

# Grace Education Ministries Parent Handbook



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“Do no harm, do all the good we can, do the things that keep us close to God”

\*Please read, sign, and return the signature page at the end of the handbook.

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## **Introduction**

Welcome to Grace Education Ministries (GEM). GEM is a non-profit community service located within Grace United Methodist Church (GUMC). It is part of the church's ministry with children. GEM is licensed by the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration and meets State and County requirements and regulations for health, safety, nutrition, and programming. GEM has an open-door policy for all families during normal business hours. We are NAEYC accredited, Level 4 Paths to Quality provider. The Division of Family and Children: 1-317-232-4468, and Child Care Information Line: 1-877-511-1144.

## **Mission**

We believe a child's love for learning begins with positive early learning experiences. Our objective is to provide safe, loving care that will enable young children to feel secure and comfortable while away from parents and home. It is also to provide developmentally appropriate activities within a Christian environment. The program at GEM includes quiet as well as active times to ensure positive mental, physical, emotional, social, and spiritual growth and development. Our program is planned to prepare children for school by providing activities for listening and following directions, activities for getting along in a group, and by providing many languages and learning experiences. Our program incorporates the zoo-phonics program as well as weekly themes. We include prayer before meals and a weekly chapel. Through these activities, we expose the children to a loving God, and to Jesus, who sets an example of how we should treat others.

## **Admission**

GEM serves children between the ages of infant and six who may benefit from our program. Enrollment is on a first-come, first-served basis, but children are admitted any time during the year, provided the total enrollment has not been met. GEM will not admit or maintain any child whose needs obviously cannot be met, or whose behavior would be dangerous for the children or staff in the center.

## **Fees**

Annual Registration/Supply Fee per program/child: \$50.00

Annual Dual Enrollment (includes Readiness Preschool) Fee: \$75.00

Any Child enrolling January or later for the current year: \$35.00

***(The fee is non-refundable, covers special events, visitors, supplies, and a key fob and insures a place in our enrollment. Your child is not considered enrolled until this fee is paid, and paperwork has been submitted.)***

Additional Key Fobs: \$15.00 limit 3 per family

Lost/Replacement Fobs: \$25.00

**(All key fobs are rented and must be returned when your child completes our program). \* A great suggestion to always have your fob when you arrive at GEM is to attach it to your child's backpack zipper 😊**

Weekly Tuition for Additional Child in family: 10% discount on oldest child

Program	Monthly	Weekly Rates	Half Day Rates	Daily Rates	CCDF	OMWPK
Infants	N/A	\$195.00	N/A	N/A	\$308.00	N/A
Toddlers	N/A	\$175.00	\$37.00	\$45.00	\$279.00	N/A
3-5-year-old	N/A	\$160.00	\$29.00	\$39.00	\$220.00	\$242.00
T/Th Preschool	\$110.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
MWF Preschool	\$125.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

**Tuition Policy:**

Tuition fees and CCDF/OMWPK copays are due **Monday morning if you pay weekly, and on the 15<sup>th</sup> if you pay monthly**. Payments are to be made via [www.myprocare.com](http://www.myprocare.com) unless you have a card on file for auto-withdrawal. Tuition not paid Monday morning or on the 15<sup>th</sup> will incur a \$20.00 late fee which will be added to your account. If your account falls more than 2 weeks/1 month behind your child will not be admitted until the account is paid in full. Your tuition is what reserves your child's spot. Therefore, full fee is due regardless of holiday, illness, days off and building closures. Please remember that our school expenses continue when one or more children are absent. Part time children that need care on an unscheduled day may pay for an additional day if there is space available and on a first come first serve basis. We do not allow children to switch days. If you need care on a day your child does not attend, we require the request in writing and will let you know if space is available. All declined credit cards will be charged a fee of \$3.50.

**Vacation Policy:**

After your child, has been enrolled at GEM for 1 full year, you will be granted a 1-week tuition credit for vacation. This credit can be used at any time of the year and is available on the anniversary of your child's enrollment. If your child withdraws for the summer, you are not eligible for a vacation credit since you are not enrolled for the full 12 months. Readiness Preschool does not offer a vacation credit.

### **Late Fee Policy:**

A \$25.00 charge will be assessed for each returned check. If a check is returned **all** future payments to GEM are to be in the form of cash, credit card or money order. Children are to be picked up by 5:30 or a late fee will be charged as follows: \$1.00 for each minute late and will be charged to your account. Please note the staff have families and appointments. Please make sure to be on time.

