

Hello Parents!

Welcome to Amazing Grace Christian Preschool. The staff and I are excited about the upcoming year. We pray that your child's preschool experience is a positive one filled with love, encouragement, friendships and enrichment. May this year, also, be a time for you and your family to grow spiritually closer to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

You, the parent/caregiver, are the most important teacher in your child's life. Make the most of these early learning years and always love your child unconditionally, just like Jesus does all the time.

With "His" Help,
Amy Onkka, Director

A Special Message from our Pastor At Grace Lutheran Church.....

Philosophy

We strive to help your child expand his/her self-confidence, feeling of self-worth and love for Christ and others. Our major goals are to provide a learning environment where a child can learn and grow at his/her own developmental pace. If your child has the need, we strongly encourage early intervention with speech, behavior, developmental delays and related. We can work with you in connecting you with the appropriate services needed.

Some of our goals are:

Get along with others, as well as, be independent.
Develop self-control, self-discipline and self-esteem.
Develop small and large motor skills.
Improve language skill including listening and speaking.
Experience everything God has made by touching, seeing and hearing.
Prepare them with life skills for kindergarten and beyond.

These goals, with a balance of structure and free play, are achieved through learning centers which help the child grow socially, spiritually, emotionally, intellectually and physically.

Amazing Grace Christian Preschool Handbook

Registration

Enrollment is open to any 2, 3, 4, or 5-year old child regardless of race, sex, national origin or creed. Age placement is based on September 1; the same date that the public schools use. Acceptance is determined by the number of openings available in each class. When a class reaches maximum enrollment, a waiting list will be established. Individuals on the waiting list will be contacted on a first registered basis.

We are currently participating in the state of **Florida's FREE Voluntary Preschool Program (VPK) for 4 year olds**. A child must be registered with the state in order to participate in this program. The parent(s) can pick the preschool the child attends provided space is available. Acceptance is on a first come first serve basis with a waiting list available after the class is full.

Registration begins in mid/late March before the upcoming school year. Currently enrolled students have first enrollment priority. The non-refundable pre-registration fee is **\$75.00 per child** and is due at the time of registration. If a child enrolls during the second half of the preschool year the registration fee is **\$37.50**. This fee helps provide professional training for teachers during the summer months, as well as, reserving the child's place in his/her preschool class. There is also a supply fee for each child based on the number of days the child attends. **2 day \$45 3 day \$65 4 day \$110.00**

Admissions

All students must have on file in the Director's office the **FIRST DAY** of School:

Enrollment Forms, which are in the enrollment packet. This includes emergency medical information. If your address, phone number or emergency / car pool contacts change, notify the Director and teacher so that the records on file are current at all times.

Student Health Examination Form (Department of Children and Families) from your child's doctor. **This is good for two years.**

Florida Certificate of Immunization/Shot Form (Department of Children and Families) This form is good until the expiration date which is listed on the form.

All paperwork must be submitted on or before the first day of preschool.

Tuition

Monthly tuition is due **between the 1st and 5th of each month**. Remember that some holidays may fall on tuition dates. This will not change the due date of the tuition. After the 5th of the month a **late fee of \$10.00** will be charged to your account. An account is considered delinquent when it is thirty days past due. Your account must be kept current, including late charges or we will have to terminate your child's enrollment. **A surcharge of \$35.00 will be made for returned/insufficient funds checks.**

Tuition payments for the year are divided into equal payment. August is the only month prorated.

Please make **payments to Amazing Grace Christian Preschool**. If you are writing a check, please note on the **“For” line the child's name**. Parents can pay by cash or check at the Director's office or drop payment into the Tuition mailbox located outside the Director's office. We accept credit cards. Please see the Director for directions on making a payment with a credit card. There is a **\$4.00 service charge** that you need to add to your payment. A receipt will be given to you at the time of payment or placed in your child's cubbie.

Monthly tuition is:

2, 3 or 4 options are available. Inquire with preschool for monthly rates.

Early drop-off is available (8am-9am) for an **additional \$50.00** a month. This must be set up ahead of time. We do not accept drop-ins. If you wish for you VPK student to attend the additional 5th day each week if available, the cost is \$75 a month. This cost is paid by the parent. A 10% discount may be taken for each additional sibling.

Hours of Operation

Amazing Grace Christian Preschool follows the Escambia County Public school calendar. We observe the same holidays and vacations. There may be a slight variation in some dates.

The teachers will be ready to greet the first child at **9:00 a.m.** Please be **on time** as this helps your child more readily welcome their preschool experience. **The pick-up time is 1:00 p.m.** The teachers have personal schedules and school age children to pick up so please be timely in the pick-up of your child. **Prior to 9:00 a.m., please wait outside the classroom.** Please come to the classroom door with your child and make sure the teacher acknowledges your arrival. If you are car pooling please make sure that the person's name and phone number is on your child's information sheet. The teachers also need to be made aware of the delivery and pick-up procedures for your child. If changes occur during the year, notify the Director and teacher of these changes.

