



2026-2027
HANDBOOK



Welcome to the Grace Episcopal Church preschool program!

We are so glad you are here!

Children of Grace Preschool, more commonly known as COG, offers our preschool program to children ages 6 months through 5 years.

Children are allowed to attend two, three, four or five days per week.
(Any request for exceptions must be made on an individual basis to administration)

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Mission Statement

As an outreach of Grace Episcopal Church, 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 high quality early childhood education and care for children 6 months through 5 years of age within a loving and nurturing environment. Our staff works diligently to prepare children for each school year by building on the foundations from previous years. We strive to meet each child's individual needs be they intellectual, emotional, physical, or spiritual.

COG Governance

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 is a program of Grace Episcopal Church and is governed by the church's leadership board, the vestry. The vestry oversees COG's budget in a check and balance system and ensures all the preschool's physical plant issues are addressed in a timely manner. The director of COG determines all policies and procedures in consultation with the rector and vestry. The vestry meets monthly.

Inclement Weather, Natural Disaster, Pandemic

Under emergency conditions created by severe weather or any other natural or social circumstances, it sometimes becomes necessary to close the preschool. COG follows the Hall County School System's closures. You can find closing announcements for county closings locally on WDUN 550 AM as well as local television and news outlets. We will do our best to communicate via email, Class Dojo, and social media in a timely manner.

Curriculum

Social and emotional development of each child is also a major focus. We emphasize self-awareness, cooperative behavior, and self-confidence at every age. Our program offers learning through free play, interactive storytelling, theme-based art projects that include both fine and gross motor skills, science experiments, music, outdoor play, manipulatives, and language skills. We know that in combination all of these activities work to nurture a love of learning.

COG has weekly themes for our Pre-Toddler, Toddler, and 2s classrooms. Below is a list of concepts covered by each age group during the academic year:

Pre-Toddler/Toddler

- Colors
- Shapes
- Seasons
- Body Parts
- Verbal name recognition
- Social Skills: taking turns, sharing

Two-Year Olds

- Continue colors, shapes, seasons, body parts
- 5 Senses
- Sight Name recognition
- Opposites
- Counting 1-10
- Social Skills: walking in a line, taking turns, sharing, expressing our emotions with our words

Three-Year Olds

We use Frog Street Curriculum. Our 3-year-olds are transitioning from parallel play to interactive play, and their language capacity is blossoming. They are becoming more mobile and learning to show genuine affection and concern for their peers. Frog Street Threes enhances literacy development and creates a “social bridge” as children this age begin to interact and share with others. It also lays the cornerstones for math concepts such as attributes, classification, and patterns, while integrating STEAM content throughout the week. We do require that all our 3-year-old students are to be potty trained before they move up to a 3-year-old classroom.

Pre-K

Also uses Frog Street Curriculum. Frog Street is a comprehensive program designed to meet the needs of diverse learners while supporting 10 learning domains. Pre-K students have lessons which integrate literacy, math, science, social studies, social-emotional connections, STEAM, technology, assessment, and family engagement.

Religious Instruction

The school provides chapel time twice monthly for the Pre-K classes to experience stories from the Bible and prayers. The Clergy of Grace Church assist in leading chapel. Many holidays are celebrated and the religious significance of specific holidays (i.e. Christmas and Easter) are included in the curriculum where appropriate. In addition, each class will be taught a mealtime blessing that will be used daily at snack and lunch.

Evaluations

If necessary, a developmental evaluation is performed to determine the appropriate placement for a child. Pre-K student evaluations will be sent home during the academic year so that you may be aware of strengths and weaknesses prior to Kindergarten.

Student Celebrations

Holiday Parties: Holidays will be celebrated throughout the year and are an integral part of your child's learning process. Each class has a room parent assigned who works directly with the classroom teacher to coordinate these parties. Parties are celebrated in 2's classes and up.

Birthday Parties: Birthdays are an exciting time for children! We welcome and encourage birthday celebrations at COG. Parties need to take place at snack time or after lunch. The classroom teacher must be consulted when scheduling a celebration. We ask this not only to maintain consistency in the classroom schedule, but to also honor those children who may have allergies.

Food: We ask that all food/treats be store bought in packaging with ingredients so we can keep children with allergies safe.

Snacks

Children will take turns supplying a snack and water for their class on rotation. Your child will be given a monthly calendar or snack form that will list your time for snacks well in advance. We ask that the snacks follow the suggested snack list given to you by your teacher.

Lunches

If you are on the lunch plan there will be no refunds on any lunches for absences nor can lunches, be moved (e.g. if your child is absent Monday, they cannot get lunch Wednesday/Friday in place of the missed lunch). If the school is closed for inclement weather, natural disaster, pandemic, etc. we will make lunch adjustments.

PLEASE DO NOT BRING MICROWAVABLE FOOD. It is against policy for the teachers to leave their rooms unattended for any reason, including 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 their lunch by the time your child's class eats. We also ask that you send your child with a LEAK-PROOF water bottle and shatter proof containers.