### **Schedule Changes:**

If your schedule changes and you do not inform us, you will be charged normal tuition for when your child is scheduled to attend whether they attend or not. A (2) two-week written notice must be given when withdrawing your child from GEM. If proper notice is not received, regular tuition will be charged for those two weeks.

### **Readiness Preschool**

Children that are 2 years prior to Kindergarten and Must be 3 by August 1<sup>st</sup> Can enroll in our Tuesday and Thursday preschool class. Classes are from 9:00-11:30 (T/TH a.m.)

Children that are 1 Year prior to Kindergarten: Must be 4 by August 1<sup>st</sup> Can enroll in our Monday, Wednesday, and Friday preschool class. Classes are held from 9:00-11:30 (M, W, F a.m.) or 12:30-3:00 (M, W, F p.m.).

**All fulltime children that opt for dual enrollment in Day Care & Readiness will attend the MWF pm class. This is also on a first come, first serve basis. Regular enrollment procedures will apply.**

### **Field Trips**

Occasionally, an additional charge for transportation or entrance fees will be requested for special field trips. These trips enrich our learning experience. Children attending must be 4-5 years old. All children must have written consent to attend trips.

### **Readiness Preschool Field Trips**

Private cars will be used for transportation needs and adequate supervision will be provided. Every child must have a seatbelt, and a booster seat. **Please note, without adequate parent volunteers we reserve the right to cancel any field trip.** Sign-up sheets for each individual trip will be posted. Notice of field trips will be in the monthly newsletters and on the bulletin board outside the classroom prior to the day of the field trip. If you choose to chaperone, we ask that you do not bring younger siblings as we expect your attention to be focused on the children in your assigned group. Please also, refrain from using your cellphone while monitoring the children. **A copy of your Driver's License and insurance card must be on file to chaperone.**

### **School Pictures**

Individual school pictures and class composites are completed in the Fall. Parents are under no obligation to purchase the pictures.

### **Purdue Speech & Hearing Screening**

A Purdue Speech and Hearing screening is offered in Fall. The audiology department will administer the screening with parent consent and payment. Information is sent 1 week prior to the screening.

### **Items from Home**

Children **may not** bring toys, money, jewelry, or candy to school. Items from home become a distraction for the child who brings it and the child who would like to borrow it.

### **Sign In & Out**

All children need to be digitally signed in and out daily. This is a requirement by law and a document we use for emergencies, court cases and voucher verification. You will need to create a 4-8-digit ID and a 4-8-digit password for everyone authorized to pick-up or drop-off. A photo of each person is also required. Please send photos to [gdc@lafgraceumc.org](mailto:gdc@lafgraceumc.org). Children that are enrolled in the CCDF/OMWPK voucher program are required to sign in/out as well as swipe their Hoosier works card. If you do not regularly sign in/out daily a \$1.00 charge will be applied to your account.

### **Release of Children**

All staff members are authorized to release the children in their care to any individual on your emergency contact list. It does not matter who brings your child to school. They must be on your list to pick up. Therefore, DO NOT presume that because your child came to school with someone, we will release your child to them if they are not on your list. We will request picture ID for anyone we do not recognize. You may add or remove any of your contacts at any time. Although, to remove a parent we will need a court order to decline release to a parent. Please send in a photo of all authorized emergency contacts so that we may add them to our system. We require a picture on file for everyone authorized to pick up/drop off your children. Please email photos to [gdc@lafgraceumc.org](mailto:gdc@lafgraceumc.org)

### **Building Security**

GEM is a secure facility. We have a security system which requires a key fob for entry into the facility. All GEM children and families enter at door #5. At the door, you will use your fob to gain access. Everyone that is an authorized pickup/drop off person should have a fob. One (1) fob is given with your paid registration fee. Additional fobs, up to 3 per family may be

purchased for \$15.00. All fobs are to be returned on your child's last day of attendance. All fees for fobs are nonrefundable. If you lose your key fobs, please inform the office and you will need to replace/purchase a new one for \$25.00. Please note that the doorbell is not guaranteed to be monitored after 4:00 p.m. Grace is equipped with video surveillance for internal use only.

**Hours of Operation**

GEM opens at 6:30 am and closes at 5:30 pm. Readiness Preschool begins at 9:00 Monday through Friday. Please remember our staffing is based on the arrival/departure times you list on your Registration form.