When in doubt, the teacher or Director may ask to see a photo identification of any person picking up a child. This is for the protection of the child. **A Late Charge of \$1.00 per minute is charged after 1:05 p.m. This late charge applies to VPK children, too.**

Discipline

Discipline should be a positive learning experience. The staff teach the children positive approaches to their behavior and reassure them of Jesus' love for them. If a problem does arise we encourage children to verbalize their feelings. Methods of discipline used are redirection, distraction, conflict resolution, positive reinforcement, modeling, and as a last resort, time out.

We also use the Peacemaking Skills for Little Children each day. Peace education is based on a philosophy that teaches love, compassion, trust, fairness, cooperation and reverence for the family and life in God's world. The peacemaking rules that we use are:

I-Care Rules

1. We listen to each other.
2. Hands are for helping, not hurting.
3. We use I-Care language (please, thank you, etc.)
4. We care about each other's feelings.
5. We are responsible for what we say and do.

Physical punishment is NOT used. No discipline will be used related to toileting or eating. Time out is age appropriate, 1 minute of time out per age of child. The Director is informed of persistent problems such as biting, physical abuse to other children, or disruptive behavior. Parents are advised of persistent behavior problems. The preschool reserves the right to dismiss any child in cases where conflicts are not improved or resolved. We pray for your children daily and ask for Jesus' love and guidance.

Injury/Illness

Sick children do not belong in preschool. **Children with fevers, diarrhea, bad colds (green mucus), and communicable diseases cannot attend preschool.** If a child has experienced any of these **symptoms within the last 24 hours**, he/she should remain at home.

In the event that your child becomes sick while at preschool you will be notified immediately. If you, the parent, cannot be reached the person on the emergency card (Florida Department of Children and Families form) will be contacted. **It is important to sign your child in and out of preschool each day always leaving a phone**

number where you can be reached that day. A sick child will be isolated, in the Director's office, from the other children and made as comfortable as possible while waiting to go home.

Notify the Director if your home has a confirmed communicable disease present. Parents will be notified when exposure to diagnosed cases of communicable diseases has occurred.

If your child will be out of preschool for an extended period of time please let us know, **in advance**, if possible. In the event that **a child withdraws from the preschool** the Director should be given a 2 week notice.

Teachers cannot dispense medicine to the children. This should be taken care of before or after preschool. Some medications effect a child's behavior and cause drowsiness, thirstiness, etc. If you absolutely need medication to be given to your child, please see the Director to fill out necessary paperwork. No medication can be in the child's classroom or backpack.

If an accident occurs that needs immediate attention, every effort will be made to contact the child's parents. An accident form will be filled out to document the injury and the parent must sign it. The preschool will not assume any financial, medical, or legal responsibility for decisions due to the inability to locate a parent or secondary authority for a decision(s).

Snacks/Birthdays/Lunches

Parents are asked to participate in **Share a Snack**. Teachers will provide on an as needed basis a list of appropriate nutritional snacks and quantity needed. Some snacks are for a particular unit of study so make note of that to aid the teachers in their unit work.

Birthdays are special and so is your child! Parents may bring a snack to share with their classmates on their child's birthday. Please refrain from cupcakes with lots of icing. Appropriate treats might be a giant cookie, rice krispie treats, popsicles, etc. Ask your child's teacher about birthday treats. Invitations to private parties will be given out at preschool only if all the children in the class are invited. Your child will be given special attention on his/her birthday and be reminded that he/she is unique and a special gift from God!

Lunches should be healthy and enjoyable. Each child should be provided with 3-4 food items and a drink. A preschool lunch is not the right time to try out new food with your preschooler. It is a good idea to pack food with an ice pack in your child's lunch.

Please mark your child's lunch box and drink container with your child's name. Please limit sweets.

If a parent forgets a child's lunch, please refrain from bringing fast food such as McDonald's, Subway, Burger King, etc.

Other Expenses

Some examples of additional expenses that may occur during the preschool year are: food/money (\$2-\$5) for special seasonal parties, Pizza Day lunches, occasional Chick Fil A meals, school/graduation photographs and book orders.

Sharing Toys

Do NOT send guns, knives, swords or toys that can be potentially perceived as dangerous and encourage aggressive behavior. It is recommended that personal toys and security items are left at home.

