

Good Shepherd Creative Play  
**Handbook for Creative Play Program**



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### **Preparing Your Child for Preschool**

Beginning preschool is one of the exciting milestones of childhood. Preschool provides a foundation for learning both socially and academically. It is our goal at Creative Play, to help your child develop the knowledge, skills and approaches to learning they will need for school success.

For many children, they may feel apprehensive about starting a new school or moving to a new classroom. These are all appropriate feelings for preschoolers. In fact, it can be a stressful time for both parents and children. Some preschoolers may experience separation anxiety and this is certainly age appropriate. It might not even be the first day, but some time during the first month of school. We will work with the families to ensure that you and your child feel safe and welcomed. You are welcome to stay in our coffee room if you feel your child will have some difficulty separating, or if *you* are not ready to let go!

By taking time to prepare both your child and yourself, it can lead to a smooth transition for everyone. Start talking to your child about preschool over the summer in a casual, upbeat manner. By staying positive about preschool, you are helping your child to feel safe and know that this is where you want them to be.

It is also a good idea to establish routines with your child in the weeks leading up to school. Routines help children learn what is expected of them in school and establishes consistency. Teaching children bathroom routines and how to take care of their toileting needs, as well as bedtime routine can ease their transition from home to school.

All children who attend Creative Play are required to be potty trained. We understand some are on the edge of success, but we encourage you to send your child to school in underwear.

Please pack a complete change of clothes (top, bottom, underwear, socks) in a bag which you have labeled. This bag should be kept in your child's backpack. In the event that your child has urinated, the office will change your child. If your child has a bowel movement, we will call the parent or emergency contact to come to the school to change the child.

Potty training for children and parents can be a stressful time. The best thing you can do as a parent is to be consistent.

Dress your child comfortably for school. Clothes that are easy to pull up and down work best. We ask that you pack a change of clothes (bottoms, tops, underwear and socks) in a bag kept in your child's backpack. A backpack labeled with your child's name should be brought to school each day. Sneakers or closed back shoes are safest and recommended for all the running and exploring the children will be doing.

### **Classroom Participation Procedures**

Parents are assigned to work in their child's classroom as a helper 12-15 times (depending on which session your child is registered for) during the school year.

On your days of participation, parents are expected to be at school 15 minutes before the class begins to prepare for the day. You must arrive by **8:45 a.m.**, **9:15 a.m.**, or **12:45 p.m.**, depending on which session your child attends. It is important for you to be prompt on your work days, as it allows time for the teacher to go over the schedule of the day with you, and allows the teacher to be available to greet the children upon arrival.

If you are not available to work your assigned day(s) these are the following options:

- Participating parents are responsible for finding their own substitutes by switching assigned days if necessary. Always let the office know of any schedule change so the master schedule in the office can be updated.
- A list of work for pay people is available in the school office. If you cannot get a class member to switch your work day, any name on this list can be contacted.
- If you choose to get a work for pay person, there is a fee. The fee is \$30.00 (2 1/2 hr class), and \$35.00 (3 hr. class). You must bring the fee to the school office and we will pay the worker. The work for pay fee must be paid in cash.

Please remember that when participating, you are in the classroom to assist the teacher and all the children. Please keep conversations with other adults to a minimum. Don't hesitate to ask the teacher for direction at any time. Encourage the children to try things on their own. Always be helpful and supportive towards the children.

It is not uncommon for your child to act differently when you are the scheduled working parent. Please keep in mind that this is normal behavior for many children. You can always arrange to move your work days until later in the school year or get coverage for your days if working in your child's classroom is too stressful.

## **Classroom Activities**

The teacher's schedule of the day helps establish routines and consistency in your child's day. Your teacher will always review with you before class how she would like each activity to proceed and its' objective. The following offers an outline of activities that *may* be part of the learning day along with some helpful tips.

- Arrival:** Encourage the children to find their cubby and their attendance checker. Help direct them to hang up their backpack and jacket. Be as helpful and supportive as needed.
- Play-doh:** Use tablecloths for easy clean up. The objective of play-doh manipulation is for the children to feel the texture and strengthen their fingers and hands by pounding, rolling, cutting or making shapes. Encourage the children to be creative and use their imagination. Always return the play-doh to the container when finished.
- Painting:** We use water colors, tempera paints, and fingerpaints for projects. Encourage the children to hold the painting tool correctly, and to cover the entire surface. Have them rinse their paintbrush if they are switching colors. Children should wear smocks and the table should be covered with a tablecloth. Send them to the bathroom to wash up and help supervise cleanup.
- Dramatic Play:** All classrooms have kitchen and dress up areas. Help the children put on the dress up clothes and place their shoes where they can be found after play. Encourage the children to pretend play in the kitchen, asking them to make a meal for you. Children love your participation. Show the children where the food, plates and utensils should be placed during cleanup.
- Sensory Play:** Sand, water, rice and other sensory materials are used for the children to explore and play. Encourage them to sift, dig, pour, and to keep the materials in the container. Sweep or mop any spills immediately.
- Blocks:** Encourage the children to work together to build. Ask them questions as they are building; such as how many, what size, and where to place the blocks. Discourage deliberate knockdowns and rough play. Teachers will add accessories to block play (cars, animals, figurines) to help expand the experience. Have the children help put the blocks away, carefully and correctly.