**Holiday Closures**

New Year's Eve	New Year's Day	Martin Luther King Day	President's Day	Good Friday	Memorial Day	4 <sup>th</sup> of July
Labor Day	<b>Staff Development Day 11/25</b>	Thanksgiving Day	Friday after Thanksgiving	<b>Staff Development Day 12/23</b>	Christmas Eve	Christmas Day

If a holiday falls on Saturday, we will be closed on Friday; if a holiday falls on Sunday, we will be closed on Monday. **During the holidays, we reserve the right to alter our building hours (7:30-5:00) and closures (Christmas Week).** We will take a survey of possible attendance. We will require the minimum of 8 children to open GEM. If GEM closes due to low enrollment regular tuition is still due.

**Readiness Preschool Schedule**

First Day of School	September 8 <sup>th</sup> /September 9 <sup>th</sup>
Fall Break	October 19 <sup>th</sup> -23 <sup>rd</sup>
Thanksgiving Break	November 25 <sup>th</sup> -27 <sup>th</sup>
Christmas Vacation	December 21 <sup>st</sup> -January 5 <sup>th</sup>
Martin Luther King Jr. Day	January 18 <sup>th</sup>
President's Day	February 15 <sup>th</sup>
Spring Break	March 22 <sup>nd</sup> – 26 <sup>th</sup>
Good Friday	April 2 <sup>nd</sup>
Last Day of School	May 19 <sup>th</sup>

**Building Closures**

GEM will NOT ordinarily be closed for bad weather, however, in severe weather situations you may wish to call before coming to be sure that

staff have arrived. A minimum of two staff members must be present to be open. If necessary, we will alert our face book page, remind app and the following television & radio stations for delays and closings.

**\*WLFI-TV 18 \*WASK-K 105 FM \*WKHY 93.5 \*WXXB-B102.9 FM**

If GEM is closed part or all day for bad weather, our policy states that we pay scheduled staff, therefore regular tuition is due. Please notify GEM by 9:30 am if your children will be absent, late or if there will be a change in routine (such as someone other than the designated persons picking up your children). This allows us to prepare the proper lunch servings and staff the building appropriately. **GEM reserves the right to follow the LSC school closings and delays for bad weather.** The safety of our children and staff is our main priority.

### **Readiness Preschool Closures**

Preschool follows the Lafayette School Corporation calendar. If LSC closed, preschool will also be closed. In case of a 2-hr delay preschool will operate on a regular schedule. We do not make-up days missed for bad weather.

### **Staff**

An effective program cannot be carried out without qualified staff. The Director and lead teachers have degrees and experience working with young children. Assistant teachers, aides and other staff have a minimum of a high school diploma plus training and/or experience in preschool and childcare education. Occasionally we work with high school students through the Vocational Industrial Cooperative Training programs. Each year the staff continues their education with twenty hours of training through early childhood conferences, in-service training, etc. All staff that work directly with children are trained in first aid and CPR training. All staff has yearly TB tests and Universal Precautions training. Applicants are screened carefully during the hiring process. References, education, and previous work experiences are verified. A national criminal history check is done through the FBI, and drug testing is required of all staff as a condition of hiring.

### **Health & Safety**

Your children's health and safety are important to all of us. Please accompany children to their classrooms or onto the playground and be sure a teacher knows they have arrived or left for the day. Children must be digitally signed in and out upon arrival and departure. Staff will require anyone picking up a child, and not known by the caregiver, to provide picture identification. If a Court Order exists preventing an individual from having contact with a child, GEM will comply with the Order. The GEM will keep a copy of the Court Order on file. Please make sure the office has all



current court orders and guardianships on file. If an intoxicated or impaired person insists on removing children from GEM, the staff will immediately report the incident to the local Police agency. Within thirty (30) days after enrollment or no earlier than twelve (12) months prior to enrollment, each child must have a signed, written verification of a physical examination by a physician or a nurse practitioner. This must include a current and complete record of immunization history showing month, day, and year of each immunization.

### **Illness & Communicable Diseases**

If children become ill during the day, are vomiting, have 3 loose stools or has a temperature of 100 degrees or higher, parents will be notified to come for them. Keep children home if they:

- have a fever or have had a fever during the previous 24 hours
- have a heavy nasal discharge
- have a constant cough
- seem overtired, fussy, cranky, not their usual selves
- have symptoms of a possible communicable disease, such as sniffles, reddened eyes, sore throat, headache, or abdominal pain, especially if accompanied by fever and/or spots

Please notify GEM if children have a communicable disease. Likewise, we will keep you informed of communicable diseases to which children have been exposed.

### **Illness Requirements**

If your child is hospitalized for an illness, no tuition will be charged until your child returns with a doctor's note stating the reason for stay and if the child is free to return to school. If your child is not at school for more than 2 consecutive days due to an illness, GEM will require a doctor's note for your child to return.

