

Children's Garden Preschool 2020–2021


Policies and Procedures

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Hello! Welcome to Children's Garden Preschool! Thank you for taking time to read this book. By reading the policy book, you will learn more about our procedures and have many of your questions answered. We have listed frequently asked questions and provided answers to those questions. Please read all of the information carefully and sign the agreement form stating that you commit to following the policies we have set in this book. COVID-19 related updates are marked with an *. Again, we appreciate your willingness to read through this information!

FQAs:

What constitutes a preschool program?

The state of North Dakota requires licensed preschool programs to have the children no more than 3 hours per day. All lessons and activities are developmentally and age appropriate for preschool age children. Both of our full time teachers have Bachelor's Degrees in Education (Elementary and Early Childhood). The goal of licensed preschool in North Dakota is to provide part-time educational and socialization experiences for children age 2 years old to kindergarten. Our program serves children 3 – 6 years old. Enrollment is limited by an adult/child ratio that is based on a points system. Depending on the ages of the children in each class, MWF classes typically have 15 students and T/Th classes typically have 12 students.

*Due to COVID-19, we are currently (September 2020) limited to a total number of 15 people in each classroom. For us this will mean one teacher and a max of fourteen students.

What type of curriculum do you use?

We are experienced curriculum writers and are continuously updating our lessons and activities. Our curriculum uses a multiple intelligences approach to teaching and provides a balance of teacher-directed and child-led activities. Our unique curriculum has been self-created to pull in the best parts from different preschool styles including Montessori (free play exploration, structure & order, natural elements), Waldorf (arts, hands-on science, music), High Scope (large and small group time, transitions, active participation), etc. Social-emotional learning, influenced by the life of Fred Rogers, is also an important part of our curriculum. We try to present our material in as many ways as possible in an effort to reach every child and appeal to the individual learning style for each child. We continuously self-evaluate our curriculum and update it as necessary. We also communicate with Kindergarten teachers about how to best prepare our students for elementary school. Please refer to our website and/or our monthly calendar and newsletter for specific classroom activities.

How will I know what is happening in the classroom?

Using the Remind App/school text message system is the best way to stay up to date on classroom happenings. Additionally, you will receive a calendar and newsletter each month that outlines the classroom activities. You will receive a hard copy sent home as well as a digital copy on the Remind App. We also post the year calendar and monthly newsletter and calendar on our website. Please check your child's backpack daily as we will send home notes and papers throughout the month. We will also post updates and reminders on our school's Facebook page and on our website.

*Due to COVID-19 we may need to get information to you quickly. Please be sure to have at least one parent be connected to us via Remind. Also, please make sure you have added us to your email contacts minotpreschool2021@outlook.com.

What does my child need for school?

Children need a full-size backpack or large tote bag. Also, please keep an extra set of clothes in your child's backpack at all times for spills, accidents, etc. Children should come in play clothes as we will be doing several hands-on activities.

What do you do for holidays and birthdays?

We will observe holidays and birthdays. Each child will get to celebrate his/her birthday at school. If your child's birthday is during the summer, we will celebrate his/her half birthday. You are welcome to send treats or a snack on your child's birthday or half birthday. **We will be nut-free school this year. This means no peanuts, nuts, or peanut butter in any item.** Birthday party invitations may not be handed out at school unless the entire class is invited. We do not have set party times for holidays, instead we incorporate holiday/seasonal theme activities into our daily routine. More details will be sent home in monthly newsletters.

*You may bring store-bought, prepackaged items for snack on your child's birthday. For example, individual bags of popcorn or snack mix. Please be sure to send enough for the entire class.

Who is allowed to pick up my child from preschool?

Your child will only be released to the individuals listed on your Child Information Sheet and only to those who show a photo ID. You can add people to your list at any time. We are not allowed to release your child to someone who is not listed. Until we get to know you and your family, you will need to show your photo ID when picking up your child. We have many families to get to know and it takes us a few days to remember everyone. Please have your photo ID out and ready for the first few days. Thank you!

*Drop off and pick up will now take place at the building entrance (the double doors on the South side of the building) rather than at the classroom entrance.

What do you serve for snacks?