**Schedule of the Day (cont'd)**

- Puzzles: Encourage children to remove the puzzle pieces one at a time and put them right side up on a table. Prompt them to where the piece should go and encourage them to fit the pieces back correctly.
- Circle Time: You are the teacher's eyes and ears! Sit behind the group and redirect misbehaviors. Sing along with the group and get involved, the children love it.
- Story Time: Help the teacher get the children seated on their bottoms, or in chairs so they may see the story book. Help a child that might be having a hard time sitting in place.
- Bathroom: If a child needs to use the bathroom, you may be needed to help turn on the faucet and roll out the paper towel to dry hands. When using the potty, the children must take care of their own needs but may need help with zippers and buttons. The bathroom door should always remain open. Always keep your eye on the bathroom to make sure the children are safe and using it properly.
- Dismissal: Backpacks should be packed with any items placed in the child's cubby or projects the teacher may have designated to go home. Help the children with their coats by zipping or buttoning. Encourage the older children to do this by themselves.

**End of the day clean-up**

After the children have been dismissed, the helping parents are responsible for cleaning up the classroom and the materials that may have been used during class time. All tables should be sprayed and wiped down. The floor should be swept. Check the bathroom and wipe out the sink. Leave the classroom ready for the next class. Help the teacher check the dramatic play by hanging up the clothes and the kitchen area by putting food away correctly. Please dispose of the classroom garbage in the dumpster on your way out.

### **Snack Time**

**3 year old working parent:** Snacks and beverages are provided by Creative Play. One adult from each class must come to the coffee room to pick up a snack and a beverage for their class. This will be prepared on a tray, with your teacher's name card identifying which is the correct tray. The beverage can be found in the refrigerator. The children are served a snack and a beverage, which you pour into a cup(\*\* No Sippy Cups Please!\*\*) Encourage the children to clean up after themselves, and to place their napkin and cup into the garbage. When snack is completed, a parent will return any leftover snack to the coffee room, wash the tray and tin then return them to the designated place.

**4 year old working parent:** All 4 year old classes are parent provided snack classes. All parents will provide a healthy snack for their child. The snack must be *peanut/tree nut free*. The responsibility of the working parent is to assist the teacher with the distribution and clean up of the parent provided snack.

### **Allergy Aware**

The school policy is not to allow any products with peanut or tree nuts to be served by our school. We understand there may be cross contamination throughout the building since we share the facilities with Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. Although we cannot provide an allergen-free environment due to the risk of accidental exposure (allergens may be present whether in food other students bring from home or food packaged in factories) we will remain as diligent as possible when keeping our student with allergies safe. Protecting a student from exposure to offending allergens is the most important way to prevent life-threatening anaphylaxis.

### **Guidelines for Positive Discipline**

Positive discipline is done in a warm, kind and respectful manner, setting fair and firm boundaries with reasonable consequences. When using positive discipline in a classroom setting, the teacher is guiding your child to help them manage their feelings, to take responsibility for their behavior and to learn how to control themselves.

While being a helping parent in the classroom, it is always recommended to follow the teacher's lead. You can give reminders throughout the classroom day to remind children of the rules. Using words like "walking feet", "quiet hands", "feet on the floor" and "eyes in front", helps redirect the child and focus on the correct behavior.

It is always a good idea to keep a sense of humor with the children. Try to appreciate the child's point of view. Always encourage the children to come up with a solution to any problem that may arise. Help them to negotiate a solution. Speaking to the children at their eye level and gently guiding them to activities in the classroom is always helpful.

### **General School Guidelines**

Parent participation at Creative Play is vital to our success. All parents are expected to attend parent meetings, to assist the teacher with the children, and to help with the set-up and clean-up of classrooms. All parents are expected to fulfill their committee duty.

We ask that you bring and pick up your child on time:

- **Morning classes:**
  - 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
  - 9:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
- **Afternoon classes:**
  - 12:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
  - 1:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Your child should be accompanied by an adult to and from the classroom. Children should not be left in a classroom unattended. This is required by our insurance coverage, as well as for practical safety.

If your child should arrive after the start of school, please stop by the office before taking your child to the classroom, so the office can update the daily attendance.

The classroom teacher as well as the Director must be notified if anyone other than the parent is picking up your child from class.

In case of an emergency, it is important that we have the most updated contact information. If there is any change in your phone number, doctor's number or emergency contact person, the office must be notified immediately.

Fire drills are held during the school year.