### **Illness Outbreak**

In the event of a serious illness outbreak (including but not limited to H1N1 flu), GEM will make every effort to remain open. We encourage frequent handwashing and sanitizing, as well as coughing and sneezing into elbows. Part-time staff will be asked to work more hours and substitutes will be called in if regularly scheduled staff become ill and cannot work. Additionally, we could alter our building hours, drop/pick up procedures, limit building access and incorporate new protocol not outlined in the handbook as recommended by State, CDC, and the health department. Children and adults must be free of a fever for 24 hours without the use of medication before returning to school. If we cannot maintain safe child-ratios, GEM will close for a temporary time. Families of children attending

GEM, State Licensing Agency, and County Health Department will be notified if we close. We will follow guidelines and recommendations of State Licensing, CDC, and the County Health Department for reopening. As stated in the handbook, tuition is still due regardless of closure.

### **Prescription Medications**

Medicine can be given at school only if authorized in writing by a parent or guardian. If the medicine does not contain a pharmacy label, it must also be authorized in writing by the child's physician. Inhalers, puffers, or other asthma treatments may be given up to two times daily, if properly authorized. Creams, ointments, and other topical products may be applied on children if authorized by parent and/or physician. Medicine is administered by the Director or designated staff person.

### **First Aid**

In case of minor injury, the staff will administer appropriate first aid. Parents will be contacted immediately if an injury is more serious. If necessary, we will also call an ambulance or paramedics. Until a parent, physician, or paramedic arrives, the Director or a lead teacher will be in charge and make all decisions about care of the child. It is to your child's benefit to keep us updated with all current emergency contacts, phone numbers, and medical information. All staff are trained in first aid/CPR.

### **Abuse & Neglect Reporting Policy**

Suspected child abuse or neglect will be reported to the proper authority whether the suspected abuse took place while a child was in the care of the childcare, or whether the suspected abuse took place elsewhere. Confidentiality of all information will be maintained. The staff is trained yearly in recognizing and reporting child abuse and neglect.

### **Emergency Evacuation Drills**

GEM conducts monthly fire, tornado, and earthquake drills. The staff will follow instructions from the Lafayette Police Department in the case of a lockdown. If you see our Red Octagon Symbol in the window, please know that your key fob will not work, and no one will be admitted or dismissed until we get an all clear from the Lafayette Police Department.

### **Rest Time**

All children are expected to take part in a daily rest time, typically from 1-3 depending on the class. Each child may bring a blanket, small pillow, and a soft sleepy toy. The cots are disinfected weekly and as needed. All cots are labelled with the child's name and they sleep on the same cot daily. Soft, calming music is played during the rest time. Children are encouraged to sleep, or at least rest quietly, but they may be allowed to

look at books or engage in a quiet activity if they cannot fall asleep after an appropriate time.

### **Toilet Training**

We assist families with potty training to ensure all children have success. We ask that when your child shows an interest to please communicate your desire to begin potty training with your child's teacher. Some indicators that your child might be ready are:

- Your child can pull his or her pants on and off with little or no assistance.
- Your child tells you when he or she is wet or has had a bowel movement.
- Your child can sit without support for five to ten minutes.
- Your child can follow simple directions. This may include "Sit on the potty."

Each child in the process of training will have a potty chart and be rewarded with stickers and stamps. We do not reward with candy treats. If you feel a more intensive reward system is necessary, please discuss with your child's teacher or center director. Remember that learning to use the toilet is a process that requires many skills and can take time and patience. If you are struggling with potty training challenges and would like free help to call The Child Care Resource Network at 765-742-7105 to speak with an Infant Toddler Specialist. Readiness Preschool students should be fully toilet trained prior to enrollment.

### **Change of Classroom Transitions**

Typically, we graduate children to the next classroom in January and May. Although, we do move children based on development and need throughout the year. Please note when your child moves to a new class to verify classroom protocol with your child's new teacher. Each teacher has set up an environment that is best suited for the age and development they teach. Feel free to communicate any needs or concerns prior to the class change. We work hard to be a team with our families.

### **Breast Feeding**

We support and encourage parents to come to Grace and breast feed when able. We offer infant parents the comfort of the infant room rockers or our Lounge for all breast-feeding parents. Once your child has transitioned into the toddler classroom, we encourage breast feeding in our Lounge.

