Once an account becomes past due, the entire balance must be paid and the account brought current in order for a child's admission to continue.

There will be a fee of \$25 for all checks returned NSF and all returned EFT payments.

Copying Fee

A copying fee of \$0.10 per copy is charged for additional copies of materials already provided to parents/children. Please note, the office does not have cash available so exact change is much appreciated.

Medical and Health Information

Screenings

Teachers who may have a concern about a student can have their hearing, vision, and speech screened. Children who cannot be screened will be referred to a physician or specialist for evaluation.

Absences

Parents should call the Attendance Hotline 614-410-4343 at any time (24 hours, 7 days a week) to access an automated mailbox that will prompt the caller through needed information about absences. Please notify the school office no later than 9:00 a.m. If you discover later that your child's illness is

communicable, please give us a follow up call as soon as possible. We are required to notify parents whose children may have been exposed to a communicable disease in the center.

Sick Children

All possible provision has been made to assure that children and teachers follow appropriate rules of personal hygiene. Antibacterial soap is used for hand washing before snacks and meals and after toilet use. Disposable paper towels are used for drying hands.

State regulation 3301-37-04 requires that there be daily observation of each child on arrival at the center by a person capable of recognizing common signs of communicable diseases or other evidence of ill health. A child who is ill upon arrival at the center will not be admitted. If a child becomes ill while at the center, the parent or guardian will be contacted and expected to pick up the child within 45 minutes. Should we not be able to reach a parent we will begin to call your authorized pick-ups. The child will be isolated from other children in the school office until the parent or guardian arrives. With any infectious disease, we ask that you seek your physician's advice and always notify us of the disease.

When a child has had a communicable disease such as chicken pox or conjunctivitis ("pink eye"), a child must have a note from his parent or physician when he returns to school and/or be re-admitted to school by the director or school nurse.

If a child displays any of the following symptoms, he/she must be kept at home:

- Fever; temperature of at least 100° F
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea; 2-3 abnormally loose stools within a 24 hr period
- Nasal secretions that are thick, yellow or green, and are accompanied by a fever. Cloudy or colored nasal secretions may indicate an allergy. Please check with your doctor to rule out infection.
- Sore throat or difficulty swallowing
- Cough; severe enough to cause the child to become red or blue in the face or it makes a whooping sound.
- Eye drainage of any type should be checked by a doctor to rule out infection
- Unusual rashes should be checked by a doctor to rule out bacterial infection
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Child not feeling well, such as lethargic behavior

The child may return to school after illness when:

- Fever has been broken for 24 hours without medication
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea has subsided for 24 hours
- At least 1 dose of antibiotic have been given over a 24-hour period for any type of strep or bacterial infection
- Child is feeling well again and normal behavior has returned

Medication

The giving of or application of medication or individual special medical procedures shall be provided only on written order of a prescription from a physician to the child's parent or guardian. All medications must be in their original container. Parents or guardians must complete and sign the Release for Dispensing Medication stating the name of medication, the quantity to be given, and the time when

the medication is to be administered. At all times, the school retains the right to refuse to administer prescription or non-prescription medications.

Medication will be stored in a location designated by the director. Medication that requires cold temperatures will be kept in the refrigerator in a separate container.

Accidents

Teachers are certified in infant/child CPR/AED and first aid. In the case of an accident, assessment and treatment of the injury will be given under the supervision of the teacher and/or director. All accidents are recorded on an incident report form that requires the signature of the parent. If further treatment is deemed necessary, the parent, guardian, or emergency contact person will be called. If the child needs to be transported by emergency personnel and the parent or guardian is not at the center, one of the Administrators will accompany the child.

Safety and Emergency Information

Inclement and Excessively Cold or Hot Weather

On days of inclement or cold wind chill factors below 20 degrees or hot weather above 85 degrees, children will be kept inside. Sunscreen is not routinely applied to children on sunny days.

Tornados

In the event of a tornado warning, students will be escorted to a safe shelter with in the ECC and instructed in proper safety procedures. Instructions for seeking safe shelter are posted at each classroom door. Tornado drills are held in March, April, and May to familiarize the children with proper and safe procedures.