We are happy to celebrate birthday celebrations. A healthy, peanut and tree nut free snack may be chosen from our "Acceptable Snack List" and purchased for the classroom. This list can be picked up in our school office. We do not allow homemade products from your household or bakeries to be brought into school. Please speak with your teacher at least two days prior to the birthday to arrange time and date for your child's celebration. We ask that you do not bring in any goody bags or extra treats for the class.

Please note, play guns, knives or swords in a group setting may lead to destructive play and therefore are not allowed in school. A favorite toy or stuffed animal that is a "security blanket" for your child will be permitted at the beginning of the school year, if needed. We understand this may help making the school transition easier.

Only children who are registered for a particular class are permitted in the classroom when school is in session.

Creative Play welcomes any suggestions, questions and comments you may have. Please communicate with your teacher, Director or Assistant Director.



### **Health Guidelines**

All children entering Creative Play must have the most updated Required Health Examination Form (physical) and immunization record on file by September 1<sup>st</sup>. You must always submit your child's updated medical records after an annual exam as to remain current. If your child has an allergy or any other medical concern, you must see the Director before the start of school. A plan of action completed by your child's physician must be on file. This information should also be shared with your teacher at the start of school.

In order to protect the children at school, we ask parents to comply with our regulations concerning colds and contagious diseases.

Please check your child for the following symptoms before coming to school:

- Severe pain or discomfort
- Acute diarrhea, characterized as twice the child's usual frequency of bowel movements with a change to a looser consistency within a 24 hour period
- Two or more episodes of acute vomiting within a 24 hours period
- An elevated oral temperature of 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit or over, in conjunction with behavior changes
- Sore throat or severe coughing
- Yellow eyes with discharge
- Red eyes or jaundiced skin
- Infected, untreated skin patches
- Skin rashes lasting more than one day
- Weeping or bleeding skin lesions that have not been treated by a doctor
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Swollen joints
- Visible enlarged lymph nodes
- Stiff neck
- Blood in urine

A child with a fever should stay home at least 48 hours after they are fever free, without the use of a fever reducing medicine.

Once the child is symptom free or a licensed physician indicates the child poses no serious risk to himself or to other children, the child may return to school.

Medication cannot be administered by the school.

Parents are requested to report to the school immediately any communicable disease in the home and any known exposure to contagion. Please consult with your doctor as to the length of time isolation may be required. (Ex: head lice, chicken pox)

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If your child becomes ill at school, the parent/guardian will be contacted and asked to pick up the child immediately. If the parent/guardian cannot be contacted, your emergency person will be called.

### **Health Guidelines (cont'd)**

In the case of a medical emergency, the school will call in the following order:

- Local emergency service
- Parent

### **Snow Days/School Closings**

We generally follow the Pearl River School District regarding closings. Closings due to inclement weather will be relayed by the email committee, by connecting to our Facebook page, our website: [goodshepherdcreativeplay.com](http://goodshepherdcreativeplay.com) or by a school closing website. If the Pearl River schools are closed, we are usually closed. If the Pearl River schools have a 1 hour delay, we will have a 1 hour delay. If there is a 2 hour delay, our morning classes will be cancelled; however, we will be open for the afternoon session.

If weather conditions become threatening during the morning session, the afternoon classes may be cancelled. Parents in the afternoon classes will be notified of the closing as early as possible.

All closings are at the discretion of the Director. Snow days are made up for our UPK classes, and are notated on the school calendar found in your class booklet. Snow days for our Creative Play classes are made up at the discretion of the Director.

### **Insurance**

Every student is insured according to New York State license specifications.

### **Tuition Payment**

Tuition payment is due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month. Reminder statements are not sent to you. Preferred payment is by check. Please make checks payable to Good Shepherd Creative Play and leave in the tuition box located in the school's office. If your child's last name is different than the person writing the check, please include the child's last name. Cash is accepted, however exact payment is preferred.

### **Guidelines for Drop off and Pick Up**

Please follow these guidelines when using our school parking lot. Our parking lot is shared with the Church and is a very active space. It is important to read any signs that designate parking rows for different groups that attend the school or Church.

When dropping or picking up a child, you must pull into the parking lot from Main Street, and exit on Bogert Ave. You must pull your car all the way up to the car in front of you.

When you park your car, you must not leave it running, and you must not leave any siblings alone in the car.

All children must hold an adults hand while in the parking lot, this is a school rule!

Never park in the fire lanes which are marked with diagonal yellow lines. Emergency vehicles need these lanes to get in and out of the parking lot. If you park in these spots you car will be towed.

Never back up in the parking lot. You cannot see children walking behind you. Wait until the car in front of you leaves, and then pull out of the lot.

For Creative Play families that work in the classrooms, on your scheduled work day, you must not park in the main parking lot. You may park in the rows in front of the garage doors or park on the street.

If you pull into the parking lot for pickup, and a spot is not available, drive out of the lot via the exit lane and enter again. A spot should have opened up. These rules are in place for the safety of your children. Please practice patience and kindness as you navigate our parking lot.

Thank you in advance for your much appreciated cooperation.