

Grace Lutheran Preschool

Parent Handbook 2023-2024





Your Preschool Team (pictured left to right) Ella Jackson, Felicity Ackers, Gina Imlach (director)



(650) 494-1212 • gracepre.org



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Grace Lutheran Preschool

Sponsorship

Grace Lutheran Preschool is licensed by the State of California Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing, LIC #430700265 and is governed by the Church Council of Grace Lutheran Church through its Preschool Board.

Why We're Here

We believe that young children learn in a preschool setting that supplements the home. Each child needs to work from their own level when they enter preschool. Our curriculum consists of a program directed toward guiding a child in learning about themselves, other people, and the world. We seek to help your child to discover a way of life, rather than just achieving a given body of material.

We are here to help your child learn about:

Themselves through:

- Fostering a positive self image
- Developing confidence in their abilities
- Constructive use of aggressive energies
- Learning self discipline
- Enhancing coordination of large and small muscles

Other people through:

- Fostering an understanding of others' feelings
- Making friends at school
- Sharing and taking turns
- Exploring family relationships
- Learning about people in the community

The world through:

- Use and enrichment of vocabulary
- Exploring science and math concepts
- Use of rhythms and music
- Using colors
- Care and responsibility of pets
- Using their senses as a learning tool
- Learning by doing with hands-on experiences

Our goal is to establish a social climate that will reflect true Christian living, with a deep concern for each child's development, showing an appreciation of them as individuals and an awareness of their needs. We strive to be a conduit of Christian love and service to the community, and hope to be faithful stewards of the resources of our congregation and world. We hope that you and your child will feel that you are valued and loved in our school.

The philosophy of our school is based on the following assumptions:

- Each individual is a gift from God and deserves respect, love, and nurture.
- Parents are our partners in education and it is appropriate for them to participate in the classroom workdays and events.
- Parents have a need to be away from their children with confidence that those who care for them will love them and set appropriate limits.
- Our examples are our most effective teaching tool.
- Children learn by concrete experiences first, observation second.
- A gentle Christian influence is a resource we can provide to the parents of our community, and we do it with pleasure.



...Enrollment and Tuition

A child is assumed to be enrolled for the entire year.

Before a child may attend, the requirements for the California Department of Public Health must be met and ALL forms must be on file. Unvaccinated children will not be accepted into the program.

The annual fee is divided into ten (10) monthly segments, each due in advance on the **first of the month - August through April**. (The last month - May - is prepaid with your signed contract.) We use **brightwheel** for our preschool management and billing. When you applied, you received an invitation to set up your account and child's profile. Brightwheel can be accessed through a browser on your computer or by downloading the **brightwheel** app for your mobile device. When you complete your contract you will be invited to set up online tuition payments using autopay through the **brightwheel** app. You will find many resources to help you with this process within the app. Receipts are available on the **brightwheel** app, or by request from the preschool treasurer, Gail Foelsch (glp.paloalto@gmail.com).

If you need to withdraw your child, we ask for thirty (30) days notice.

Refunds are not available for illnesses or vacations. Scholarship aid is available for those in need of it, with board approval.

School Policies

School policies and budget matters are decided by a preschool board, which is made up of church members and preschool parents. The board meets monthly on the church campus. The director and pastors are ex-officio members of the board, and can give you a list of the other members.

Potty Training Assistance

A monthly fee of \$80 will be added to your monthly tuition if assistance is needed with potty training. Children in the 3-5 year-old range need to be potty trained, however, assistance may be given in the first month of attendance if necessary. Once we have determined that a child is fully potty trained, the fee will no longer be charged to your account.

Parents are responsible for supplying pull-ups, wipes, and extra clothing. All supplies need to be marked with the child's name and restocked as needed.

Biting Policy

Unfortunately, biting is not an unexpected behavior in a childcare setting. Young children communicate through their behavior. Biting can be harmful and impact other children. It is our goal to help identify the root cause of this behavior and resolve these issues. If a biting incident occurs, both sets of parents will be notified by phone and in writing. Names of the children are not shared with either parent.

