

CHILDREN OF GRACE PRESCHOOL



2011—2012 HANDBOOK

**WELCOME TO THE
GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH
CHILDREN OF GRACE PRESCHOOL PROGRAM,
MORE COMMONLY KNOWN AS COG.**

Children of Grace Preschool offers the following programs:



Mothers Morning Out

This program is offered to children ages 6 months to 23 months.

Children are allowed to attend two days per week.

(Any request for exceptions must be made on an individual basis to the administration.)



Preschool

This program is offered to children ages 2 through 5 years.

Children are allowed to attend two, three or five days per week.

(Any request for exceptions must be made on an individual basis to the administration.)

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I. The Program

Mission Statement

As an outreach of *Grace Episcopal Church*, *The Children of Grace* Preschool's mission is to provide a loving, nurturing environment that will enhance each child's self esteem, independence and individuality.

Philosophy

Our philosophy at *Children of Grace* is to provide quality care and education for children 6 months through 5 years of age within a loving environment. The overall belief is to prepare children for each school year by building on previous years. We strive to meet each child's individual emotional, spiritual, physical and intellectual needs. *Children of Grace* is an outreach ministry to the community providing early childhood education for all children without regard to race, color, religion, sex, handicap, creed or national origin.

COG Governance

COG is a program of *Grace Episcopal Church* and is governed by the church's leadership board, the *Vestry*. The *Vestry* provides for the physical needs of *COG* and oversees its budget. The *Vestry* delegates the day-to-day operation of *COG* to the rector of *Grace Church* and to the director of *COG*. The director of *COG* determines all policies and procedures in consultation with the rector and *Vestry*. The *Vestry* meets monthly.

COG Parent Committees

COG has parent committees, made up of volunteer parents who help with the various events and fundraising programs of the school. The parent committees work closely with the director to help ensure the betterment of the program.

2011-2012 Calendar

COG's calendar for the 2011-2012 school year is based upon the calendar for the Hall County school system. School will start August 15 and will end on May 9. COG follows the Hall County school system holiday and weather closings. A pullout calendar is located in the middle of this handbook. At the first of each month your child will bring home a more detailed class calendar prepared by the teacher to inform you of any extra activities that month.

Curriculum

Children of Grace's curriculum offers opportunities for learning in a developmentally appropriate environment. Social and emotional development of the child is a major focus. We emphasize self-awareness, cooperative behavior, and self-confidence. Our program offers learning through free play, stories, art projects, finger plays, music, snack, outdoor play, manipulatives, and language skills.

We are on our eleventh year of the curriculum "The Letter People." Let's begin with the Letter People is a developmentally appropriate Pre-K program emphasizing literacy learning.

Religious Instruction

The school shall provide a chapel time twice monthly for the Pre-K classes to experience stories from the Bible and prayers. The clergy of Grace Church will assist in leading chapel. The religious significance of holidays will be included in the curriculum. In addition, each class will be taught a mealtime blessing that will be used daily at snack and lunch.

Student Activities

- **Music**—Music is offered to all classes (except Pre-Toddler) once a week. Toddlers will begin after the first of the year. The children are taught both religious and secular songs as well as playing rhythm band instruments. All children from the younger two classes and up will participate in the "Christmas and Spring Fling" programs.

- **Art/Science**—Art projects and science experiments are offered to all classes (except Pre-Toddler) once a week. Toddlers will begin after the first of the year.
- **Computers**—COG offers computer availability to children in the Three Year Old and Pre-K classes. This will expose students to basic computer skills while reinforcing the curriculum taught in the classrooms.
- **Field Trips**—Pre-K classes will have the opportunity to participate in a variety of field trips throughout the year. Children will not be allowed to attend field trips without a parent's consent. We require that all Pre-K students wear a COG T-shirt. (T-shirts will be available for purchase in the fall packets and at Open House.)
- **Birthday Parties**—Birthdays are an exciting time for children and we welcome and encourage birthday parties. Parties need to take place at snack time or after lunch so please talk with the teacher when scheduling a time for such parties. We would like to encourage parents to donate a book in honor of your child's special day. This is a great way to continue building our library at COG. Please, no latex balloons, mylar only.
- **Holiday Parties** Holidays will be celebrated throughout the year, and are an integral part of your child's learning process.