We try to serve nutritious snacks at school. These snacks include fresh vegetables, fruit, crackers, cereal, yogurt, trail mix, raisins, etc. On special occasions, such as birthdays, there may be items like cupcakes and cookies. We are more than happy to accommodate special diets or allergy restrictions.

*Our water fountain is closed, but children will have access to cups and water during the day.

What are the hours of operation?

The morning session runs from 8:20 – 11:10 a.m. and the afternoon session runs from 11:45 – 2:35 p.m. We prepare the room and materials before, between and after class. We will not be able to supervise children before 8:20 a.m. and 11:45 a.m. It is important for children to have a sense that “things and places” are ready and teachers are prepared to give them their full attention. The building doors will remain closed until 8:20 or 11:45. If you arrive early, please remain in your car until the doors have been opened by the teachers. We will not be able to accept early arrivals. Thank you in advance for following this procedure as it will help our day run smoothly.

Drop Off Time:

*Drop off times are 8:20–8:30 a.m. and 11:45–11:55 a.m. Drop off will take place at the double doors on the South side of the parking lot. If you must come in, masks are required for all non-staff and non-enrolled children entering those doors during school hours. Also, all teachers and children entering must participate in a Daily Health Check. This includes a forehead temperature check with a no-touch thermometer. Any child with a fever of 100.4 or higher will not be able to attend school. We are also required to ask you the following questions each day.

1. Have you had any known contact with someone who is exhibiting symptoms (fever of 100.4, shortness of breath, cough) OR tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 14 days?
2. Have you had any new symptoms consistent with COVID-19 such as fever OR two or more of the following symptoms: fatigue, body aches, cough, sore throat, runny nose, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain or loss of taste and/or smell?
3. Have you been tested for or diagnosed with COVID-19 in the last 14 days?

If the answer to all 3 screening questions is “no” the child (or adult) can enter. If the answer to ANY of the 3 screening questions is “yes” the person should leave and contact their health care provider.

After your child has had a temperature scan and all check-in questions have been answered with No, your child is welcome to enter the hallway and you are free to leave. Exact details regarding drop off procedures will be made available prior to the start of school.

Pick Up Time:

Children are to be picked up at the designated times — **11:00 a.m. and 2:25 p.m.** You have a 10-minute grace period to arrive. If you arrive after 11:10 a.m. or 2:35 p.m. you will be asked to pay an overtime fee of \$5 per 5 minutes, which will go directly into the Children’s Garden scholarship fund. Please inform the teacher of any change in the person picking up your child. Children become concerned if they are left at the end of the school day, so please return on time. For apprehensive new children, it is comforting for you to be among the first to arrive. It is helpful to set alarms or reminders on your phone regarding school pick-up.

*Due to increased cleaning that will need to be done after each class, it is more important than ever for you to arrive on time to pick up your child. We need to get the hallways, bathrooms, and classrooms sanitized before the next group arrives. Thank you for your diligence!

What if there is a weather-related closure?

We follow Minot Public Schools decisions on weather-related school closures. If Minot Public is closed or has a late start or early release due to weather, we will also be closed for the day. These days will not be made up. Weather announcements will be posted on Facebook and KXMC and sent out on the Remind App.

***What about COVID-19 related closures?**

Covid-related closures will be discussed at the Open House.

Do you ever leave the school?

We may take planned or spontaneous walks around the neighborhood. We will always stay within a few blocks of the school and will always have a phone with us.

*Due to the pandemic, all other field trips are currently suspended.

Is your school licensed?

Yes, we are licensed by the North Dakota Department of Human Services. We have our license on display so that you can see we have met the licensing requirements for the state of North Dakota. Each year we are required to attend a specified number of training hours to maintain our license. We are also members of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

Grievance Procedure: If you have any concerns or complaints about our program, please discuss them with us as soon as possible. If you have a serious complaint that you feel we are not addressing, you may contact our licenser, Kara Currie at 852-3552.

What are the fees?

A one month tuition payment must be paid upon registration to hold your child's spot. This payment will cover your May tuition and is non-refundable. Tuition Rates are:

2 days/week — 9 payments of \$200

3 days/week — 9 payments of \$250

Please refer to your copy of your signed contract for specific payment information. Payments must be made on via automatic bank draft monthly or the full year's tuition can be paid in full by October 20, 2020. Late payments or accounts with non-sufficient funds are subject to a \$20 fee. This fee will go into the Children's Garden scholarship fund.

