

Good Shepherd Creative Play  
**Handbook for UPK**  
**(Universal Pre-Kindergarten)**



**Table of Contents**

Preparing Your Child for Preschool - - - - - Page 1

Academic Readiness - - - - - Page 2

Allergy Aware & Snack Policy - - - - - Page 3

General School Guidelines - - - - - Page 3 & 4

Health Guidelines - - - - - Page 4 & 5

Snow Days & School Closings - - - - - Page 6

Insurance - - - - - Page 6

Guidelines for Drop off and Pick up - - - - - Page 7

Diagram of Parking Lot - - - - - Page 8

### **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 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 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 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 routines can ease their transition from home to school.

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) and place in a bag 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.

## **Academic Readiness**

### **Brigance Screening**

Brigance is a diagnostic screening tool required by New York State. This screening is administered to all UPK students by December 1<sup>st</sup>. This nationally standardized tool covers a broad sampling of a child's skill in key developmental areas. The information from this screening helps the teacher plan her lessons, as it helps determine the class strengths and weakness in certain areas.

### **Assessments**

The classroom teacher is constantly observing the children at work and play. This is the best way to see that your child is achieving the objectives of the curriculum. The teacher will keep notes from her observations, as well as keeping a portfolio of your child's work. Samples of drawings, writings and photos of your child's artwork and block play are included in this portfolio. Assessments are ongoing, and two formal assessments are done during the school year. The first is done by December and the second is done in May. It is the hope of the teacher to see progress and growth of your child in the May assessment.

### **Conference**

Parents and teachers will conference in January to discuss your child's progress. With the Brigance screening information and the December assessment completed, your teacher will have a clear picture of your child's classroom development to share with the family.

In addition, there may also be the opportunity for a spring conference.

### **Schedule of the Day**

The teacher's schedule of the day helps establish routines and consistency in your child's day. A typical class schedule would include (but not limited to) the following:

- Arrival & Free Play
- Outdoor Play
- Class meeting time
- Centers
- Snack time
- Story
- Music & Movement
- Pack-up & dismissal

### **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 through-out 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.

### **Snack Policy**

All UPK students bring a parent provided snack and beverage to school every day. This snack must be peanut/tree nut free, in accordance with our Allergy Aware policy. The snack should be packed in a bag with the child's name clearly labeled.

### **General School Guidelines**

- Parent participation at Creative Play is vital to our success. All parents are expected to attend parent meetings and to fulfill their committee duty. Parents are also encouraged to volunteer for special events that take place throughout the school year like our Thanksgiving Celebration and our end of the year class picnic.
- We ask that you bring and pick up your child on time. Morning classes are 9:00-11:30 and afternoon classes are 12:30-3:00. Your child should be accompanied by an adult to and from the classroom. Children should never 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.
- You must call the school office (845) 735-2737, to notify the school of your child's absence. If your child is out for more than four days in a row, a note is required. If the absence is due to illness, a doctor's note may be required.
- 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.

### **General School Guidelines Cont'd**

- We are happy to celebrate birthdays. 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.

### **Health Guidelines Cont'd**

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 hour 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).

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.

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

1. Local emergency service
2. Parent/Guardian

### **Snow Days/School Closing**

You will receive a group email from Mail Chimp in the event of a school closing. You may also choose to call the school office at (845) 735-2727, for the updated message regarding a school closing or by connecting to our Facebook page or our website: [goodshepherdcreativeplay.com](http://goodshepherdcreativeplay.com).

We generally follow the Pearl River School District regarding closings. 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 the UPK classes, and are notated on the school calendar found in your class booklet.

### **Insurance**

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



### **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 other children alone in the car.

All children must hold an adult's 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 your 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 forward 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.