Pictures

A professional photographer will make pictures of the children in the spring. The photo session will consist of individual and class pictures. Pre-K students will have individual pictures and class pictures made in their graduation caps and gowns.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Developmental evaluations will be performed to determine the appropriate placement for children. COG provides the opportunity to meet in conference with their child's teacher. Conferences are scheduled at the request of the parents. Pre-K student evaluations will be sent home so that you may be aware of any strengths and weaknesses prior to Kindergarten.

Parent Information Sheets

Parent information sheets will be sent home periodically to let parents know if your child has had any type of accident, discipline problem and/or other miscellaneous information. PLEASE check your child's bag daily for these forms.

Visitation

Parents are welcome to visit *COG* anytime. By regularly checking with staff members, parents can keep informed of their child's progress and activities. We encourage parents to volunteer for any field trips, parties and programs, in order to be as fully involved in your child's experience at *COG* as possible.

Behavior Management

The purpose of discipline is to help children learn ways of behaving that are acceptable to themselves and others. With very young children this usually means setting limits, for their safety, the safety of others and the safety of property. Discipline is regarded as part of the total program, and the consequences of misbehavior will be stated in positive terms and discussed with the child. Teachers facilitate the development of self-control in children by using positive guidance techniques such as modeling and encouraging expected behavior, redirecting children to a more appropriate activity, and setting clear limits for the benefit and safety of all children. If redirecting is not successful a child will be placed in "time-out" as a consequence for his/her unacceptable behavior. No form of physical punishment will be allowed, and verbal abuse will not be tolerated. No child will be denied food, rest or bathroom privileges as punishment. If unacceptable behavior continues, the director will notify the parents and a conference may be held. A child may be suspended or ultimately removed from the program for serious misbehavior at anytime at the discretion of the director of the pre-school. Please make a point to know your child's classroom rules, so that the two of you can work together in making your *COG* pre-school experience positive.

Biting

For this age group biting is considered age appropriate behavior. Because younger children often lack language skills to express themselves appropriately, it is not unusual for them to bite another child out of frustration. Bites usually occur on the arms, hands, faces, and backs. When a child bites, he/she will be redirected to another activity and told "no biting, biting hurts." The injured child will be offered comfort and the wounded area cleaned. The parents of both children will be notified of the incident via written report. In the rare instance the bite breaks the skin, parents will be notified by telephone. For the safety and well being of all children, any child who bites another child 2 times in the same day may be asked to leave the school for the remainder of the day. If biting becomes a persistent problem, parents must meet with the Teacher and Director to discuss possible options, including counseling or withdrawal from the school.

Attendance

To gain maximum benefit from the program, regular attendance is recommended. If, however, there is any indication of illness, please keep your child at home and notify the office.

Policies Regarding Illness

COG is a place for WELL children. Staying at home at the first sign of illness is important. If you receive a call that your child is ill, PLEASE make arrangements to pick up your child as soon as possible in order to protect the health and well being of the other children. Sick children expose other children, parents, staff, and their families to the spread of their illness. Sick children want care from their parents in the comfort of their own homes. Do Not bring your child to the preschool if he/she has had any of the symptoms discussed below in the past 24 hours. Control of communicable diseases in preschool takes a cooperative effort on the part of the parents and the preschool. If medication is necessary, please refer to the information on medication forms in the handbook.

Illnesses requiring temporary removal from the preschool include the following:

Diarrhea: When one diarrhea is noted, and if the director feels it is necessary for the child to go home the parents will be notified.

Temperature elevation of 100.4 or above: When a temperature elevation is suspected, the child's temperature will be taken. If your child has a temperature over 100.4 the parents will be notified immediately and asked to pick the child up as soon as possible.

Rash (suspected contagious disease, i.e. measles, chicken pox, scarlet fever, etc.): When a rash is noted, the child's temperature will be taken. The child's parent will be notified of the rash. If a contagious disease is suspected the parent will be requested to come for the child immediately.

Lung Congestion: Serious lung congestion in children will necessitate their absence from the preschool until condition improves.

Prolonged Vomiting: If a child has been vomiting before they come to preschool, then the child should be kept home. If vomiting occurs while the child is at the preschool, the parents will be notified and requested to come for the child as soon as possible.

Lice: Lice policy of Children of Grace Preschool:

- At the first occurrence, follow the treatment prescribed by the Hall County School system. Treat lice with commercial products available at any local drugstore, and remain out of school until all nits are gone.
- At the second occurrence, follow the same procedure as the first occurrence, but parents must show proof that treatment has been completed.
- With the third occurrence, the child must remain home for a minimum of 7 full days or until the condition is totally remedied.

