

# GRACE PRESCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK



# 2024-2025

# At Grace Preschool We Learn, Love, and Play through:

**Grace**— acceptance, kindness, Love

**Relationships**—Your family is our family

**Acts of kindness** — helping others

**Creative play**— Developmentally Appropriate experiences

**Empowerment**— Independence, Love of learning





# WELCOME TO GRACE LOVES PARK PRESCHOOL

Our School is sponsored and operated by Grace Lutheran Church, 343 Grand Avenue, Loves Park, 61111. The Governing Board is made up of parents, members of the church, the Pastors, the Director of the School and the Chairman of the Committee.

Our school first opened in 1944 as a kindergarten. In 1959 the school was licensed by the Illinois State Department of Children and Family Services. After the Harlem School District offered kindergarten, we expanded to include a four-year-old pre-school in 1970. Four years later, a three-year-old program was opened in an effort to serve the community better and fully utilize the church facilities. Beginning in 2017, a 2 year old program was opened.

## Purpose

The purpose of Grace Preschool is to:

- Teach the love of Jesus in all that we do
- Provide a safe, caring environment where all students and families feel welcome.
- Provide materials and time for children to explore and enhance their love of learning
- Support each child and their family's needs and abilities
- Foster creativity and independence
- Teach diversity and justice in a developmentally appropriate way

## Goals

A variety of developmentally appropriate activities and materials shall be provided to help children achieve the following goals:

- Positive self-concept, sense of independence, and self-help skills
- Social skills, including an awareness of diversity
- Cognitive skills
- Physical development and skills
- Sound health, safety and nutritional practice
- Creative expression
- Develop an appreciation for God's world and to know what it means to be a child of God

## Website/Social Media

Please visit us at our website [www.gracepreschool.net](http://www.gracepreschool.net). You will be able to read about our school's history, the staff, and updates throughout the year.

On Facebook, find us at [www.facebook.com/gracelutheranpreschool](http://www.facebook.com/gracelutheranpreschool)

## Registration

Registration begins every late Winter. There is a non-refundable registration fee. Children currently enrolled who anticipate attending another year can register the week prior to public registration. Grace Lutheran Church members can also register one week before the public registration. Application forms are available from the Director or on the website.

## Admission Policies

Grace Preschool admits students of any national and ethnic origin, sex, race, creed, religion, color, age, veteran or military status, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, or disability to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of national and ethnic origin, sex, race, creed, religion, color, age, veteran or military status, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, or disability in administration of its educational policies, admissions and other school-administered programs.

A child's acceptance into the program is contingent upon the following:

- ♥ There must be an opening in the class.
- ♥ The completed registration form and payment of a non-refundable registration fee is required to reserve a place in the program
- ♥ A physical dated within 6 months prior to entry to school
- ♥ A Certified copy of the child's birth Certificate



**No child will be allowed to start school without an updated physical!**

## 2 year old program

Our 2 year old program is similar to our 3 and 4 year old program, with age appropriate adjustments: it will not be required that students be potty-trained, but parents will need to supply diapers and wipes; our day will be less structured with plenty of opportunity for learning through play; and discipline will be appropriate for the age of the child.

## **Tuition**

Registration fee-\$100.00 before May 30th, \$125 after May 30th (**non-refundable**)

### **2 Year Olds (MUST be 2 by September 1)**

Tuesday/Thursday AM - \$170

### **3 year olds (Birthday before September 1)**

Tuesday/Thursday AM - \$170

M/W/F AM - \$235

Tuesday/Thursday PM - \$170 (Add Wednesday \$235)

### **4 year olds (Birthday before September 1)**

M/W/F or T/W/TH AM - \$235

M/T/W/TH AM - \$290

M-F AM - \$340

T/W/TH PM - \$235

Tuition is due the first day of each month. The first payment is due September 1. The last payment will be due May 1st.

