



Parent Handbook
Grace Lutheran Preschool

415 10th Street

DeWitt, IA 52742

563.659.9193

preschool@gracedewitt.org

Revised: 8/1/2024

Mission Statement:

The mission of Grace Lutheran Preschool is to provide parents and their preschoolers with opportunities to fulfill a child's spiritual, intellectual, emotional, social and physical needs.

Philosophy:

"Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it."
Proverbs 22:6

Grace Lutheran Preschool (GLP) is dedicated to sharing the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ with preschoolers and their families. It is the aim of GLP to help the children grow in their understanding of how wonderfully God has made them and that they are loved by God. This is accomplished through a caring and loving Christian environment that encourages independent and group learning through play, exploration and hands-on activities.

Goals:

- 1) Spiritually, students will come to know Jesus as their friend who will never leave them.
- 2) Intellectually, students will participate in learning experiences which promote exploration, creativity, language and concept development.
- 3) Emotionally, students will be helped to live confidently as beautiful creations of God and to develop positive self-awareness.
- 4) Socially, students will be involved in a sharing, caring environment where relationships with others are strengthened through interaction and through the practice of self-control.
- 5) Physically, students will have the opportunity to develop large and small muscle skills and good healthy/safety habits.

Licensing

Grace Lutheran Preschool is a non-profit Christian preschool licensed by the State of Iowa. It complies with all standards set for by the Iowa Department of Human Services.

Information for the 4s Classes:

The 4s Preschool Program is funded by State of Iowa's Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program. The information in this handbook is site specific to our location. For more information, on the 4s program, please refer to the District Preschool Handbook. This is located on the district website (<http://www.cd-csd.org/>) under the Elementary School tab (click preschool)

Dear Parents,

When you ask your child what he/she did in preschool today, the response may be, "I played!" This is a very good answer because *play* is your child's way of learning about the world. What your child probably can't explain to you is what was learned through play.

Through the curriculum at GLP our preschoolers will learn that a loving God is always watching over their lives. They will discover that they can have a happy time away from home and that the teachers will be there for help and comfort whenever needed.

Our preschoolers will be encouraged by the staff to experiment with new things without the fear of making mistakes or failing. Since God has made each one of us in a unique way, we are blessed with different abilities and talents. Students will be allowed to explore new things in ways that are comfortable and allow for different learning styles, as long as this is not harmful to them and doesn't interfere with the learning of their classmates.

While at preschool, students will learn that the toys and learning materials are for all the children which requires learning to share and take turns. We will help all our preschoolers discover the wide variety of God's blessings. They will learn new stories, words, create new friendships and explore all that preschool offers. We will provide opportunities that grow imagination through gluing, cutting, painting and dramatic play.

As parents, you have been your child's first teachers at home. How far along your child is in these and other learning experiences depend upon many factors including age, individual growth patterns/development and home experiences.

We are excited at what our year has in store for all of us and we are anxious to work with you as we explore the world of preschool!

Sincerely,
Christine Greve

Admission

Grace Preschool admits all children regardless of race, color, national or ethnic origin, or religious background. You do not have to be a member of Grace Church to come to our school.

Children are eligible for enrollment on the following basis:

- Children must be 3 or 4 years or old on or before September 15th of the current year.
- Children should be toilet trained by the time they begin class.

Enrollment

To enroll in the 3s program you will need to log onto our website, www.gracedewitt.org. Go to the preschool tab and download the registration form. This form along with a, non-refundable, \$40 registration fee must be turned in to secure your place in class. Currently we offer two classes, which are both limited to 10 students:

All enrollment for the 4s program needs to be done on the Central Community School District website (www.cd-csd.org).

Enrollment Forms

The Iowa Department of Human Services requires the following forms to be filled out for your child to attend preschool. All paperwork is due to GLP by August 1st:

- Student Enrollment Form
 - Field Trip/Photo Release
 - Pick-Up authorization/Medical Release Form
 - Child Health Exam Forms
 - Immunization form – Signed and dated
- **Physical Form** must be signed, dated, and returned to the preschool within the first thirty days of school or the 25th of September, whichever comes first. If your child's physical expires during the school year; a reminder form will be sent home in your child's communication folder.
 - **Photo Policy** – This policy is part of the required documentation to start Preschool. We will post children's photos on our Seasaw App. If you choose not to sign the photo policy, your child will not be able to participate in class pictures, field trips, special class visitors (if newspaper photographer is present), class programs, and graduation.

Doctor and Dental Information

Every student must have a doctor and dentist listed on their Medical Consent Form. The information provided will be used in case of emergency. If you do not have a doctor or a dentist, please choose one.