Clothing

We ask that you send your child to school in play clothes and play shoes. Tennis shoes are usually the best choice for school. Children do get dirty whether they are playing outside or inside doing art projects. Our active learners are sometimes messy as they learn, explore, and play. Do not be shocked if your child comes home with paint on their clothes! 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.

Diapers and Potty Training

We will do our best to partner with you when potty training your child. During potty training, please communicate with your teacher and let them know what works best for your child as they do potty training at home (ex: words, rewards, etc.) During potty training, pull ups with Velcro sides are preferred. If you prefer to have your child wear underwear, we absolutely support this but ask that a pull up be put on over the underwear unless the child can consistently tell the teacher when they need to use the bathroom. Soiled clothing cannot be washed at preschool but will be put in a sealed plastic bag to go home. We know accidents happen! We are prepared to support your child through them. However, our teachers must balance the care, support, and health of the whole classroom. We appreciate our parents having open communication with us during this exciting time for your child and working with us to make sure your child is as successful at COG as they are at home when using the potty.

We believe every child potty trains at their own pace. If a child is currently not potty trained but begins showing interest while at COG, teachers will let parents know and stay in communication if potty training begins at home.

Students enrolled in our 3-year-old class should be potty trained when the school year begins. Please continue to send your child in pull ups until they are confident, they can make it through the school day without frequent accidents.

Behavior Management

Effective discipline is helping, teaching, and learning. The purpose of discipline is not punishment. Our goal with behavior management at COG is to support our students in feeling good about who they are, making sound decisions, finding solutions to their problems, having self-control, getting along with others, being responsible citizens, and caring about others.

Within our classrooms, we allow a child the freedom to learn from his/her mistakes and experience the consequences of his/her decisions. With very young children we set developmentally appropriate 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 appropriate behavior, 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 tool to diffuse the situation at hand and give the child space to effectively reflect on the situation before finding a solution with the aid of his/her teacher. If a child is placed in time out, a parent may receive a note in Class Dojo, on the daily chat sheet, or receive an incident/accident report. This is because we believe that "time out" can be a tool of behavioral reset and is not indicative of bad behavior.

No form of physical punishment will be allowed at COG. Any type of verbal abuse will not be tolerated. No child will be denied their comfort item, food, rest, or bathroom privileges as a punishment.

If a child's unacceptable behavior continues, the director will notify the parents, and a conference may be held.

Please note, children at this age are often motivated by rewards. Our classroom teachers reward children, especially in our younger classrooms, when appropriate. Examples include potty training, following instructions, etc. Our goal is to foster intrinsic motivation, but rewards may be given. Please check with your child's teacher to discuss what they may use for their classroom management (i.e. stickers, stamps, Skittles, reward chart, etc.)

Biting

For our younger age groups (i.e. Pre-Toddlers to Older Twos), 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. When a child bites, they 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 an Incident/Accident report.

In the rare instance a bite breaks the skin, both sets of 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 solutions.

Illness/Injury

A parent will be notified immediately of any illness or injury requiring medical attention. If a parent cannot be reached, their emergency contact person will be notified and 911 will be called if an illness or injury requires immediate professional medical attention. If minor accidents occur and/or scratches, bumps, bruises are treated during COG, you will be given either a written incident report at pick up or verbal communication from the teacher regarding the incident.

Policies Regarding Illness

Control of inevitable illness in preschool takes a cooperative effort on the part of the parents and the preschool. In consideration of other students and teaching staff, please do not bring a child to COG who has shown signs of illness in the last 24 hours. Parents are requested to report any illness or symptoms of illness that your child may have as soon as possible to the administration.

Is My Child too Sick for School

- **Temperature elevation of 100.4 or higher.** A child must be 24 hours fever free without the use of fever reducing medications to return to school.
- **Eye Discharge**
- **Diarrhea:** 2 or more loose bowels in a 24-hour period. Keep your child home until they have not had diarrhea for at least 24 hours. This includes children who wear diapers.
- **Vomiting:** 1 or more episodes of vomiting in a 24-hour period. Keep your child home until they have not vomited for at least 24 hours.
- **Lung Congestion:** Serious lung congestion in children will necessitate their absence from preschool until conditions improve.
- **Persistent Coughing or Sneezing with excessive, discolored nasal discharge**
- **Rash (except diaper rash):** 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. If the rash is allergy related, we must have a note from their doctor on file. (suspected contagious disease, i.e. hand, foot, & mouth or measles, chicken pox, scarlet fever, molluscum, etc.)
- **Colds:** If a child comes to school with a cold, they should be able to follow the daily routine, including outside time. If the teacher determines they cannot care for the child without compromising their ability to care for the health and safety of the other children, the parent will be called.
- **Lice:** 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 live lice and nits are gone. COG staff may check hair upon return to school and will check classroom students if lice is noticed.