**All payments will be made through Kangarootime. Details provided upon enrollment. Payments can be set up from ACH or Credit Card. Credit Card payments will include a 3% fee.**

*Please notify the Treasurer or Director promptly if a tuition payment will be late.* Because of past problems with late or NSF checks, the board has implemented the following:

\*If tuition is paid after the 10th of the month, there will be a \$10 late fee.

\*If tuition is paid after the last day of the month, there will be another \$10 late fee, for a total of \$20 in late fees.

\*If the payment is not received by the last day of the month, your child may be dropped from the program, unless special arrangements have been made with the Director and the Treasurer.

***Remember: monthly tuition is the preschool's primary source of income. Please make your payments on time.***

## **Tuition Assistance**

Financial assistance is available to families who would otherwise not be able to attend Grace through the Carol A. Johnson Memorial Scholarship Fund. Applications and information can be requested from the director.

## Discharge Policies

Grace Preschool has made a commitment to serve all students and families to the best of our ability. Occasionally a circumstance arises in which a child is not benefitting from our program.

Any child who, after attempts have been made to meet his/her individual needs, demonstrates inability to benefit from the type of program offered by the school, or whose presence is detrimental to the group shall be discharged. Parents will be consulted first.

Failure to make prompt tuition payments for the support of the program will result in being dropped from the school. If there is a financial problem, please discuss it with our Director. There are Scholarships available!

## Physicals

A medical report, **dated no earlier than 6 months prior to entry into school** must contain all updated immunizations, including a TB test, HIB, Hepatitis B and Chicken pox vaccinations and lead screen. Since this report is valid for 2 years, a child who attended our school the previous year does not need another physical.

**No child will be allowed to begin school without a physical and all immunizations.**

## Medical Emergencies

In case of illness, accident, or injury to a child, the parent (or person designated on the registration form) will be notified. If no one can be reached, the school will secure the services of a physician. Staff members are trained in CPR and First Aid. 911 will be called in an emergency.

All contagious diseases must be reported to the school (**815-282-6114**), and a permission slip from a doctor or nurse must be presented before returning. If a child becomes ill while at school, he/she will be isolated (with an aide) and the parent will be notified to come for him/her. Since school is in session for a short period of time, no medications will be given by the staff.

## Arrival and Dismissal

No child will be allowed in the classroom until 5 minutes before starting time. It is the parent's responsibility to see that the preschool students enter the classroom. **All students must be brought to the room and picked up from the room.** All parents must "sign in" and "sign out" the children through Kangarootime, as required by DCFS.

A child will be released from the facility only to those persons designated on the registration form. Persons not known to the staff shall be required to show some identification if any changes are made for a release. Teachers will keep an accurate record of this. Please be prompt when picking your child up from school.

According to DCFS, all day care centers shall have a written policy that explains to parents the action the center will take if a parent or guardian does not pick up a child at the designated time.

1. A late charge will be issued to parents who are more than 5 minutes late and will be added to the next month's tuition. The late fees will be \$1 per minute after the first 5 minutes.

2. If the parents cannot be reached, the staff will call all other emergency contacts as listed by the parents. If no one can be reached and there have been no phone calls to the school by the parents saying when they will pick up their child, if one hour has passed since the school's dismissal, the center will notify the Loves Park police to pick up your child.

3. Please be sure to update the center on your emergency contact numbers!

4. Please note that the staff will not hold the child responsible for the situation and the discussion of this issue will only be with the parent or guardian.

## Volunteers

All volunteers who help at the school more than once a month must be fingerprinted and have a background check, according to DCFS regulations. Please let your child's teacher know if you can help. We love to have community helpers come and share with us; i.e. nurses, dentists, musicians, firefighters, and police officers.

## Insurance

The school is covered by liability insurance by A.W.Anderson Insurance Agency.