3s Tuition

2 Day - \$120/Month

3 Day - \$160/Month

Tuition is divided into 9 equal payments (September – May) and is due by the 1st of each month. Monthly invoices will be sent home in your child's Communication Folder. These payments remain the same regardless of the number of class days in a month, absences due to illness or family vacation or weather-related closings.

Payments received after the 15th of the month are subject to a \$10 late fee. If a family falls one month behind in payments, the child will be unable to attend class until the account is paid and brought up to date unless other arrangements have been made. At the end of the second month, if a family has not made arrangements for a new payment schedule, termination of the child's enrollment at GLP will occur. A \$15 fee will be added to your account for any returned checks. Two bad checks will result in cash payments for the remainder of the year.

If, for any reason, a parent wishes to discontinue a child's enrollment at GLP, a written 14-day notice is required. Without this notification, the family will be responsible for one month's tuition after the child's last day of attendance.

Drop Off & Pick Up Procedures

We at GLP always have the safety of your child and other students on our mind when dropping off and picking up your child. All children must be picked up by an authorized adult. If we do not recognize the adult picking up, identification will be asked for and checked with our Authorized Pick-up list before the children will be released.

Before school:

AM 4s	doors open at 7:50 am	school begins at 8:00 am
AM 3s	doors open at 8:05 am	school begins at 8:15 am
PM 4s	doors open at Noon	school begins at Noon

1. For the safety of all students at GLP: All Parents or persons dropping off a preschooler will be met at the door by a teacher.
2. Parents are not allowed to escort their child into the school.
3. Parents may park on 5th Avenue or use the alley alongside the church.
4. Parking is NOT allowed where orange cones are, this is for busses only.
5. Any adult wanting to enter the Preschool, who does not have prior authorization, must go to the Church Office (doors are located on 10th St.) to check in.

After school:

AM 4s	pick up begins at 10:50 am	all children must be picked up by 11:00 am
AM 3s	pick up begins at 10:40 am	all children must be picked up by 10:45 am
PM 4s	pick up begins at 2:50 pm	all children must be picked up by 3:00 pm

Please be patient.

1. Children will be brought to the Preschool Entrance by a staff member.
2. Parents are asked to come to the Preschool Entrance to get their child.
3. Parents may park on 5th Avenue or the alley alongside the church.

Parents that have children in Ekstrand that they need to pick up are encouraged to pick up their child from the Preschool first. We have found this helps parents pick up their child on time.

4-year-old Preschool has the option to use the Central DeWitt Community School District busses. While the children are on the bus; they are the responsibility of the school district. If you have transportation questions; please call the Bus Barn at 659-0706.

What Does Your Child Need?

- **Backpacks** - Every child should bring a full-size backpack (NO WHEELS) or a tote bag to school each day. This helps teach a child responsibility in bringing notes/papers to and from school.
- **Communication Folder** - Grace Lutheran Preschool will provide a folder to each student will contain important notes, work, and other items for parents to review. Please empty your child's folder after each class unless there is a form that says to keep it in the folder (examples would be a reading log, behavior chart, etc.). This is a communication tool for parents to use as well. We daily check the folders, **not the backpacks for communication from you.**
- **Change of Clothes** - An emergency change of clothes (shirt, pants, underwear, and socks) should be kept in a plastic grocery sack in the backpack. Spills and accidents happen occasionally in preschool. Consider season changes and your child's growth when selecting spare outfits.

Clothing:

Washable, comfortable PLAY clothing should be worn at all times. We paint, glue, use markers and crayons, play outside, etc. – expect your child to get dirty. If your daughter prefers dresses and skirts, shorts should be worn under them. PLEASE send your child to school in clothes he/she can manage (snap, zip, button) by him/herself. This includes when using the restroom! Shoes should have a strap across the back for safety reasons, especially when playing outside. Children **MAY NOT** wear slick soled shoes. **Children must always wear shoes – snow/rain boots may not be worn in the classroom.**

Attendance:

Please call GLP (659-9193) if your child is going to be absent for any reason. You may call the preschool 24/7 and leave a message for preschool staff.

- **BUS RIDERS:** If your child is in the 4s class and rides the bus to or from school, it is your responsibility to call the transportation office to let them know your child will not be riding that day. That number is 659-0706.
- **4-Year-Old Parents:** we follow the Central DeWitt Community School District attendance policy; if your child is not in the building by 8:00am/12:00pm they will be marked as tardy.

Curriculum:

Grace Lutheran Preschool uses child-friendly themes. Four-Year-Old Preschool curriculum is aligned with *Creative Curriculum GOLD* and *Handwriting Without Tears*. Jesus Time materials for the 3s classes are taken from *The Beginners Bible*.