In the event of a possible exposure to a contagious disease or parasite in the classroom (pink eye, head lice, etc.) the Director or Assistant Director will notify parents.

COG shall reserve the right to request a doctor's written excuse if the Director deems it necessary. If a child has any of the above because of allergies, a doctor's note must be in their file.

Medication/Medication Forms

If your child has received any vaccines or been given any medications prior to attending class, please include a note to your child's teacher.

If your child is to be given medication while at school, a medication form on page must be completed. 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 complete medication form. Medication must be given in the presence of the teacher and the Director or Assistant Director.

Absolutely no medicine can be left in bags or diluted in 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 cup. No medicine should enter the preschool without the immediate notification of the Director or Assistant Director.

Children's Records

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.

Attendance

For maximum benefit from the program, regular attendance is highly recommended. Our classes begin at 9:05. Being on time helps structure in the school day schedule and helps minimize any emotional stress your child may have. COG does not swap days or add extra days to offset absences for any reason. Should a child need to attend on a day they are not currently registered for, a drop-in day may be scheduled by calling the office and a drop-in fee will be added to your bill. If there is any indication of illness, please keep your child at home and notify the office.

Parent Communication

Our classes stay connected with parents in a variety of ways.

COG teachers use BrightWheel to communicate electronically with parents. After Open House, parents will be added to their child's virtual classroom.

Teachers will communicate through BrightWheel for all communication. This includes classroom updates, pictures, videos, and any other information that parents need to know regarding behavior or incidents.

Periodically a form known as an Incident/Accident Report form may be sent home to let parents know if your child has had any type of accident or discipline issue in the classroom. These forms detail the accident or discipline issue along with steps followed to support the child.

PLEASE check your BrightWheel app daily along with your child's folder.

Calendar

Please visit our website at www.gracechurchgainesville.org/children-of-grace/calendar/ for online and printable versions of our preschool calendar.

Tuition & Registration Fees

For 2026-2027 there is a \$75 non-refundable registration fee to enroll your child.

Monthly Tuition:

- \$245 2 days
- \$275 3 days
- \$305 4 days
- \$335 5 days

There will be no tuition allowances made for illness, travel, or voluntary absence. No tuition allowances will be made for school closing due to the Hall County Schools, whether they be pre-established holidays, inclement weather, natural disaster, pandemic, etc. if staff is proactively offering, developing and implementing remote learning during times of extended closure.

You may send in your monthly tuition by check or cash in your child's communication folder. You may also pay online through the BrightWheel App. Should you choose to pay by check, make it payable to either Children of Grace or COG. Check or cash payments can be given directly to the Director or Assistant Director or placed in your child's folder along with a copy of your invoice. Please do not put any payment down in your child's book bag or in the pocket of a book bag. Teachers only check their students' folders.

Tuition payments received after the late due date will incur a \$25 late fee which will be added to your next tuition payment. If tuition is delinquent by 30 days from invoice date, 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 the bank fee will be charged for all returned checks.

Withdrawal

Please notify the COG Director as soon as possible if you will be withdrawing your child from the program. Children of Grace require written notice 60 days before the withdrawal is to take place. It shall be the responsibility of the parents to pay tuition during the last 60 days.

The director reserves the right to withdraw any child from COG under the following conditions:

- Failure to pay tuition
- If a child's behavior (physical, verbal, or emotional) continuously disrupts or causes undue stress on either the teacher (s) or the other students in the class.
- It becomes apparent that the child has needs that extend beyond what we can provide for, while still maintaining a positive and effective learning environment for all children in the classroom.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

COG provides the opportunity to meet in conference with the Director, Assistant Director, and your child's teacher. Conferences are scheduled at the request of teachers and/or parents.

Arrival and Departure Procedures

- Morning carpool starts at 8:50 a.m. and lasts until 9:05 a.m.
- Afternoon carpool starts at 12:50 p.m. and lasts until 1:05 p.m.

We strive to make carpool as efficient as possible, and we appreciate your help in doing so. We ask that all parents stay in their car during morning and afternoon carpool to keep things running smoothly.

COG Staff will unload and load your child for you. If you do not want a COG staff member to do so you will need to park and walk your child in.

Staff will not unload or load a child who is not in a proper car seat. Georgia State Law states children under 8 years old must ride in an approved safety seat or booster that is suited for their height and weight. Children 8 years old and under must ride in the back seat.

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. If you walk your child in for the day, please do not plan to have a lengthy, unscheduled visit with a teacher. Once our school day begins, we want to focus on the students.

Children should arrive via carpool so as not to disrupt classroom consistency. If your child arrives after carpool, we request that you take your child to their classroom.

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 p.m. to eliminate confusion when students and teachers prepare for carpool. An adult must accompany children when entering or leaving the building.

If someone else is picking up your child, please notify the school. Give them your window decal if possible. Identification is mandatory and we will not release your child to an unauthorized person.

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.