Snow Days

When severe weather conditions exist, please listen to the radio for school closings. Stations WDLR (1550 Delaware), WTVN (610 AM), WCOL (1230 AM& 92 FM), WNCI - (97.9 FM), WCVO - (104.9 FM), and WSNY - (Sunny 95 FM) will carry this information. Television stations Channel 4 WCMH (TV) and Channel 10 WBNS (TV) will also carry this information.

Center Closings

As a courtesy to our parents we will remain open if at all possible. Should Franklin County be on a level 2 snow emergency and we need to close the center, we will communicate this to you via email/TV/Radio stating that the Grace Early Childhood Center is closed. In all cases, you should be able to call our school at 614-431-8228 and hear a detailed message about the closing of the center.

Fire Drills

Fire drills are held in order to familiarize the children with proper and safe procedures for emergency exit of the building. In the event of a fire, students will be evacuated according to plan. Evacuation plans are posted at each classroom door. The most recent inspection information is located in the school office.

Stranger Danger Drills

Drills are held every quarter in order to familiarize the children with proper and safe procedures for safe shelter or emergency evacuation in the event an individual(s) poses a threat to our safety.

Emergency Evacuation

In the event of an emergency where the center needs to evacuate, our relocation site shall either be the Worthington Christian Middle School or Slate Hill Elementary School (614-883-3200).

Child Abuse

All school employees are required under Section 2151.421 of the Ohio Revised Code to report any suspicion of child abuse or child neglect.

Health

Grace Early Childhood Center is inspected on a regular basis by the Department of Health. The most recent inspection information is located in the school office.

Special Events and Field Trips

Field trips are an important and fun part of learning about our world. Field trips enhance the learning experience by offering opportunities not available in the classroom. Parents will be notified of a forthcoming field trip at least two weeks in advance, and must return the required permission form in order for the child to attend. WCS buses transport preschool students to and from field trip locations. Our buses meet State and Federal requirements for transporting preschool aged children, but are not equipped with seat belts. Parents who desire that their small child be transported wearing a child restraint are encouraged to drive their child meeting us at our destination. Any parent who chooses to ride the bus must be considered a chaperone and must perform the duties of a chaperone. All chaperones are responsible to enforce safety rules and know how to emergency exit students from the bus. All teachers keep copies of student emergency information as well as their attendance card with them at all times.

Throughout the school year, teachers plan special activity days to enhance learning. Parents are encouraged to participate by helping in the classroom or providing special items for snacks or activities.

Occasionally, during the summer months, students may participate in water activities including wading pools, sprinklers, spray bottles, etc. Before any water activities, a permission slip must be signed by parents. All water activities are supervised by teachers.

Attendance

Grace Early Childhood Center believes that regular attendance in class is essential to student learning. Missed days and late arrivals, while necessary at times, diminish the quality of teaching and learning. Classroom instruction cannot be thoroughly replicated through makeup assignments.

Arrival and Pickup Times for Children

Parents are requested to plan their children's arrival at school so that the children arrive no later than 8:45. Half day PS parents may drop off as early as 8:35 and are requested to pick up by 11:15 for the morning session. For the PM session drop off may be as early as 12:35 and pick up is 3:15. We encourage regular and punctual attendance. It is very important that parents call the attendance hotline by 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. if a child is going to be absent that day. If parents have not called the school, the office may contact the parents to verify the child's absence.

Late Pickups

There is a \$1 per minute charge for late pick-up on the second offense; \$5 per minute for the third offense.

Morning half day PS classes pick up is 11:15 a.m.
(Late pick up charges begin at 11:25 a.m.)

Afternoon half day PS classes pick up is 3:15 p.m.
(Late pick up charges begin at 3:25 p.m.)

Full Day enrollment pick up is 6:00 p.m.
(Late pick up charges begin at 6:00 p.m.)

Because teachers have continuous duties throughout the day, children who are left after pickup time are supervised in the office. Should you ever be late, we ask that you graciously accept your "Oops" slip and make your payment at the office the following day.