### **Food Program**

Our food program is a kid- friendly, well-balanced meal that is prepared at GEM by an experienced cook. A breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack are served daily. Menus are posted on our website, the parent bulletin board, in each classroom, and in the dining room. According to State licensing we may not serve any food items not prepared in our kitchen (this excludes infant meals). We serve breakfast as our morning snack at 8:30. Polite table manners and good eating habits are encouraged. Children are expected to try a bite of each food and beverage served. Seconds of foods and milk are available. **Food from home is not permitted in the classrooms at drop off.**

### **Readiness Preschool Snacks**

We will send home a snack lists each month for parents to provide a snack for the class. Water is provided. We do our best to assign snack days close to the children's birthday. Take home birthday treats are also acceptable. Please note all snacks need to be store bought and in the original container. **Please bring your labeled snack to the classroom on your assigned day.** If you choose to send in cupcakes, please send in mini cupcakes as they are easier for the children to manipulate and less messy than the large ones.

### **Readiness Preschool Drop off/Pick up**

When arriving, please park in a designated spot and walk your child to their locker. Please say goodbye when the teacher opens the classroom door. The children will be dismissed at the northwest door #6 under the portico. For dismissal, form a single carline. The teacher will load children into cars; two cars can pull under the portico at once if the first car pulls completely up. The children are not permitted to walk to you or their car without holding a teacher's hand. Please remain in your car, as this keeps the flow. As you drive through our parking lots, please obey all traffic signs, and go slow.

### **Special Days & Parties**

#### **Birthdays**

If children wish to bring treats for birthdays or other special occasions, please let us know in advance. Nutritious treats are encouraged. All treats need to be in the original sealed container from the store. Homemade foods are not acceptable according to Licensing. Non-edible treats such as stickers, pencils, etc. are an alternative to bringing food. Readiness Preschool schedules your child's snack day on or close to their birthday.

## **Halloween**

Our annual Halloween party is typically scheduled the last Friday before Halloween. Children may come to school dressed in costume on this day. We prefer the costume over his/her clothes as it makes changing more convenient. Please refrain from scary or age inappropriate costumes. No masks or weapons are permitted. We also ask that you keep all accessories at home. Please label all parts as many times we have more than one of a specific character. Party sign-up sheets are placed on the class board the week prior to the party. All treats need to be in the original sealed container from the store. Homemade foods are not acceptable according to Licensing. Non-edible treats such as stickers, pencils, etc. are an alternative to bringing food. Readiness Preschool children are to create a homemade mask in lieu of costumes for their party day.

## **Readiness Preschool Thanksgiving Program**

The Monday before Thanksgiving, the Monday, Wednesday, Friday classes present a short program during the last 45 minutes of class time. Children will sing several Thanksgiving songs, recite a poem, and tell their version of the First Thanksgiving. Children come to class at the regular time. Family and friends are invited to join us in the Sanctuary at 10:45 in the morning class and 2 :15 in the afternoon class. Each child is to bring 1 piece of fruit to class that day. The fruits are combined into a large fruit salad. Following the program, children and families join in a “feast” of fruit salad, corn bread and apple juice in the snack room.

## **Christmas**

Santa will visit and present each child with a gift. Parents are asked to purchase a gift between \$8.00-\$10.00 for this day. Children enrolled in both programs will need a gift for each class. Please see the list below regarding gifts for parties as each class does something different. Party sign-up sheets are placed on the class clipboard the week prior to the party. All treats need to be in the original sealed container from the store. Homemade foods are not acceptable according to Licensing. Non-edible treats such as stickers, pencils, etc. are an alternative to bringing food.

Infants & Toddlers: Parents bring a book for their own child for Santa to give.

Hurricanes & Sunshine Kids: Parents bring a wrapped gift for their own child for Santa to give.

Raindrops & Thunderbolts: Parents bring a wrapped gift for each child to exchange with a friend. Boys bring a boy gift/Girls bring a girl gift.

Readiness Preschool: Parents bring a wrapped gift for each child to exchange with a friend. Boys bring a boy gift/Girls bring a girl gift.

### **Valentine's Day**

We do not do a Valentine card exchange as we celebrate with activities and special snacks. Readiness Preschool children can bring valentines for their classmates. Cards should not be addressed with names but should be signed by your child. They are also required to bring a homemade mailbox for the party day.

### **Week of the Young Child**

We celebrate the week of the young child annually. You will be informed when the week is scheduled. Classrooms will incorporate the NAEYC themes into lesson plans and may request specific items for that week. For example, Tasty Tuesday: Bring a piece of fruit to share.

### **Spring Fling**

A special day is designed for parents to come and experience a little of what their child's day is like. This day is hosted in April. This day means a great deal to the children, we typically plan it from 3:30-5:00 so that all families can participate. If you cannot make it, a suitable parent substitute should attend. That way all children can experience the joy of bringing someone special to school.