This plan would include:

- Your child's teachers will observe him/her to learn where, when, and in what situations biting occurs and adjustments will be made in the classroom as needed.
- One of your child's teachers will shadow your child to intervein and provide the tools he/she needs.
- We will suggest acceptable ways to express strong feelings and help your child learn to communicate his/her wants and needs by establishing words for setting limits, such as "no," "stop," or "that's mine."
- Make sure your child's schedule is routine, and transitions are predictable and consistent.
- We will reinforce positive behavior by acknowledging your child's appropriate words and actions and provide opportunities for your child to make choices and feel empowered.
- We will establish behavior expectations that are age-appropriate and individually appropriate for your child. We will offer foods with a variety of textures to meet your child's sensory needs. You may also need to bring in a teething ring to help with the impulse to bite.



Parent Participation

We value a working relationship with parents and want parents to be a part of their child's preschool experience. We require each two-parent family to volunteer 20 hours and single-parent families to volunteer 14 hours each year. Hours do not carry over to the next semester unless specified by the preschool staff. These hours must be completed and logged by mid-January and by mid-May. Exact due dates are posted on the school calendar. There are many opportunities throughout the year to complete your parent hours. If you do not complete or log your parent hours, **you will be billed at a rate of \$25 per hour**.

In accordance with Community Care Licensing requirements and Senate Bill No 792, all staff and volunteers are required to show proof of immunization for the following (if you will be volunteering in the classroom or working with the children):

- Immunization for influenza (optional)
- Immunization for pertussis
- Immunization for measles
- a current, negative TB test or negative risk assessment

Parent Participation Opportunities

- Teacher Helper/Art Helper /Classroom Helper/Workdays
- Take projects home to prepare for the children. Please remember to record completed hours in the Parent Participation binder located outside the classroom door before their due dates.

Parent Communication

For your child's preschool experience to be successful, it is necessary that home and school stay in communication with each other. Communication between parents and teachers will enhance the feeling of partnership in the education of your child. We are committed to working with you to provide a loving Christian environment that is the best match for your child's developmental needs. We will share any concerns we have with you as they arise. It is also important that you share any concerns you may have with us (i.e. change in the family's routine). We encourage your input and urge you to speak with us regarding any suggestions or important information that could aid us in the care of your child. We are happy to discuss information about your child's day with you whenever it is possible and look forward to getting to know each of our families.

At the time of enrollment, you will need to provide your child with an earthquake/emergency kit (such as the "QuakeHold! Evacuation Essentials Plus kit" available through Amazon) that will be kept at the school in case of an emergency. These kits are good for three years. If your child requires rescue medication, you must provide a set for the emergency kit. This should include the medication in its original packaging with a label indicating administration instructions, dosage, and your child's name. A **Plan of Action** should also be included. All medications should be up to date and not expired.

Arrival and Departure:

Please park in the parking lot and use the courtyard entrance when dropping off and picking up your child. For the safety of the children we serve, we will be keeping the doors locked on the Loma Verde side of the preschool. If you are walking to school, you are welcome to come through the office, (say "hi" to Gretchen!)

Checking In and Out

California State Licensing requires that each child be checked in and out each time the child attends class. Parent/—guardians are required to sign in both at the time of arrival and at the time of departure.



Authorized Pick-up

When enrolling your child in our program, a parent/guardian must register the names of persons (age 18+) authorized to pick up their child. It is the Parent/Guardian's responsibility to inform the preschool, in writing, of any changes in the names of persons authorized. We will release children to authorized persons only.

Photo identification will be requested and copied before your child is released. If someone other than an authorized person is picking up your child, please notify us in writing. In the event of a divorce, separation, or joint custody ruling, both parents will be granted equal access to their child unless legal documentation is provided.

If someone new (whose name is not on the emergency card) comes to pick up your child and we have not been notified in writing, the child will not be released until the following procedures have been followed:

- Identification is provided and verified.
- The parent is contacted by phone.

Medications

Prescription Medications are only given/permitted in school if prescribed by a doctor, are in the original container which indicates child's name, prescription, dosage, administration instructions, and are not expired.

Non-prescription medications will only be administered per written parental consent and must indicate the dosage and frequency. You need to fill out the Medication Administration Consent Form and give it to a staff member with your child's medication. Instructions need to be given in writing. Please do not leave/pack medications in your child's belongings. They must be given to the preschool staff.