COG shall reserve the right to request a doctor's written release if the director deems it necessary. All parents will be notified if a child becomes ill with a communicable disease such as measles, mumps, chicken pox, etc. Parents are requested to report any illness or symptoms of illness that your child may have as soon as possible to the administration.

II. Administration

Enrollment

COG is open to any child from the age of 6 months to five years. The following ages are used only as a guideline when placing children within an appropriate age group at registration:

Pre-Toddler	6 months - 14 months
Toddler	15 months - 2 years
Younger Two	2 years - 2 years, 4 months
Middle Two	2 years, 4 months - 2 years, 8 months
Older Two	2 years, 8 months - 3 years
Younger Three	3 years - 3 years, 4 months
Middle Three	3 years, 4 months - 3 years, 8 months
Older Three	3 years, 8 months - 4 years
Pre-K	4 years - 5 years

Tuition

The annual tuition rates for the 2011-2012 school year (not including June & July) are:

- \$1,540.00 annual for two days/week
- \$1,836.66 annual for three days/week
- \$2,364.25 annual for five days/week
- \$30.00 per day drop-in fee (availability must be approved)

2011-2012 Tuition Payment Schedule

Ten tuition payments are scheduled based on the total annual tuition rates.

April 1, 2011	1st tuition payment for 2011-2012 school year
May 1, 2011	June summer session payment
June 1, 2011	July summer session payment
July 1, 2011	* 2nd tuition payment and supply/activity fees
August 1, 2011	3rd tuition payment
September 1, 2011	4th tuition payment
October 1, 2011	5th tuition payment
November 1, 2011	6th tuition payment
December 1, 2011	7th tuition payment
January 1, 2012	8th tuition payment
February 1, 2012	9th tuition payment
March 1, 2012	10th tuition payment
April 1, 2012	1st tuition payment for 2012-2013 school year

* 2nd tuition payment is reduced to accommodate other fees due at this time.

Tuition payments are accepted by CHECKS ONLY. Checks should be made payable to either Children of Grace or COG and given to the director or assistant director. Please do not place tuition checks and invoices in your child's bag. Return one copy of the invoice with your tuition payment and keep the other copy for your records.

Tuition payments received after the 10th will incur a \$25 late fee which will be added to your next tuition payment. If tuition is not received by the 15th, your child will not be allowed to attend preschool until the account is brought current. Feel free to contact the administration if you ever have a question or problem with your account. Please note that a \$25.00 fee will be charged for all returned checks.

Tuition Assistance

Limited funds are available to provide tuition scholarships for *COG* families. March 1, 2012 is the deadline for scholarship requests for the 2012-2013 school year. Funds may be awarded after the completion of an application process. Disclosure of personal financial information is part of this process. For additional information about tuition assistance, please speak to the director.

Fall Registration

Registration is held in January for the next school year. Registration cannot be done over the phone. Children are accepted on a "first-come, first-served" basis within each of the priority categories listed below:

1. Teacher's Children
2. Students currently attending *COG*
3. Episcopalian siblings of current *COG* students
4. Non-Episcopalian siblings of current *COG* students
5. Episcopalians
6. General Public

There is a \$75.00 non-refundable registration fee per child.

Waiting List

If all available spaces are filled, the child will be placed on the waiting list. When an opening occurs, the child at the top of the list will be notified and a registration fee will be due at that time. A child is not considered enrolled until the registration fee is paid in full.

Withdrawal

If a parent wishes to withdraw their child from the program, the director must be notified in writing 60 days before the action is to take place. Enrollment will be cancelled 60 days from the date of written notice. It shall be the responsibility of the parents to pay tuition during the last 60 days. Students who withdraw during the school year will forfeit their future enrollment at the preschool.

Children's Records

It is a requirement of the State Department of Human Resources that a current record be on file for each child. This record shall include:

1. Application form complete with emergency information
2. Current certificate of immunization (if for religious or family beliefs, your child is not immunized, please send it in writing to be filed) This information can be faxed directly from your pediatrician's office to our office at 770-536-1587.
3. Emergency medical agreement signed by the parent giving permission to seek emergency medical treatment and waiver of liability for transporting children

The parents shall provide all required information before your child's first day of school.

For the safety of your child, all personal information records must be kept current. It is the responsibility of the parents to notify the administration in writing of any changes to pertinent information regarding the family during the school year. All parents are assured of complete confidentiality.