## Curriculum



The program objectives will be implemented through the HighScope Curriculum— a research-based, child-focused program. The HighScope Preschool Curriculum is based on the principles of active learning and support of a child's positive interactions with adults and peers. . Bible lessons will be an integral part of curriculum. Free play is an important part of the day and we believe children learn best through play and communicating with each other and loving adults.

## Conferences

Conferences will be held in September, February and any time a parent requests. Evidence of learning, via learning stories, will be shared throughout the year on Educa.

## Visiting the School

Parents are welcome to visit the school at any time. If you wish to have a conference with a teacher, please schedule a time.



## Hand Washing

According to DCFS rules every child and staff member must wash their hands with soap and water as soon as they enter the building, before they enter the classroom. We also wash after using the restroom, before and after eating, and after sneezing, coughing or blowing noses.

## Educa



Our newest program, Educa, allows teachers to share stories of student's learning throughout the year. Parents can read and comment on the stories, and even add their own stories showing the learning happening at home. There is also a message board where we post updates that families can check at any time. You will find newsletters, important announcements, and upcoming events. Make sure to invite

any family members who wish to participate.

## Kangarootime

The Kangarootime program is used by the preschool to take online payments, track attendance, and keep records. Parents can download an app to check-in and check-out, and pay monthly tuition.



# Sample Daily Schedule

8:45-9:00 A.M./12:15-12:30P.M.	Arrival, Handwriting, Intro to Play Time
9:00-9:50 AM/12:45-1:35 PM	Art, Playtime, Clean-up
9:50-10:10AM/1:35—1:55PM	Calendar, Attendance, Story
10:10 –10:30AM/1:55-2:15 PM	Music/Chapel
10:30 –10:45AM/2:15-2:30PM	Gym, Bathroom Break
10:45-11:15 AM/2:30-2:50 PM	Snack
11:15-11:30 AM/2:50-3:00 PM	Review of Day’s Work, Story, Dismissal

## Discipline

In the event it becomes necessary to discipline a child for inappropriate behavior, the child will first be redirected. It may, in some cases, be necessary to separate the child from the group. In this case we will discuss strategies and choices, as part of our curriculum is to help children learn rules and social skills. If any behavior hurts others, the parents will be consulted by the teachers to find an appropriate solution. Every parent will be asked to read our discipline policies and sign and return the agreement form, then return it to school.

## Communicable Diseases



All communicable diseases should be reported to the school at once for the protection of the other children. You must **KEEP YOUR CHILD AT HOME** if they have the following symptoms: *fever, nausea or vomiting, skin rash or sore, inflamed or swollen eyes, red or swollen joints, diarrhea, flushed face, unusual pallor, excessive coughing, sore throat, or headache*. Please keep your child home 24 hours after an elevated temperature has returned to normal without medication.

## Parking

We need to keep the parking lot safe for the children at all times. You are required to park your vehicle during drop off and pick up times. Please park in the designated parking spaces so you do not block the flow of traffic. **Never leave children alone in the car.**





## Family Involvement

Families are encouraged to actively participate at Grace Preschool. We offer family events such as Reading Night and Science night, a Christmas Program, Church based family events, and other opportunities throughout the year. There will be times when students are invited to sing at Church services. And our student portfolios are fully interactive—parents can comment on stories and add their own learning stories.



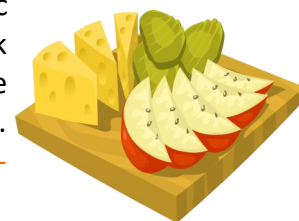
### Library

Our lending library is located in the gym. Families are welcome to borrow a book at any time, and return it when they are done. We follow the honor system and do not track our books.

### Treats

The school furnishes milk and healthy snacks. A monthly snack calendar will be posted. Children may bring treats at any time, as long as they sign up for what they are bringing on a specific date on the treat sign up sheet in the classroom. DCFS requires us to keep a snack list posted at least a week in advance. This is to protect those children who have food allergies. Parents must notify the teacher if their child has food allergies.