Allergies

Parents will need to provide physician documentation of the allergy. If the allergy is life threatening, we require an Action Plan (a description of needs and support for the student as indicated by their physician) and 2 sets of rescue medication such as an epinephrine auto-injector or inhaler. One set will be stored in the office and the second set will be stored with the school's emergency backpack.

Please make sure to have updated emergency contact information on file in the office as well. The Preschool will be responsible for educating staff on procedures. We will do everything possible to accommodate your child's needs.

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Every effort is taken to reduce the spread of illness by encouraging hand washing and other sanitary practices; however, your child will need to be sent home if he/she appears to have symptoms of illness or is unable to participate in the normal daily routine of the program. In such a case, a Parent/Guardian will be notified and asked to pick up their child within 60 minutes (1 hour).

If your child is sent home, he/she must be free of symptoms/fever/vomit/diarrhea for a minimum of 48 hours without use of medications. This means your child may not return the next day. If you aren't sure about whether to bring your child, please call the us to discuss it. We understand that many children in a group setting do have recurring colds. If your child's symptoms are mild, they may come to school. However, assessment of whether your child is well enough to participate in the program is left to the discretion of the teacher/director. Allergy-related symptoms and non-communicable illnesses do not require exclusion if you have a note from your doctor.

Children suspected of having contracted a contagious disease will not be readmitted into the program without a doctor's release indicating that they are not contagious and may attend school. If a medical or dental emergency does occur and we cannot contact you, we will call 911.

Symptoms requiring your child to be sent home from school:

- Fever: Fever is defined as having a temperature of 100°F or higher.
- Fever under 100°F AND any other symptoms (sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, earache, irritability, lethargy)



- Diarrhea: runny, watery stools, or 2 or more loose stools within a 2-hour period.
- Vomiting
- Breathing trouble, sore throat, swollen glands, loss of voice, hacking or continuous coughing.
- Runny nose (other than clear), runny nose that is consistent, draining eyes or ears.
- Frequent scratching of body or scalp that may indicate skin conditions such as (but not limited to) ringworm, scabies or lice.
- Child is irritable, continuously crying, or requires more attention than we can provide within the teacher to child ratio.

Your child needs to be free of all symptoms mentioned above, without the aid of Tylenol[®] or any other medication for a minimum of 48 hours before returning.

Keep your child home if your child

- Has a fever or has had one in the past 48 hours
- Has vomited or had diarrhea in the past 48 hours
- Has eye discharge or crust (a child with conjunctivitis must stay home for a 24-hour period after treatment has started)
- Has a cough, croup or other illnesses
- Is fussy, cranky, and generally not him/herself
- Has constant runny nose (yellow or green mucus)
- Has an undiagnosed body rash
- Is unable to play or participate in daily activities
- Has a doctor's appointment for suspected illness (please do not bring your child to school prior to or after an appointment)

Head Lice

You may not send your child to school for 24 hours after treatment has begun unless they have been treated at a facility that provides a certification and guarantee.

Please take the following precautions:

- 1. If you suspect that your child has lice, please notify the school and begin treatment immediately.
- 2. Please remember to treat your child's environment and other family members as well.
- 3. Check your child's hair for nits/eggs. Do this using a fine-toothed comb in a well-lit area.
- 4. Examine your child's hair every 2 days for the next 10 days.
- 5. If using home treatments, please follow the instructions to re-treat within 7-10 days after initial treatment.
- 6. When returning to school, a staff member must check your child's hair. We will do this discreetly and respectfully, in the back office.

The daily health check is a quick way for us to check a child's well-being or a change in their health status while in our care. The daily health check will be performed by a staff member upon the arrival of each child. It will be determined by the staff member, not the parent/guardian.

First Regular Day of School

This is the first day that most children will come in, put on name tags, and say goodbye to their grown-ups. It is important to talk to your child about this before hand to prepare them for the fact that you will be somewhere else while they are at school. We will do our best to help you with this transition.