School Bus and Car Traffic

There are many buses and automobiles leaving the school parking lot at the 3:15 dismissal time. To help provide a safe exit, please pay close attention.

PARKING LOT SPEED LIMIT: 5 m.p.h.

Church policy prohibits cars parking at the curb. **Fire lanes must be free for emergency vehicles at all times. Children and parents must have unobstructed view of moving traffic.** When picking up or dropping off children, please park in the lined parking spaces reserving the handicapped spots for those who need them. All parents are asked to cooperate in leaving the curb areas open at all times.

Parent Communication Procedures

A variety of methods are used to keep all families informed about what is happening at Grace Early Childhood Center. Social and educational events are held throughout the year to encourage interactions between staff and families.

Parent / Teacher Conferences

A required PS parent/teacher conference day is scheduled in October with an optional one in January. At this conference the teachers will give parents information about the child's progress and possibly a class recommendation for the following school year. The teachers and the director are available throughout the year for individual conferences with parents. Parents are reminded of the importance of scheduling the time to meet. Because of the teacher's responsibility for the children she is not able to devote her full attention to an unscheduled conference. Scheduling a time to meet helps both you and the teacher to be able to devote your full attention to the discussion items.

Information Screen

Outside the school office is an LCD TV that runs announcements and reminders for each week.

PS Newsletter

This monthly publication includes information about activities happening at our Center as well as general early childhood news.

Parent Directory

Rosters that include names and telephone numbers of parents of enrolled children are available upon request. This roster will not include the names or telephone numbers of those parents who request not to be included.

Preschool Evaluation Reports

Ongoing evaluations for preschoolers are presented to parents in January and April.

Parent Involvement

Open-Door Policy for Parents

Parents are encouraged to visit the school at any time. Although we request cooperation in not disrupting our program, parents are permitted access to all parts of this center at any time their child is present. When visiting the center for any reason, please sign in at the school office.

Volunteer Opportunities

We welcome parent involvement in the preschool classrooms, and feel that it benefits not only the center but the parent and child as well. Parents are encouraged to participate in the classroom as a helper on a regular basis. Parent participation enables the teacher to offer a variety of creative activities for students. All parent volunteers and guests must sign in at the office. Other ways that parents can participate in the school experience are accompanying us on field trips, special-day events, staff appreciation committee, etc.

BOOK CLUBS

Each month PS parents will receive a book club newsletter and order form. These books are offered at exceptional prices and allow families to build their home libraries. When you purchase books through the book clubs, the teacher receives points with which he/she can order books, free of charge, for the classroom. We do ask that you choose your books carefully, as we cannot endorse all of the materials offered. If you have a question about a particular book or would like recommendations, ask your child's teacher. When ordering books from a particular book club, please use a check as payment and make sure your checks are made out to that particular club.

Discipline Information and Procedures

Children are instructed in reasonable and age-appropriate group and classroom practices and taught to operate within those boundaries. At Grace Early Childhood Center we teach children to respect themselves, respect authority, and consider others more important than themselves. We teach children to

practice self control. We teach children to accept responsibility for choices and actions and to understand there are consequences to choices and actions. We help children to learn to use toys and materials properly. We encourage children to try, we applaud their efforts, and we provide many opportunities for success. We lovingly care for children, letting them know they are valued and they are capable. Limits are held calmly and consistently, offering encouragement, kindness, gentleness, and long-suffering. Both our philosophy and state law prohibit the use of physical punishment or verbal abuse.

In guiding and disciplining young children, God, our Father, must be our example. He always lovingly, patiently, but firmly, guides us and disciplines us. The teacher, with the help of the parent, must understand the individual differences of each child and then choose appropriate practices. The home and center must work hand in hand, helping each other understand the child and reinforce, as well as negate, certain behaviors, making formal early education a pleasant experience.