### **Readiness Preschool Graduation**

Monday, Wednesday, Friday students present a Graduation program on Tuesday evening before the last day of school. This event is held at 7 pm in the church sanctuary. Children are to arrive in the Readiness classroom by 6:45, where they will line up. They perform several songs and diplomas are presented. Many crafts and work items are on display in the classroom. A cookies and punch reception is held following the ceremony, in Fellowship Hall. Family and friends are invited to attend.

### **Classroom Donations**

We welcome parent involvement. We gladly accept donations. If you have something specific to donate, please see the director to arrange it. If a classroom is doing a special project, they will often hang a sign or send a message via the remind app or face book page. Donation suggestions: tissues, disinfectant wipes, glue sticks, magazines, old cellphones, dress up clothes, purses, jewelry, etc.

### **Guest Speakers**

Parents are urged to share knowledge and talents with the children. Parents whose occupations coincide with aspects of community service that the children can relate to or add enrichment to the current lessons are particularly valuable. For example, artists, dentists, doctors, firefighters, musician, police officers, veterinarians, bakers, chefs, florists, nurses, mail

carriers, engineers, etc. Please let us know if you would like to share your work or skill with the children. We would be happy to schedule a visit anytime.

### **Preschool Show & Tell**

Show & Tell is the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday & Friday of each month, except for May. The date will be posted in the newsletter, bulletin board outside of the classroom as well as our face book page. This is the only time when children should bring an item from home to school. Please NO GUNS of any kind.

### **Lockers & Extra Clothes**

Lockers are provided in the hallways/classrooms for coats and personal belongings. Your child needs to bring the following items to school:

- A full set of extra clothes appropriate to the current season clearly **labelled with your child's name.**
- A blanket and stuffed animal for nap time.
- A family photo for the classroom wall.
- All items need to be small enough to fit in the locker.

We recommend that you send children to school in clothing which is comfortable and appropriate for play. Your child will spend time playing, learning and will get dirty. WE use non-toxic paint, markers. In warm weather, please do not send children in flip-flops or slip-on sandals **without an ankle strap.** Children need sturdy shoes for negotiating stairs, running, and climbing on the playground. We suggest keeping a swimsuit and towel in the locker in summer for sprinkler play. **Please check** your child's locker daily for receipts, newsletters, notes, artwork, etc. Readiness Preschool children need to keep a set of extra clothes in your child's backpack.

### **Outdoor Play**

Children love our large, park-like outdoor play area. This fenced, shady playground has play centers with slides, swings, climbers, and sandboxes. There is a cement sidewalk on the playground for riding trikes. It is also a fun place for wagons and sidewalk chalk. Sprinklers and water play activities are used on the back lawn on hot, summer days. By State regulation we are required to go outside for fresh air each day, but we do not take children outside if the weather is excessively cold/hot or windy.

In the winter and during bad weather, the children play in our indoor romper room.

### **Confidentiality**

It is our policy to keep all family and children information and records confidential. We will not share information with anyone. Any information we attain is solely used for educating and caring for you and your child.

### **Guidance & Discipline**

Discipline is handled by emphasizing and praising positive behavior and by using positive statements. It is not our policy to use corporal punishment. Instead, we talk things out, give reminders, sometimes verbal reprimands, and redirect children to more appropriate behavior. Our goal is to help children to use their own words and solutions to solve interpersonal conflicts and assist them to make good choices.

If those methods are not effective, we may remove a child from the situation for a few minutes. Usually this gives children a chance to calm down and regain control. Our children may lose a privilege, not be allowed to participate for a short time, or be separated from another child. In cases of consistent or more severe misbehavior, parents will be contacted so that we may work things out together. We work closely with our local CCRN. We often with a parent's consent have the CCRN, First Steps and pedestrians that assist with implementation and support for children who might need more assistance beyond the teachers means. We will not permit children to interfere with the learning process or safety of our staff or other children. If the misbehavior continues, and things cannot be worked out, the Director will contact the family to create an action plan for the child.

### **Student Evaluations**

The children are evaluated daily. The teachers keep an observation log. This log is a quick reference for behaviors, goals, and achievements they wish to note about a specific child. These small group observations assist the staff when getting to know a new student and how to best prepare lessons to engage and help the child grow emotionally, socially, and developmentally. We present the families with a non-formal progress report in early fall and have a more detail evaluation completed 3 times a year. At the end of the final evaluation, parent/teacher conferences are held to discuss the child's growth academically. Parent conferences are scheduled in late April. Readiness Preschool evaluations are completed once a year and are sent home in the Spring prior to Kindergarten Round-Up.