Snacks & Nutrition:

Please make sure that your child eats a sufficient breakfast or lunch prior to coming to preschool. Our snack doesn't replace a meal for a growing child. The children will have the opportunity to eat snack together during class. The snack is provided by the preschool. Sometimes the children will have a cooking project and will prepare their own snack. GLP will provide 1% milk and water during snack time. Allergy accommodations will be made on an as needed basis.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

The 4s classes have conferences in October and February with a progress report available at the conferences and sent home at the end of the year. The 3s receive progress reports in November and at the end of the year. Parents may request a conference by contacting the teacher.

School Closing Policy:

If the Central DeWitt Community School District in DeWitt closes due to weather conditions (fog, ice, snow, etc.), GLP will also be closed. Please check Seesaw, local TV stations or check on the district website (www.cd-csd.org) for this information. If there is a late start, morning classes will not meet. If there is an early out, the afternoon class will not meet.

Forms of Communication:

Since education and upbringing of your child is a joint effort, it is important that communication remain open between parents and preschool staff. GLP uses The Seesaw App as the main form of communication with our families. The following will be sent via Seesaw:

- 1) **Monthly calendar** – identifies days not in session, vacations, and special events.
- 2) **Snack calendar** – identifies the snack for the day or if it is someone's birthday. The daily snack may be changed. Any changes will be posted on the snack calendar outside the classroom.
- 3) **Monthly newsletter** – identifies themes, Jesus Time stories, shape, color, number and/or letter focus for the week in addition to other important information families need to know.
- 4) **Weekly Reminders** of important events.
- 5) **School Delays/Dismissal** – if the school schedule has changed for any reason.
- 6) **Pictures/Children's Work** – will be uploaded to share with families on the Seesaw App.
- 7) **Parent Handbook** – states policies and procedures
- 8) **Phone Calls/Emails** – Please call or email with any questions or concerns you may have about your child or the preschool. If you would like to talk with the teacher in person, please do so at the end of class. Staff is on site from 7:45-3:00 on school days, except for late start or early dismissal days. The phone number is 659-9193 or the email address is preschool@gracedewitt.org.

Outdoor Play:

Children will have an opportunity for outdoor play when weather, air quality and environmental safety permits. When outdoor play is not permissible, similar activities will be available indoors.

- Parents are responsible for applying sunscreen on their child prior to arriving at preschool. No sunscreen will be applied at preschool.

Grace Preschool uses the Child Care Weather Watch poster to determine if it is safe to go outdoors. We will follow the guidelines outlined by the chart. We will use caution and closely observe the children for signs of being too hot or cold while outdoors, which may shorten or lengthen the time that they spend outside.

WINTER OUTDOOR PLAY DAYS WILL BE ANNOUNCED IN ADVANCE AND ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE DUE TO WEATHER.

Field Trips:

3s- Our 3s classes generally do not take field trips. We often have guest speakers come into our classroom. We may take the children for walks around the neighborhood as stated on the FIELD TRIP PERMISSION FORM you signed and is on file.

4s- Our 4s classes may take field trips away from the center. Most will be walking field trips in our neighborhood. If we go to a location farther away from our center in town or to a location outside of DeWitt, we utilize the school district's bus service.

Parents are encouraged to join us on our field trips, but siblings, cousins and friends may not accompany the class.

Health Guidelines:

Each child will have direct contact with a staff person upon arrival for early detection of apparent illness, communicable disease or unusual conditions that may affect the children. Children who arrive at preschool noticeably ill will not be admitted to class.

Handwashing Guidelines:

All children and staff will wash their hands:

- Entering the building (before going into the classroom)
- After using the restroom
- Before snack
- After blowing nose or coughing
- Before and after using sensory table
- Before and after administration of minor first aid

Parent Notification of Sickness or Injury:

Should a student become ill during class time, the staff will notify a parent immediately. Should the parents be unavailable, the next person on the Emergency Contact Form will be notified and asked to pick up the child from preschool. Until an adult arrives, the child will be kept in an area separate from the rest of the children, but under adult supervision. Every attempt will be made to keep the child comfortable.

Symptoms of Illness:

Symptoms that necessitate keeping your child at home include the following:

- Temperature 100 degrees or higher (must be fever-free for 24 hours without Tylenol, etc. before child can return)
- Severe coughing
- Diarrhea (keep home 24 hours after last episode)
- Vomiting (keep home 24 hours after last episode)
- Excessive nose (snot) drainage or eye discharge
- Sore throat
- Skin rash (undiagnosed or contagious)

If you are in doubt, please contact the director.

Communicable Diseases:

If a child contracts a contagious disease and has exposed other children, parents will be notified. The ill child will not be able to return to preschool until the contagious period has passed. In the event of exposure to a communicable disease, staff will refer to the Communicable Disease Chart provided by DHS.