Appropriate Dress

Please dress your child appropriately for weather, art activities and outdoor play. All clothing should be marked with your child's name. Expect that your will come home messy ⁽ⁱ⁾. It is important to provide your child with at least one change of clothing in a plastic box (this should include socks, underwear, pants, shirts, and shoes) and should fit in your child's cubby. Children can be more independent if clothing is easy to manage. Your child should be able to manage clothing independently. Belts and overalls are not suggested. Socks and shoes that securely fit are a must. Shoes such as flip-flops, jellies, boots, any type of slip-on (such as crocs) or open-toed shoes limit the children's activities and are not allowed. Please leave all jewelry at home as this can be a safety concern.

Outside Time

Children will participate in outside activities throughout the day. They will be encouraged to participate in a wide range of activities. It is important your child is dressed appropriately for this time of day. Open-toed shoes OR slip-on shoes (boots, crocs, etc) are NOT allowed.

Lunch, Snacks, and Birthday Treats

- Lunch and a morning and afternoon snack will need to be provided from home. We have a microwave to warm up children's lunches for 30-60 seconds. Please do not send uncooked foods as 60 seconds is not sufficient time to cook food. Please do not pack sweets—they will be sent home. We will have emergency snacks on site for those occasions that you may forget.
- Due to various allergies, we kindly ask that you check with us for snack suggestions that are acceptable to share when celebrating your child's birthday.
- If your child has allergies, we ask that you bring a special snack that can be left in the freezer or kitchen so that your child may enjoy a treat with the other children when celebrating birthdays.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent/teacher conferences are held twice a year. Please check the calendar for dates so that you are able to set aside some time to discuss your child's progress. You may also use **brightwheel** to communicate with your child's teacher regarding any questions or concerns. Please keep in mind that teachers are not available for private conversations when they are teaching or supervising the children. If at any time you feel you need to speak to your child's teacher in depth, please set up an appointment through Brightwheel and arrangements can be made.

Student Portfolio

An on-going portfolio is kept for each child in our program. During the school year, samples of art and other activities will be kept.

Nap Time

Nap time is optional and is not forced for children who are 3.5-5 years old who attend our full-day program. If a child is not napping, they are invited to participate in our afternoon activity. For children who nap, 2 (crib/toddler bed size) sheets and 2 blankets must be provided. (They fit the nap mats.) One set of sheets and blankets will be sent home at the end of each week to be laundered and returned.

Discipline

Discipline is a "process." This process includes modeling positive reinforcement, redirection, communication, and direction about what is appropriate and inappropriate. We will use the Bucket Filling approach to discipline. If you would like more information on this method, please speak with us. Discipline is meant to be clearly understood by the child. Explanation is given to the child before and at the time of any action. Staff will always use positive statements



when changing unacceptable behavior, your child will be redirected to another activity, or asked to sit and observe until they are ready to try again.

We reserve the right to withdraw the child from our program and terminate the contract with the Parent/Guardian at any time, for any reason. We will never use corporal punishment or violate personal rights in accordance with [CCR TITLE 22, SECTION 101223].

Photographing Your Child

There will be times throughout the year where your child will be photographed and filmed. It is possible that these photos or videos may be posted to social media, used in publications, promotions, slide shows, or articles about Prince of Peace. Agreement and acknowledgment of this is included in our Admissions Agreement form.

eScrip

Help support the preschool's scholarship and general funds by registering your grocery loyalty cards and/or credit cards at **www.escrip.com** and selecting **Grace Lutheran Preschool** as a beneficiary. Retailers like Safeway return a portion of the dollars you spend to the preschool. There is no cost to you; you can support your older children's schools, as well; and it's easy!

Questions on eScrip? Ask your teacher!