### **Communication**



Daily communication with parents is important. This is usually done verbally and with occasional notes. Toddlers receive a daily report concerning his/her day. An evaluation of children's growth and progress are completed annually. We will schedule parent conferences to review the teacher's findings once our student evaluations are completed in April/May. If parents or staff feels it is necessary, a conference can be scheduled at anytime throughout the year and scheduled through the teacher and Director. Newsletters are sent home monthly to inform you of weekly themes and activities, to give general information, and to list upcoming events. Please like our face book page to stay informed of all our exciting activities. Sign up for the Pro Care Connect App to communicate, see current Newsletters, Menus, Program activities as well as individualized activities for each child/classroom. We ask that you communicate to us any changes within home or family which may affect how children feel or act at school. If you have any questions, suggestions, or concerns, please bring them to our attention as soon as possible. Please use the GEM phone number to reach us. However, if the line is busy, and there is an emergency, the Church number and email is listed below. You may also email the director at any time.

GEM: 765-447-2204 [gdc@lafgraceumc.org](mailto:gdc@lafgraceumc.org)

Preschool: 765-447-2204 [hmwb26@aol.com](mailto:hmwb26@aol.com)

Grace Church: 765-447-4152 [office@lafgraceumc.org](mailto:office@lafgraceumc.org)

### **Social Media**

GEM does not permit personal connections between parents and staff that are currently enrolled on social media sites such as Facebook. That relationship can often be misinterpreted from professional to personal. Our policy is to treat all families and children in our care with respect and professionalism. If you wish to communicate with your child's teacher regarding the events in the classroom, please use the GEM Facebook page or the remind app that is monitored by the director. Parents are not to communicate with the staff regarding attendance, scheduling, classroom situations or other students via Facebook or text messages. This policy is for your personal protection and the protection of all employees.

### **Curriculum**

Our curriculum is theme based with the incorporation of zoo phonics and hands on learning. Lesson plans are developed according to the Indiana Foundations to prepare each child for Kindergarten. Each class offers various activities that enrich the child's learning through large and small groups. They can explore individual learning styles through center activities such as math, science, art, dramatic play and sensory. The role of the teachers is to:

- Provide an array of materials and activities from which a child can explore.
- Involve the children with planning, to assist them with choices and problem-solving skills.
- Ask questions and make suggestions for experiences that will stimulate a child's thinking.
- Offer a balance between adult initiation and child initiation.

**Schedule**

The following daily schedule is subject to change:

6:30-8:30	Supervised Play, Center-based Activities, Art
8:30-9:00	Breakfast
9:00-9:15	Bathroom, Stories, Music or Outside
9:30-10:00	Chapel (Wednesdays)
9:30-11:30	Class time
11:15-11:45	Infant & Toddler Lunch
11:30-12:00	Hurricanes, Sunshine Kids Lunch
12:00-12:30	Raindrops & Thunderbolts Lunch
12:30-3:00	Nap Time/ MWF PM Readiness Preschool (4 & 5-year-old)
2:45-3:30	Snack
3:30-5:30	Centers, Outside

**Grouping**

Children at GEM are placed in groups per their ages and development. The following chart gives the names of the groups, ages, maximum number of children that can be in each group, and the minimum number of teachers with each class. This grouping is subject to change per need and enrollment. Please note we have a policy in place if a classroom becomes over ratio.

<u>Group</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u># of Children</u>	<u># of Staff</u>
Infants	8 wks-1 ½	8	2
Tornadoes	1 ½ -2 ½	10	2
Hurricanes	2 ½-3	14-20	2
Sunshine Kids	3-4	20	2
Raindrops	4-5	24	2
Thunderbolts	4 ½-5	15	1
Readiness Preschool MWF	4-5	24	2
Readiness Preschool T/TH	3-4	20	2

### **Donations**

GEM collects the items below. Collection buckets are in the main upstairs hallway on top of the lockers near Room I. Box Tops for education labels, which you can find on many household products. We share them with the Lafayette School Corporation. If you do not already send into another school, please consider donating them to us. Pop tabs are for Ronald McDonald House.



### **Readiness Preschool Schedule**

9:00 AM/12:30 PM	Readiness Preschool arrival
9:00-9:45/12:30-1:15	Free play
9:45-10:15/1:15-1:45	Circle time
10:15-10:45/1:45-2:15	Class time
10:45-11:00/2:15-2:30	Story/music
11:00-11:30/2:30-3:00	Snack
11:30/3:00	Readiness Preschool Dismissal

### **Helpful Hints**

Visit the school with your child prior to them attending. Make sure they have all the enrollment paperwork completed. Bring everything they will need for the day, especially something of comfort for nap time. If you are experiencing separation issues, please inform the teacher that you will need assistance. It is sometimes difficult for us to measure when you are ready to leave. Please remember it is easier for both you and your child to say good-bye and leave without hesitating or returning to the room. If the children cry the staff are trained in how to ease the fears and comfort them. It usually only takes a few minutes. You are always able to call and see how they are after you leave. Adjustment periods are normal, but they can smooth if parents support the child with a positive, firm, and consistent approach.

