Christian Preschool

Parent Handbook 2026-27
Revised 1.15.26
Grace Gardens Preschool
2622 11th Ave.
Sidney, NE 69162

Contact Information:
Phone: 308-254-4505
GraceGardensPreschool@gmail.com
Facebook.com/gracegardenspreschool
Valerie Hoekema – Teacher/Director
Angela Frerichs - Teacher
Waunita Hansen, Assistant Teacher

Welcome to Grace Gardens Preschool. We are very excited about our new adventure with your child. We look forward to the opportunity to work with you and your child. This handbook provides general information that will be helpful to you. Grace Gardens is a ministry of Faith Methodist Church of Sidney, and is directed by the Grace Gardens Preschool Board. Grace Gardens is licensed by the State of Nebraska.

Eligibility:
Children must be successfully potty trained to enter preschool. Children must be between the ages of 3 and 5 years old. A student must be three years old by July 31 to be eligible for the 3 year old class. A student must be four by July 31 in order to be eligible for the Pre-K class.

Mission Statement:
Our mission is to help children develop their spiritual, social, cognitive, and creative abilities.

The Preschool is located at Faith Methodist Church of Sidney, Nebraska. The lessons will include appropriate Bible stories and songs. The children may be asked to participate in a Sunday morning Worship Service.

For children 2 years away from Kindergarten:
Monday- Friday – 8am-11:30am OR 8am-3pm
For Pre-Kindergarten class (children one year away from Kindergarten),
Monday-Friday – 8am-11:30am OR 8am-3pm

Enrollment:
To register for any class, please fill out the preschool record form and include a $75.00 application fee. Registration can also be completed online at www.gracegardenspreschool.com/apply. Application fees are non-refundable. Parents who have two students enrolling will be charged $125.00 total for both children.

School Supplies:
Your child will need a full size backpack, one that will easily hold papers and projects that your child will bring home from school.

Opening and Closing:
The preschool will open on time for each class and close promptly at the end of each class. Morning session begins at 8:00 am and ends at 11:30 am. Students staying all day should be picked up promptly at 3:00 pm. We ask that you walk your child to and from the church at the north doors to ensure their safety.

If preschool is canceled due to weather it will be announced or posted on the Grace Gardens Facebook page, and we will use Remind messages for notification. Generally, we will follow the decision of Sidney Public Schools (SPS) regarding weather cancellations. If SPS has a late start, Grace Gardens will not have a morning session**. If SPS has an early dismissal, Grace Gardens will not release early, except in an emergency situation.**

We ask that you pick up your child promptly after class. Consistent tardiness in picking up your child will result in an additional charge for child care. If parents are more than 30 minutes late and cannot be contacted, the preschool teacher will contact authorities.

Special Needs:
Our program will prepare each lesson to accommodate both the advanced child, and those who may struggle. If we see a child that has special needs above what we can accommodate, we will ask that further testing be approved by the Educational Service Unit in our area. Once completed, an informational meeting will be organized to determine where the child may obtain the needed accommodations.

Discipline:
We use praise, positive reinforcement, and time-out as corrective measures for misbehavior. Parents and childcare staff will always work together to deal with persistent behavioral issues such as biting, or unusual or dangerous aggression to self or others. If a child appears unusually stressed or anxious, or otherwise motivated to engage in negative behaviors, it is the duty of the child care staff to consult with the parents.

One of our primary goals is to provide a safe, nurturing, and pleasant environment for all children we serve. We recognize that one of our responsibilities is to help children learn appropriate ways to handle conflicts. We understand that many preschoolers have not yet learned what is acceptable behavior. However, at times, a child's behavior may endanger others. We want to assure parents that we will address such behavior immediately, following these guidelines:

- A first incident will be reported to the parent.

- A second incident will result in a parent-teacher conference to discuss the behavior and establish a plan of action.
- In the case of a third incident, the parent will be called and another conference will be set up with the teacher(s) and the director to continue the discussion and attempt to understand what might be causing the problem. Referral for outside advice will be suggested. *Grace Gardens reserves the right to terminate any child's enrollment if any further incident occurs, or if we feel that any of the following conditions exists:*
    1. The school cannot meet the child's needs.
    2. The parents are not able to work with the school to find an acceptable solution.
    3. The continuing behavior endangers the well-being of other children, and/or the child engaging in the behavior.