Medication:

Our staff does NOT administer medication on a regular basis since the children are only in our care for 2 ½ - 3 hours. **An allergy action plan and/or asthma action plan must be filled out by a physician and on file in the child's records so that we can verify that the right child receives the right medication in the right dose at the right time by the right method.** The teacher and associates have completed training in first aid which includes the use of an epi-pen.

Discipline:

We encourage and verbally reward acceptable behavior. Unacceptable behavior may be handled in several ways:

- Redirect child to a different area/situation.
- Ask the child to think about his/her unpleasant behavior and discuss with a staff member. This will help the child work at self-control.
- Ask the child to move to a different area of the room or to a different spot in the meeting area.
- Separate the child from the group on a chair until he/she is ready to listen, work or play cooperatively.

If an incident occurs between children, we will find a quiet place to talk over the problem, resolve the differences and then encourage the children to apologize.

When negative behavior persists, parents will be contacted to hear our concern and be asked to share their insight. Together we can develop a strategy to help the child act in a more responsible way. Positive behavior support strategies will be used in addressing challenging behavior. Good discipline is essential to having a good educational program and learning environment. When we have a child with learning or behavior concerns, the parent will be consulted and then the Area Education Agency (AEA) will be contacted as necessary. There will be no corporal punishment, and no child will be subjected to verbal abuse or derogatory remarks.

Incident or Accident Reporting:

Incidents or accidents resulting in injury to a child will be reported on the day of the incident in writing to the parent or person authorized to pick up the child. The written report will be prepared by the staff member who observed the incident and will include a general description of what happened, and the action taken, if any, by the staff. Two copies will be sent with the child. One copy should be signed and returned to the preschool for the child's file. An incident report will not be filled out for paper cuts or when the staff replaces a band aid a child came to school with.

Biting:

As with any behavior, how biting is dealt with depends on the ages of the children involved, the reason for the biting (if it can be determined), frequency of biting and many other specific circumstances. General guidelines for biting include:

- Comforting the bitten child; washing the bitten area with soap and water and applying a bandage if needed. An ice pack may be applied to reduce swelling.
- Completing an incident report for each child.
- Discussing the situation with the biter's parents.

Additional actions may include:

- Discussing a better solution with all children involved.
- Separation of the involved children.
- Carefully observing the involved child to identify precipitating events and prevent recurrences.
- Maintain a log to track when behavior occurs.
- Conferences with biter's parents to discuss the child's actions at home; consult with AEA, etc.

Just as any other behavior issue regarding children is confidential, the names of the children involved is also confidential. This is to ensure the privacy of the children and their families and to help prevent bias from other enrolled families at GLP. If the biting continues, suspension or termination of enrollment at GLP may occur.

Parent Visitation/Unlimited Access:

Opportunity will be provided for parents at times convenient to observe their children in the preschool and whenever possible to work with the program. Parents are afforded unlimited access to their children and to the staff caring for their children. The only exception to this would be a parent or guardian limited by court order. Pre-arranging your visit is appreciated. Parents are welcome to visit the preschool at any time. HOWEVER, as a licensed preschool, we are not able to accommodate siblings, cousins or friends of enrolled preschoolers as visitors for the day. State regulations require enrollment files on all children attending class. We must also meet regulations regarding class size and adult ratios.

Volunteers:

Parent/grandparent volunteers are welcome in our classroom. We do ask for you to schedule a time before hand with your child's teacher prior to your visit. Please, understand that parent volunteers must remain under staff supervision as all staff have undergone background checks.

Unauthorized Access Policy:

All volunteers must have authorization to access the children in the classroom. All staff and volunteers counted as part of our class ration need to have a formal record check before having direct responsibility for any child. The volunteer will remain under the supervision of a staff member. The front doors to the preschool remain locked during preschool hours. Anyone without prior authorization will need to go to the church office and be approved by the teacher prior to admittance into the building.

Evacuation – If Grace Preschool needs to be evacuated all the children and staff will evacuate to the DeWitt Public Library unless instructed otherwise by emergency personnel. Then we would evacuate to the Central Community High School atrium or Grace Camp G*Y*M as directed by emergency personnel. Parents would be notified of evacuation and which location was used.

Lockdown – Lockdown of the preschool will be directed by the Central Community School District. If the district feels that there is a situation which warrants schools to lockdown they will contact the Director of the Preschool. Once the call for a lockdown all doors in the building will be locked and remain locked until the “all clear” is given by the district. During a lockdown no one will be able to enter or leave the building. Parents will be notified of all lockdowns which effect Grace Lutheran Preschool.

Safety

For the safety of your child all staff are required to be certified in CPR/First Aid and take a Mandatory Reporters training on child abuse. Yearly training will be done on all other safety procedures. Tornado and Fire Drills will be done monthly with the children as well. Grace Lutheran Preschool Emergency Plan is available upon request.