The following may be utilized as the situation warrants (all staff follow these practices):

- 1.Reinforcement and praise of good behavior
- 2.Reviewing expectations.
- 3.Redirecting (verbally/physically)
- 4.Discussing consequences
- 5.Reflection (separating from the group as in time out – one minute for each year of age)
- 6.Removal of privileges (closing an activity)
- 7.Relocation and/or restraining if safety of others is an issue
- 8.Parental conferences (phone and/or in person).
- 9.Requesting parental discipline and/or removal of child from school.

The school generally follows its discipline procedures contained herein. However, there are circumstances in which the school administration may determine, in their sole discretion, that it is appropriate not to follow progressive discipline steps. In cases in which a student has engaged in egregious, immoral, or other unacceptable behavior, the school reserves the right to suspend or expel the student immediately.

Snacks and Food Service

Parents provide snacks for half-day students. Parents are encouraged to provide nutritional and safe snacks. Please remember convenience in serving when planning a snack – prepackaged and individual portions are more convenient to serve. Please do not bring sugar-sweetened punch, sodas or grape juice. Birthdays are very special occasions for children. You are welcome to help us celebrate by bringing a special birthday snack. Foods with higher sugar content are allowed for the special celebration. Teachers may ask parents to bring a special snack that enhances the theme or special activity (i.e. alphabet letter snacks). Check with the teacher if you are in doubt about a particular snack. Teachers will daily post the snack on the board outside the classroom for parent's information.

It is our practice to serve nutritious hot lunches as well as a morning and afternoon snack to all students enrolled full day. Our menus are prepared by the school dietitian and include tasty foods that meet children's dietary needs. Menus are posted monthly for review on the web as well as sent home. Children are encouraged to expand their taste experiences by trying foods that they may not consider their favorite, eating some of all the food groups represented on their plate.

Due to the high number of medical and religious dietary restrictions of our students, we provide parents the following procedure for substituting food items when necessary. Modified diets shall be approved in writing by a licensed physician. If an entire food group is eliminated we will need written instructions from your physician on a prescribed form obtained in the office. When special diets are required for cultural or religious reasons, we will need written, dated and signed instructions from you. The substitution should not compromise the nutritional value of the meal. Food substitutions must be well labeled with both the student's name and the teacher's name, self-cooled, and meet the nutritional requirements as set forth by the Department of Jobs and Family Services. **Quality Staff**

An important component of a quality early childhood program is the choice of staff. Our teachers are nurturing Christians, positive in nature, understand children's needs, and are specially trained. The administrative team carefully evaluates staff performance to assure that children are provided developmentally appropriate experiences in a safe, loving Christian environment.

We employ people who profess Christ as their Savior, live in a manner consistent with their belief, and model Biblical principles. Their focus is the same as that of the church, "to bring up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." They are warm and nurturing, and understand child development. Our employees apply their knowledge in the classroom, and respect each child as an individual, special gift from God. We seek employees who value working as a team with parents, colleagues, and volunteers.

Each staff member has three written references on file, been finger printed, undergone a FBI/BCI background check, and has had a physical examination by their physician.

Continuing education is an important part of working at Grace Early Childhood Center. Each staff member attends regular training in first aid, communicable disease recognition, child abuse prevention and recognition, CPR, and child development.

Toys and Personal Belongings

We advise you to label clearly everything that comes to school and supervise that your child takes it home at the end of the day. We regret that we cannot be responsible for lost or damaged items.

Please do not allow your child to bring toys to school except on designated "show and tell" days. Suitable items for "sharing" may be brought to school as allowed by individual teachers. Toys that are not suitable include toys relating to sorcery or violence, toys of aggression or destruction, and toys most appropriate for older children.

Celebrations and Special Events

Holidays

On holidays, we emphasize the Biblical aspect at school. For example, we do not teach Santa Claus or the Easter Bunny, instead we focus on Jesus. We celebrate the glorious changes we see in the fall and do not participate in Halloween. We do not want to ruin any fun things you do with your child at home. It is our desire, however, to keep our teaching centered on the Lord and what the Bible teaches. Should children engage in conversation about Santa Claus or the Easter Bunny, the teacher will direct the children to talk to their parents about questions on those topics.