### **Suggestions & Criticisms**

Your suggestions and constructive criticism are most welcome at any time. We are not and probably never will be infallible, but we do care

about our children and the education and care we provide them. You can help us by letting us know what you like and do not like as we are always striving to make our program better. Please fill out staff compliment cards and place in the tuition box to help honor our staff for going above and beyond. We also ask that you complete a NAEYC evaluation annually.

### **COVID19 Protocol**

Please note that many policies listed above have changed due to the COVID19 pandemic. Below are some changes that could differ from policies previously stated. We reserve the right to alter guidelines as announced from State and CDC in the future.

- Have a completed a Health & Travel Form on file.
- All children aged 3 and older are **required** to wear a mask.
- Only Staff and Children are permitted in the building.
- A carline drop off & pickup will be at door #6.
- Morning carline will be from 6:30-8:30 for Day Care and 8:45-9:15 for Readiness.
- Afternoon carline will be from 4:30-5:30 for Day Care and 11:30-12:00 for Readiness.
- If you need to pick up earlier or drop off later, please call the center at 765-447-2204 option 2 to let us know you have arrived, and we will meet you there.
- All families will be required to clock in/out on the tablets provided.
- All families that have CCDF vouchers are required to swipe CCDF cards DAILY.
- All tuition payments are to be made via [www.myprocare.com](http://www.myprocare.com) unless you are enrolled in the automatic tuition withdrawal tuition express.
- Please return all fobs associated with your account.
- Enter the GEM property from the East (Elizabeth Street) and exit from the West (22<sup>nd</sup> St). Pull under the portico at door #6. Take your child out of your car and meet a GEM staff member at the door for intake protocol.
- All children and staff are required to wash hands upon entry of the building.
- All Day Care children need the following items in a sealed plastic bag. Ex., diapers, wipes, bottles, 2 sets of extra clothes, 1 clean blanket.
- **No stuffed animals, pillows, toys, or other extra items will be permitted.**
- All items sent to GEM will remain at the center and not be sent home daily. We will wash daily except for dirty clothes.

- Each child will undergo a health check along with their temperature taken upon drop off. Parents will be asked to remain on-site for this to occur.
- If a child presents a temperature over **100** degrees Fahrenheit (per our handbook), you will be asked to return home with your child.
- Children will be asked to remain home until they are fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medications, as well as free of other symptoms of diarrhea and vomiting for at least 24 hours from the last episode.
- If you or anyone in your household has been in contact with anyone that has been exposed to COVID 19, we respectfully ask you to self-quarantine for 14 days prior to returning to GEM.
- If a positive case of COVID 19 is found in any staff member, child or family of GEM or GUMC, GEM will close as directed and take necessary precautions from the CDC, State and Local Health Department to reopen when it is deemed safe.

Everyone can do their part to help us respond to this emerging public health threat. Parents should take everyday preventive measures to help protect their family from the spread of COVID-19:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Encourage respiratory etiquette (e.g., covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or sleeve).
- Encourage frequent, proper handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or with hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Keep your child at home if sick with **any** illness. If their symptoms worsen, contact your healthcare provider.
- Be prepared if GEM needs to close temporarily in the future.
- Talk with your employer about sick leave and telework options in case you need to stay home with your child.
- Consider planning for alternate childcare arrangements.
- Perform routine environmental cleaning. Routinely clean and disinfect all frequently touched surfaces (e.g., doorknobs, countertops, workstations) with usual cleaning and disinfection products. Follow all instructions on the product label.
- All tuition policies will remain as normal even in the event of a closure or COVID 19 related absences.
- As always, we appreciate our community's support and cooperation.

You can assist us by remaining vigilant but sensible in your approach to dealing with this health concern. As you know, we are the greatest influence on our children's reactions to these types of events. As a

result, let us remain calm, respectful, empathetic, and inclusive while advocating for ourselves and others.

**Parent/Guardian Signature Page**

*\*Please sign and return to the office*

I, \_\_\_\_\_ have read and  
I agree to comply with **ALL** rules and regulations as documented in the  
GEM Parent Handbook. Please sign below and return to the GEM office.

Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Date

Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Date