**PLEASE NOTE DCFS RULE:** *Children may bring only prepackaged treats from a bakery or store.*



**PLEASE DO NOT SEND CUPCAKES - THEY ARE VERY MESSY!**



### Field Trips

The children will take field trips during the year. Some will be within walking distance (such as the fire station & other short walks). Parents are welcome as chaperones. Permission slips and details will be sent home for you to sign for each field trip.

### Chapel

The children will visit church up to once a week for Chapel time with the Pastors and/or Youth director from Grace Lutheran Church. They will sing songs and hear Bible stories as well as learn Bible verses.

### Emergency Drills

We will have fire drills monthly and tornado drills in the fall and Spring. We will occasionally practice soft and hard lockdowns as well. Procedures are posted in each classroom. Please let your child's teacher know if your child becomes afraid, or is having problems because of the drills.



### Holidays and Days Off

All vacations, holiday and institute days will be listed on the school calendar. Closing for these days or snow days will not be made up. In case of inclement weather, the school will generally follow the policy of the Harlem Schools. If Harlem Schools close their afternoon pre-k, we will also close our afternoon classes. There have been occasions where the school has had to close even when Harlem does not.

**Please watch Channel 23, Educa, or Facebook for school closings.**

## **Security**

To keep our children safe, our school is a locked facility. The doors will be unlocked 5 minutes before school begins and then locked until school is out. If you are late, you need to go to the Grand Avenue Doors, where a secretary will allow you in.

## **Records and Release Information**

The state requires that we keep records on file for 5 years. No personal information about a child or family will be released without written consent of the parent. All reports are confidential. Copies of all records will be made for the parent at a nominal cost.

## **Mandated Reporters**

Childcare teachers and administrators in the state of Illinois are required by law to report evidence of child neglect or abuse.

## **Pest Control Policy**

According to DCFS regulations, if a center has to take pest control measures, the following shall apply:

1. The application will be done by a professional who is accompanied by a center representative.
2. No pest control measures will be taken while children are present. Children will not be allowed in the treated area until at least 2 hours after the application.
3. Parents will be given at least two and not over 30 days written prior notice to any pest control application.
4. Toys that are handled by the children must be removed before the application.
5. A written record of all pest control applications will be kept including the name of such application.

## **End of Year Programs**

Preschool students will take part in a graduation ceremony, complete with caps and gowns, at the end of May.

The 3-year-old students will also share a special program with family and friends at the end of May.

Be sure to stay for fellowship and refreshments after all the programs.