Preschool Tuition:
Preschool tuition is due on the 1st of the month and delinquent after the 10th of the month. Beginning with the fall semester in 2024, the tuition for morning only sessions (8:00-11:30) will be divided as follows: $300 per month for the months of September, October, November, December, January, February, March, and April, and $150.00 per month for the months of August and May. The tuition for our all day program will be divided as follows: $500 per month for the months of September, October, November, December, January, February, March, and April, and $250 per month for the months of August and May. Preschool tuition is non-refundable. Any unusual circumstances may be brought to the Preschool Board for consideration. For any payments received by Grace Gardens more than 30 days after the due date, a late fee of $10 will be added. There will be a $30.00 charge on returned checks. If payment is more than one month delinquent, we reserve the right to dismiss your child from our program. Payment may be made in person or on the Grace Gardens Website (for an additional $5 fee).

Adjustment to preschool:
It's normal to experience difficulties adjusting to a new routine. Here are some tips for an easier transition. Prior to school, talk with your child in a positive, relaxed manner about coming to school; mention something your child will enjoy. If your child clings or throws a tantrum when you prepare to leave, say gently but firmly, "I have to go now, but I will be excited to come back and pick you up." Then exit promptly. You are welcome to call and check on your child. Please don't sneak out as this usually causes anxiety the next time you are going to leave. Remember, it's totally normal for a child to cry when being introduced to a new setting such as school where there is a class of possibly all new people. Detaching from you may not be easy, but as your child continues to come, he/she will learn that this is okay and you will be back.

Health:

Unfortunately, children suffer from illness. In order to keep our preschool environment healthy, a child must stay home 24 hours after a fever, vomiting, diarrhea, coughing, sneezing have subsided. Other illnesses that require a student to stay home are; ringworm, impetigo, head lice, pink eye, chicken pox, fifths disease, and scabies. If a child has been prescribed antibiotics they need to be on them a full 24 hours before returning to school. You may call 308-254-4505 and leave a message if your child is ill.

Grace Gardens Preschool will follow any and all protocols established by Panhandle Public Health for public health issues such as COVID-19.

Immunization:
An updated immunization record is required with your preschool application. Each child's immunization must include: 1) Documentation of age-appropriate immunizations, 2) Certification by a physician, advanced practice registered nurse, or physician assistant that immunization is not appropriate for a stated medical reason, or 3) A written statement that the parent or guardian does not wish to have the child immunized and the reason for that decision.

Medications:
If at all possible, we ask that any medications your child requires be administered at home. If that is not possible, our next option would be to have the parent/guardian come to the preschool at the proper time and administer the medication. As a last resort, we will administer medications with a properly filled out form by a physician and signed by a parent. The medication must be in the original container and all necessary information to administer the medication must be provided, including the drug, the amount, and the time to be administered.

Parent involvement:
Children love when parents can participate in some of their activities at school. Parents are welcome to help with parties, accompany us on field trips and visit the classroom. The Teacher reserves the right to determine what is best for the children in her class. Frequent volunteers will be asked to take the Safe Gatherings training offered by the United Methodist Church, which includes a background check. *If Panhandle Public Health protocols require more safety, parent visits to the classroom may be limited.*

Parent/School Communication:
Teachers will provide a monthly newsletter to keep you informed of what will be going on in preschool. Please feel free to call before 8:00 A.M. or after 3:15 P.M. The church office will relay a message between 8 am and 1 pm, and there is an answering machine on at all times. If there is an emergency please call us during school hours. The preschool number is 308-254-4505**.** If you have an issue or a grievance with the preschool please notify the director at 254-4505 or 249-4988. If needed, our Preschool Board is available to assist in any manner. Teachers will provide a phone number for a preschool board member, if needed.

In Case of Fire or Emergency:
We will do everything in our power to keep your children safe. There is a tornado shelter on site. If necessary, the children will be evacuated to the United Methodist Parsonage, 1142 Alvarado Rd, (first house west of the church) or to the National Guard Armory, depending on the circumstances. Parents will be informed of their child's location by telephone as soon as possible.

Transportation Policy:
Except in case of emergency, we will not transport the children.

We are thrilled that you have considered Grace Gardens as your child's preschool. We promise to do our very best at making this a happy learning environment for your child. We look forward to getting to know you and your child.

Please sign below and return this form to the teacher to indicate you have received a copy of the Grace Gardens handbook and agree with our guidelines.

_____ _____

Parent signature Date