Sample Daily Schedule

8:00 - 8:45 am	Extended Care Free Choice Play
8:45 - 9:00 am	Transition/Bathroom
9:00 - 9:30 am	Outside Time
9:30 - 9:50 am	Snack
9:50 - 10:10 am	Circle Time
10:10 - 10:50 am	Art/Center/Free Choice
11:00 - 11:30 am	Outside Time
11:30 am - 12:15 pm	Lunch
12:00 - 12:45 pm	Outside/Nap Time (2:00 nap)
12:45 - 1:00 pm	Quiet Time (non-nappers)
1:00 - 2:00 pm	Small Group Time
2:00 - 2:15 pm	Napper Wake-up
2:15 - 2:30 pm	Snack
2:30 - 3:00 pm	Free Choice/Dismissal
3:00 - 4:00 pm	Outside Time
	Extended Cove Activities

4:00 - 5:00 pm Extended Care Activities

Grace Lutheran Preschool

3149 Waverley Street | Palo Alto, CA 94306 www.gracepre.org | 650 494-1212

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Important Dates:

8/10 Parent Orientation

11/1 Late Start: 9:30am

11/17 Early Dismissal: 12:00pm

12/22 Early Dismissal: 12:00pm

1/26 First 10 parent hours due

3/1 Open Enrollment Begins

3/29 Early Dismissal: 12:00pm

2/5 Re-enrollment Begins

8/11 Visiting Day/Supply Drop-off

8/14 First Day of School (Monday)

8/15 First Day of School (Tuesday)

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Parent Workdays:												

8/5 Church/Preschool Workday 11/18 Parent Workday (double parent hours) Canned Food Drive/Church Workdays (First Saturday of each month) 9/2, 10/7, 11/4, 12/2, 1/6, 2/3, 3/2, 4/6, 5/4

Summer Camp:

first/last

school day

annier camp.		
6/10 - 6/21	Summer Camp 1	
	(no camp 6/17 - Juneteenth)	
6/24 - 7/3	Summer Camp 2	
	(no camp 7/4-5 - July Fourth observed)	
7/8 - 7/19	Summer Camp 3	

schedule

change

	Church/	School Events:
s	8/6	Teacher Dedication/ Blessing of Bikes & Backpacks
7		Kick-off Sunday Celebration
14	9/10	BBQ in the Courtyard 12pm
	9/19-20	Picture Days
21	9/22	Welcome Back Dinner
28	9/30	Women's Retreat: You are beautiful, my love
	10/1	Blessing of the Animals Service
	10/20	Trunk or Treat
	10/27	Parent/Teacher Conferences
s	11/17	Thanksgiving Feast
6	11/26	Advent Festival
13		Children's Christmas Program
20	12/20	Christmas Dinner – Brown Hall
20	12/24	Christmas Eve Services: 4-6-9pm
27	12/25	Christmas Day Service: 10am
	2/10	Community Open House
	2/13	Mardi Gras Pancake Dinner: 6pm Youth Fundraiser - Narthex
	2/14	Valentine's Day Class Party
	2/14	Ash Wednesday Services: 12•7pm
S		
6	3/4-7	Spirit Week
	3/8	Race for Education Fundraiser
13	3/10	Children Sing in Church
20	3/24	Palm Sunday: 8:30•10:45am

- Maundy Thursday: 3/28 6:15pm Dinner • 7:30pm Service
- Good Friday: 12•7:30pm 3/29 (Early Dismissal - 12pm)
- 3/30 Easter Vigil: 7:30pm
- Easter Sunday: 8:30-10:45am 3/31 Breakfast/Egghunt between services
- 4/19-21 Women's Retreat at Mt. Cross 4/26 Preschool Art Show - Narthex
- 4/28 Art Show and Church Event
- 5/3 Parent/Teacher Conferences
- 5/10 Muffins with Mom
- 5/30 Graduation: 1pm

School Holidays:

- 9/4 Labor Day 10/9 Teacher In-service Day 10/27 Parent Teacher Conferences 11/10 Veterans Day 11/20 - 24 Thanksgiving Break 12/25 - 1/5 Christmas Break
 - 1/15 Martin Luther King Day
 - 2/16 Teacher In-service Day
 - 2/19 Presidents' Day

 - 6/3-7 Preschool Closed
 - 6/17 Juneteenth
 - 7/5 July 4th will be observed on July 5

- 4/29 Last 10 parent hours due 5/29 Last Day of School (Wednesday)
- 5/30 Last Day of School (Thursday) Early Dismissal: 11:00am
- 5/30 1 pm Graduation

parent workdavs school events

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- - 3/12 Local Holiday
 - 4/1-6 Spring Break
 - 5/3 Parent Teacher Conferences
 - 5/27 Memorial Day