## Snack Suggestions

Cheese Cubes/Slices

## Fresh Fruit or Vegetables

Granola or Cereal Mixes

Popcorn or Pretzels

Quick Breads or Muffins

Raisins/ Dried Fruit

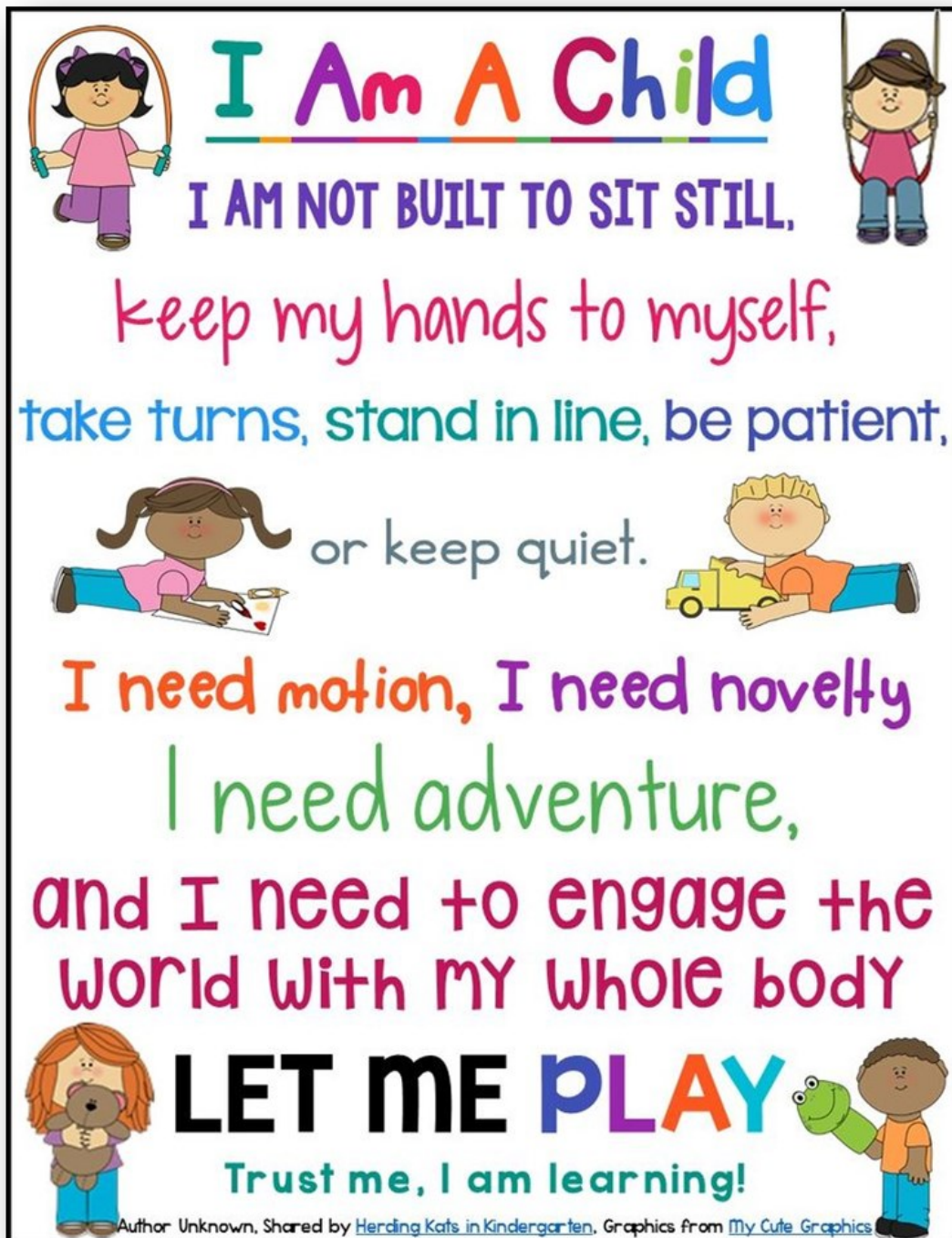
Pudding or Applesauce

Popsicles or Fruitbars

Dips

Due to allergies, some classes may be Gluten Free or  
Peanut Free

**NO CUPCAKES PLEASE!!**





# Contact Information

Grace Loves Park Church and Preschool

343 Grand Avenue Loves Park, IL 61111

Church Office: 815-633-8075 (Please call director cell phone first)

Website: [www.gracepreschool.net](http://www.gracepreschool.net)

**Preschool Director**

*Stacie Leese*

Cell Phone 815-914-7148

[sleese@gracelovespark.org](mailto:sleese@gracelovespark.org)

**Preschool Assistant Director**

*Delica Austin*

[delicaaustin@aol.com](mailto:delicaaustin@aol.com)

**Treasurer**

*Mary Frykman*

815-633-8075

DCFS License # 008197

Grace Preschool admits students of any national and ethnic origin, sex, race, creed, religion, color, age, veteran or military status, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, or disability to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of national and ethnic origin, sex, race, creed, religion, color, age, veteran or military status, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, or disability in administration of its educational policies, admissions and other school-administered programs.

Updated  
1/25/2024