Grievance Procedure

If you have a complaint that cannot be resolved with your child's teacher you may contact the director. If you feel that the situation has not been resolved or feel uncomfortable speaking with the director, then you may contact the Rector of Grace Episcopal Church, Doug Dailey. We want you to know that we do care and will always listen. Your child's well being is extremely important to us as well as your confidence in the program.

III. Logistics

Arrival and Departure Procedures

For safety reasons, *COG* has implemented a "carpool" system that must be observed by all individuals dropping off or picking up children during carpool times.

Carpool in the morning starts at 8:50 a.m. and lasts until 9:05 a.m. and in the afternoon carpool will last from 12:50 p.m. until 1:05 p.m. Observing the procedures outlined below will insure your child is properly supervised while waiting to be picked up and that they get safely to your vehicle.

During carpool times, please enter the parking lot from Brenau Avenue. Please do not block traffic by attempting to turn left from Brenau Avenue into the parking lot. Instead form a line along Brenau Ave. so that everyone is turning right into the parking lot. Please do not block any business entrances/driveways along Brenau while waiting in line.

On rainy days carpool will take place under the portico that is facing Boulevard (to the right of the main entrance of the church). Please enter the parking lot as you normally would, as this is the only way to enter the carpool line. NOTE: Carpool will take place in this area only during rainy days if the space is available.

Children should unload from the passenger side only unless two or more children are unloading from your car. Have all bags ready to hand to the teacher. A window decal with your child's last name on it will be handed out at Open House on August 12 so we may identify you during carpool. If someone else is picking up your child, please notify the school, and give them your window decal if possible. A fee of \$2.00 will be charged for any window decal that needs to be replaced or if you want to purchase extras for different cars.

Identification is mandatory and we will not release your child to an unauthorized person.

For parents who do not participate in morning carpool, please wait until carpool has ended before entering the building.

Carpool has ended when the double doors are closed and no staff members remain outside the building. We ask that you always park in a designated parking space. Please do not park behind cars in parking spaces or around the center circle.

Children should arrive by 9:15 a.m. so as not to disrupt activities teachers have planned. Regardless of the time of your child's arrival, we request that you take your child to his/her classroom. Please do not drop your child off in the parking lot or hallway unsupervised. For parents who do not participate in afternoon carpool, we ask that you pick your child up by 12:30 p.m. and leave the building before 12:45 in order to eliminate confusion when students and teachers prepare for carpool. An adult must accompany children, when entering or leaving the building.

PLEASE NOTE: A \$5.00 late fee will be charged each time a child is picked up after carpool has ended. The late fee will apply to each child.

Security

COG's doors are locked after carpool and remain locked until school is closed. This ensures the safety of all children in the program. The door on the side of the building (facing Brenau Ave.) remains locked 24 hours a day and is equipped with an alarm. We ask that you only enter through the COG preschool doors. Please ring the doorbell located at the entrance to be let in. The doorbell can be heard in the front hallway and the office. You will be waved in after the lock has been released.

Child Abuse

State of Georgia requires that all childcare providers be on the lookout for and report to the State all cases of child abuse (emotional, verbal, and physical) and or neglect. Grace Episcopal Church and COG preschool is therefore obligated to report to the State any and all cases of abuse and or neglect. Once the report takes place, the church and the preschool will not take an active

part in its resolution. We consider violation of the Georgia State Child Restraint Law a case of neglect.

Lunches

Lunch Bunch: All lunches are \$3.00 each

If your child attends school on Monday, Wednesday or Friday you have the option to buy lunch for any of these days. Lunch bunch sign up is available on your tuition invoice. Please circle the dates your child will be participating in lunch bunch, cross out any days you do not want to participate and then re-calculate your total due. You must be signed up at the beginning of the month to participate in the lunch bunch. The lunch plan will start on Monday, August 15th.

If you are on the lunch plan, and you will be arriving late, please notify the office by 10:00 a.m. Orders are placed by 10:00 a.m. in order to receive the meals in time for lunch. If you do not notify the office, then a lunch will not be ordered for your child, and you will need to bring a lunch. There will be no refunds on any lunches unless the school is closed for inclement weather.

If your child is absent, and you want to pick up their lunch you will need to call by 10:00 a.m. to place an order that can be picked up in the office after 12:00 p.m. If you choose not to participate in the lunch plan, please pack a lunch with your child's name on it.