We teach our students about the Pilgrim's first harvest feast of 1621, which has become the model for our traditional Thanksgiving Day observance. Research of Pilgrim journal entries confirm that Pilgrims used the term "Indian" when referring to Native Americans. After much consideration, we feel it is fitting to continue to use the beloved songs, poems, finger plays, and story books that are part of our Thanksgiving traditions that include the word "Indian". When introducing any activity, we include a discussion of new words and their significance. As we do when discussing any culture, we refer to other cultures only with the deepest respect.

Birthdays

We are happy to be a part of your child's birthday or "half birthday" celebration here at school. As parents plan a birthday party for their children that will occur outside of school, we request that invitations be mailed or distributed privately to the children. This will prevent awkward situations for the children when some of the boys and girls receive invitations and others do not. We appreciate your sensitivity in not distributing birthday party invitations on school premises.

Grandparents Day

In March, we set aside a day to invite our grandparents and senior citizen friends to join us for part of the school day and visit the classes.

Music Program and Art Show

In May, the preschool students showcase their talents for families in a music program and art show followed with a reception for all.

Basic Procedures and Guidelines

Playground Guidelines

We desire for the children to enjoy their recess experiences. Boys and girls need to display kindness, courtesy, and a happy spirit at play, as well as in all other areas of their lives. The following guidelines have been developed for the playground.

1. One child at a time on the slides; go down feet first.
2. No walking on slides - up or down.
3. No climbing on top of tunnels
4. No jumping from the top of the climbers.
5. Keep balls in playground.

Conduct in the Building

Please encourage your preschool students and young siblings to conduct themselves appropriately when in the building. Respecting all who are in the building throughout the day, we ask that all young children follow these guidelines during school hours:

1. Children are to **show proper respect** to all adults at all times.
2. Children are to **walk** in the building at all times.
3. Children are to **talk in quiet voices** in the hallways or the public restrooms.

Student Dress

Good grooming should be a mark of every Grace Early Childhood student. **All shoes must have an enclosed toe and heel.** Clothing worn by the children should be appropriate to the weather.

Resolution of Concerns

Communication between parents and staff members is very important in assuring we have a common understanding of goals for each child.

At times concerns may develop that need to be resolved. The following steps have been identified to resolve concerns. When a concern exists parents are requested to begin this process as quickly as possible.

- 1.Meet with the person directly involved (teacher).
- 2.Meet with the director.
- 3.Meet with the administrator / pastor of the church.

At any of the levels of discussion, it may be possible to invite others to participate if it is believed their involvement will assist in reaching a resolution.

Confidentiality

All information about children and their families of Grace Early Childhood Center is regarded as confidential, the property of the church and the family involved.

Rest Periods

After an active, exciting morning each full-day child is scheduled for a time of rest. This is a one-half to two-hour period when all children are encouraged to rest quietly. Children may bring one small stuffed toy, blanket and small pillow to be taken home at the end of each week to be laundered.

Sample Half Day Program Schedule

AM	PM	
8:45 - 9:30	or 12:45 - 1:30	Free Play
9:30 - 10:00	or 1:30 - 2:00	Circle Time / Chapel
10:00 - 10:30	or 2:00 - 2:30	Art / Music / Snack
10:30 - 10:45	or 2:30 - 2:45	Recess
10:45 - 11:00	or 2:45 - 3:00	Bible time
11:00 - 11:15	or 3:00 - 3:15	Story time / Share bag

Sample Full Day Program Schedule

7:00 - 8:15	Arrivals / free play
8:20 - 8:45	Breakfast snack served
8:45 - 9:30	WOW! Room
9:30 - 10:00	Circle time / Chapel
10:00 - 10:30	Story time / theme activities / snack
10:30 - 11:00	Recess
11:00 - 11:15	Bible
11:15 - 11:30	Learning activity
11:30 - 12:00	Art
12:00 - 12:30	Lunch
12:30 - 1:00	Recess
1:00 - 1:30	Books / Puzzles
1:30 - 3:30	Nap / Rest time

3:30 - 4:00	Centers
4:00 - 4:30	Snack
4:30 - 5:00	Recess / Departures
5:00 - 6:00	Free Play / Departures