What is the daily routine and what are your activities?

Arrival and Fine Motor Activities (legos, puzzles, drawing, etc)
Circle Time/Opening (calendar, weather, Hello song, yoga, helper, etc)
Large Group Learning (alphabet, writing, science, etc)
Playtime/Free Choice in classroom centers and Art/Crafts time
Clean Up/Game or Math Graph/ Hand washing
Snack/Pack Mail
Quiet Book Time/Story
Music/Movement/Outdoor Play

Our centers include Home Living/Dramatic Play, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics), Reading, Sensory Play, Blocks/Building, Art/Writing and More! Children receive about an hour of free play time each day.

Our website has an updated video showing our daily routine and different parts of our classrooms.

Children will be taught to write using the Zaner-Bloser style of handwriting, which is used in our local public school system as well.

What should I do if my child needs medication while at school?

Ask your child's teacher for a medication form and fill out all of the necessary information including the name of the medication, dosage and time to be administered. Sign the form and turn it in with the medication. We will keep the medicine in a locked cabinet and will record the time it was given to your child. If possible, please try to give medications before or after school.

My child has an illness; can he/she still attend school?

We request that children who are not feeling well be kept home from school. If you suspect your child may be sick and you have scheduled a doctor's appointment, **please keep your child out of school until you have had the appointment.** We will follow guidelines set by the ND Department of Health listed in the "North Dakota Childcare/School Infection Control Manual." This manual can be found online.

The following illnesses require children to be kept home from school or sent home if symptoms develop at school: pink eye, scabies, lice, nits, chicken pox, impetigo, fever of 100+ degrees F, rash with fever or behavior change, ring worm, vomiting, diarrhea, etc. Other illness and diseases not listed here may also require children to be kept home. Please contact us if your child has a specific illness not listed and we will consult the guidelines and help you make a decision.

Communicable diseases such as measles, rubella, hepatitis A, pertussis, mumps, tuberculosis, hib, meningitis, etc require a consult with a physician before attending preschool.

If your child is not feeling well, we will contact you to come and pick up your child. If you cannot be reached, we will contact others listed on your Child Information Sheet.

*Please refer to the "COVID-19 and Childcares" put out by the North Dakota Department of Health for COVID-19 specific information. A copy is available to download from our website.

What if there is an emergency with my child? Including burns, serious injury, ingestion of poison, etc.

We will always call 9-1-1 and/or poison control and will make an effort to contact you or one of your emergency contacts. If we are unable to contact anyone, it will be necessary for us to obtain emergency medical care at your expense.

We are certified in Infant/Child CPR and First-Aid. In case of an emergency, we will take the necessary steps to give your child care to the best of our abilities.

Do you provide transportation to and from school?

No, parents are responsible for arranging transportation to and from preschool.

If your child will be arriving unaccompanied (for example, walking) please discuss this with us. If an unaccompanied child fails to arrive within 15 minutes of arrival time we will call parents first, then those listed on your Child Information Sheet. If we cannot reach anyone we will call the police to report a missing child.

How is discipline handled?

Discipline will be handled as individual situations arise. We try to stop problems before they happen by using redirection, class discussions, books, relaxation and other techniques. We also follow the same routine and procedure every day. This helps eliminate a lot of discipline issues because children know what is expected during each part of the day and what will be happening next. Children this age seem to thrive on a predictable routine. Additionally, we work on helping children learn to make good choices. We show them that good choices lead to positive outcomes and we try to help them learn compassion by talking about how their choices have an effect on others.

If there is a consistent discipline problem, parents and teacher will work together to find a suitable solution. Children will never be physically punished. We try to use logical/natural consequences whenever possible — for example, a child who continues to run in the classroom may need to take a break and sit at the table for a brief time in order to calm down and regroup. Another example would be a child who dumps out a box of toys after clean-up time will need to clean up the mess before joining the class in the next activity.

Our classroom boundaries (rules) are:

1. Use a quiet voice 2. Use walking feet 3. Have kind hands 4. Have clean-up hands 5. Have listening ears

What is a mandated reporter?