PLEASE DO NOT BRING MICROWAVABLE FOOD because it is against policy for the teachers to leave their rooms unattended (in order to heat or cook food). If your child has a lunch that requires refrigeration, we ask that you enclose a freezer pack in the lunch box. If you forget your child's lunch, it is your responsibility to bring a lunch by the time your child's class eats.

Snacks

Children will take turns supplying a snack and juice for their class on rotation. Your child will be given a monthly calendar or snack form that will list your time for snack well in advance. We ask that the snacks have some nutritional value. The teachers will provide a list of suitable snacks and drinks you may bring.

Clothing

The staff asks that you send your child to school in play clothes. Children do get dirty whether they are playing outside or inside doing art projects. Each child must have at least one change of clothing (shirt, pants, socks and underwear) left at school to be used in case of an emergency. These articles of clothing are to be placed in a large zip lock bag with your child's name on it. If the clothes are used, the bag will be sent home with the dirty clothes. A new bag with a set of clean clothing must be returned to the school the next day your child attends.

These policies are put in place to ensure that *COG* does not have to inconvenience the parents in the case a child may need to change clothes.

If your child is in diapers, please dress them in clothes which either have fasteners between the legs or are easy to slip on and off for diaper changes. Also if your child is in diapers or is in the early stages of potty training, please send extra disposable diapers. It is extremely important in the "potty training" stage that you send your child in easily accessible clothing as they are learning the independence of removing clothing. Cloth diapers or rubber training pants may not be used.

Personal Items

Children are discouraged from bringing food, chewing gum, candy, guns, swords, and other toys of destruction to the preschool. Toys are permitted only on days of "Sharing", please check with the teacher for the day and what toys would be appropriate.

Although we will try to keep track of personal items brought from home, the preschool cannot be responsible for them. Please mark all items brought to the preschool (i.e. lunch boxes, book bags, jackets, etc.) with your child's name.

Toilet Training

Toilet training should begin when the child shows some signs of readiness. Once the training has begun, both home and the preschool must work together to accomplish this task. All children must wear pull-ups while potty training. Soiled clothing will not be washed at the preschool, but will be put in a plastic bag to go home. This is recommended in order to avoid spreading of infections.

***NOTE: children need to be toilet trained to enter the classes older than middle three and up. If your child is not potty trained, he will not be eligible to move up, and will remain in a younger class if space is available.

Medication Forms

If your child is to be given medication while at school, a medication form must be completed. These forms are located in your child's room. One form is to be filled out for each medication the child is to receive. Your child's medication must have their name on the bottle and be in the original container. No medication can be administered without a completed medication form. Medication must be given in the presence of the teacher and an administrator.

Absolutely no medicine can be left in bags or diluted in juice (sippy cups) as this poses a major safety issue to all children in the program. It is very easy at a young age to accidentally drink from a friend's sippy cup. NO medicine should enter the preschool without the immediate notification of the director or assistant director.

Emergency Drills

Fire drills and tornado drills will be practiced periodically. In the event of a fire, tornado or other severe weather, children will be taken to the appropriate designated areas. There are written evacuation plans and teachers are trained to safely evacuate children to designated areas or from the building in the event of an emergency.

Inclement Weather

Under emergency conditions created by severe weather or other circumstances, it sometimes becomes necessary to close the pre-school. COG follows the Hall County School systems inclement weather closings. Initial winter snow closing announcements for county closings will be announced on WDUN 550 AM and other local weather stations. Make-up days will be addressed as needed.

Please tear out this page and return it
to the COG office by July 11, 2011.

Thank you, Ansley and Janet

- A. I have read and agree to abide by all rules and regulations in the 2011-2012 Children of Grace Preschool handbook.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

- B. Children of Grace Preschool and Grace Episcopal Church occasionally use photographs of preschool children and activities on the website, www.gracechurchgainesville.org/cog, and in the church newsletter, *The Evangelist*.

When/if identified, only the child's first name is used. If you **DO NOT** wish for your child's photograph to appear on the website or in the newsletter, please sign and date below.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Child's name: _____

(Please print)

Children of Grace Preschool 2011-2012 Handbook

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Phone: 770-536-9088

Fax: 770-536-1587

E-mail: cog@gracechurchgainesville.org

Website: www.gracechurchgainesville.org/cog

Director: Ansley Forrester

Assistant Director: Janet Shreeram