Clothing

Each child should bring a change of clothing to preschool which will remain in the child's class. This includes a full set of clothing, underwear and socks. These clothes will remain in the child's classroom to be used on an as needed basis. The clothing will be changed seasonally. **Please label your child's clothing (extra shoes) and place it in a plastic ziploc bag with the child's name on the bag.**

Dress your child appropriately for the season. Clothing should be appropriate for messy play indoors and outdoors. Please send a jacket for cooler days. Children should wear soft-sole shoes or tennis shoes. (No cowboy boots, Sunday shoes, flip flops, jellies, etc.) This is for your child's safety, especially, when playing and climbing on playground equipment. Also, be cautious of jackets with strings as they may be a hazard on playground equipment.

Newsletter

A monthly newsletter will be published and given to the parents to remind you of special days, events and plans. The Director publishes a monthly one and the teachers provide a calendar, as well. You can also check online at gracepensacola.org (look under the preschool tab).

Chapel

All of the children will begin their week in the Sanctuary (at Chapel) on Monday's or Tuesday's. This time is lead by the Director or the Pastor. This is a special time when we share God's word through Bible stories, songs and prayers. It is also a great time to introduce and develop listening skills in relation to worship.

Stretch and Grow

Stretch and Grow is a unique “exercising” program that promotes wellness and fitness for preschool children.

Activities involve movement (what preschool children do best), music, and exercise while emphasizing good health, nutrition and exercise. Each class participates in this program at least twice a month at no additional charge to you.

Parental Involvement

We love our parents! Parents help our program grow and become more effective. Please come, observe, participate and be an active part of your child’s education. **We use the Remind App to communicate to our families. We also have a facebook page. Amazing Grace Christian Preschool at GLC.**

Emergency Situations

Listen to the local radio or television concerning closing of schools. We follow the Escambia County public school plans for opening or closing during an emergency situation. If public schools are closed for emergencies then the preschool is closed. If we should evacuate the preschool, we will be at the nearest possible shelter at St. Paul’s Lutheran at 4600 North 9th Avenue (south of Amazing Grace past Bayou Blvd.) You will be notified of emergency situations.

Fire Drills

We are required by the Department of Children and Families to have a monthly fire drill. You may want to reassure your child ahead of time that this is just a practice drill and not to be afraid.

Curriculum

Amazing Grace Christian Preschool program includes a focus on Christian development in the form of daily prayer, songs, weekly Bible stories, along with learning centers and circle time activities. The learning centers include home living, reading, art, nature, blocks/puzzles, listening/writing centers and music. Emphasis is placed on the Christian aspect of seasonal holidays. We believe that when Christian education is based on joy and wonder, children are led to the discovery of a loving God. We strive to prepare your preschooler for elementary school by developing him/her socially, physically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually in a Christ-like environment. Luke 2:52 describes the way children develop like Jesus. Emphasis is placed on the Christian aspect of seasonal holidays. Some secular holidays such as Valentine’s Day, Thanksgiving, etc. are acknowledged.

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The following is our approach to some holidays:

Halloween This is a fun and exciting time of the year. However, it can also be a frightening time to children who are just beginning to distinguish reality from fantasy. We are **careful not to focus on witches, ghosts, devils or any evil.** Our focus is on pumpkins, God's beautiful world in the fall, safety, and the beauty of the season.

Thanksgiving This is a time to give thanks and praise to God for all of our blessings. Concentration is on families, sharing and the first Thanksgiving.

Advent This is four weeks in the church year before Christmas which focus on waiting for the Christ child to be born. We do not emphasize Santa Claus, elves, etc. It is a joyous time of the year that we, as Christians, anticipate.

On the days preceding Christmas break we have a Happy Birthday Jesus' party that may include a book exchange. We also encourage children to think of others at Christmas and discuss giving not just receiving gifts. Some activities may include giving food to a food bank, collecting school supplies for needy school-age children, etc.

Valentine's Day We focus on friendship, love and kindness. The children exchange valentines on party day.

Lent/Easter These are special observances in our Christian preschool. The focus is on the death and especially the resurrection of Jesus. These concepts are difficult, but not impossible for preschoolers to comprehend. We place emphasis on Jesus rather than the Easter Bunny. We have a special Bunny Lunch but emphasis is placed on new life, butterflies, and God's wonderful creatures.

Staff

The teachers and aides of the preschool love and nurture your children in a Christian environment. They pray for your children. Please remember them in your prayers. The teachers are certified in education and/or have experience teaching or working with young children, as well as, having children of their own. They are also required to have level 2 background checks, CPR and First Aide, as well as, a required number of hours in training and in-service each year. Staff are selected by the Director with advisement from staff at Grace. Should you have any ministry needs; do not hesitate to let one of us know. The Director can answer any questions you may have about our preschool. The Director can address any questions you have about working with preschoolers. We can always use substitutes.