By the North Dakota Century Code, all teachers and staff are mandated to report suspected child abuse and/or neglect to the appropriate authorities.

What are the policies for children with special needs?

Prior to the beginning of the school year, we will set up a meeting to create a care plan. The care plan will be followed to the best of our ability. Children who need care beyond our training may be referred to a special services program.

Where are my child's belongings kept?

Each child will be assigned his/her own "mailbox" to be used while they are in school. Backpacks will be hung on the hooks under the mailboxes. We request no other items from home be brought to school, except on specified 'show and tell' days. This includes water bottles, toys, food, games, money, etc. We are not responsible for lost or stolen items brought from home.

*Coats, shoes/boots, etc will be kept in the hallway. Children are welcome to wear socks or slippers in the classroom.

Who will be employed by Children's Garden Preschool?

Sara and Shaun Brentrup are the teachers and only full-time staff. We have a list of back-up caregivers that may need to fill in on occasion if we have an appointment, meeting, family illness, emergency, etc. We will try to tell you in advance when a substitute teacher will be in the classroom, but this may not always be possible. All of our substitute staff have undergone background checks, fingerprinting and CPR/First Aid training.

We will never employ someone who has been found guilty of homicide, assaults, kidnapping, gross sexual imposition, sexual imposition, corruption or solicitation of minors, sexual abuse, sexual assault, robbery, burglary, sexual performances of children, promoting or facilitating prostitution or a similar offense.

We will conduct detailed interviews, fingerprinting and background checks before hiring any new employees.

Our back-up/substitute teacher:

Destiny Waddle

Destiny has an Associate of the Arts degree in Early Childhood Education. Previously she was an infant and toddler teacher for Early Head Start. Currently, she is a stay-at-home mom with a First-Grader and a Preschooler. Destiny is certified in CPR and First Aid.

What if there is a fire, disaster or weather-related emergency?

For a fire: We will exit the door or window that appears safest and furthest from the fire. Each classroom has two doors, two escape windows and heat sensitive sprinklers. After exiting, we will meet by the west garages and account for all children and adults. We will also call 9-1-1 if they have not yet been notified.

For a tornado: We will move to the center of the building away from windows and doors until it is safe to return to the classrooms.

For all other emergencies: We will make all efforts to keep children and adults safe. We keep battery operated radios and flashlights in our classrooms as well as first aid kits and a disaster supply of water and food. If parents are unable to pick up their child due to an emergency or disaster, children may remain at the facility until it is safe to pick them up. If we need to relocate due to an emergency or disaster, our first relocation area is Washington Elementary School (857-4695). We will call parents as we are able to. We will follow the procedures in our Disaster Plan.

How can I help/volunteer/be involved?

*Because we have limited access to our building, we will not be allowing parents or others to come in to present to the class. If you have a unique job or hobby that you think may be of interest to preschoolers (which is basically EVERYTHING!) please let your child's teacher know. We would still like to offer guest presentation through videos. Thanks!

What other information do I need to know?

- Photographs will be taken of various activities in the classroom. We will display photos of the children in the hallway of the building and inside the classroom. We will never put faces of the children on the internet without obtaining special permission from parents.
- We have obtained liability insurance for Children's Garden Preschool, Inc.
- Please use the doors on the south side of the building when entering. *Entrance is only permitted for special circumstances. Masks are required for all adults and non-student children during school hours.
- Our school is choosing to not participate in aquatic activities including swimming, playing in wading pools or taking field trips to pools.
- Pick up time is 11:00 a.m. and 2:25 p.m.
- *We will do all we can to have a safe and successful school year. We know that challenges and unforeseen situations are going to arise. We ask you to be flexible and understanding as we navigate this new school year together. Our goal will be to provide a clean environment for your child, but cannot guarantee that they will not be exposed to diseases while at school. We are committed to increased cleaning and hygiene procedures. If you have any feedback, please let us know.
- *If our community cases continue to increase and a decision is made to cancel school, we would NOT go to distance learning. Instead, we would discontinue classes. We would cancel payments as needed.
- Please let us know anytime you have questions, concerns, comments, etc.
- Thank you for supporting our school. We are looking forward to a fantastic year!

Thank you

