

Small Blessings Christian Preschool

An outreach of the First United Methodist Church of Carson City



212 N. Division Street, Carson City, NV 89703

213 N. Minnesota Street, Carson City, NV 89703

775-884-1600 preschool 775-882-1436 church

sara@smallblessingsumc.org

britney@smallblessingsumc.org

smallblessingsumc.org

Parent Handbook

Thank you for choosing Small Blessings Christian Preschool as a partner in your child's early education. Like you, we are interested in your child's development in all areas. Our commitment is to provide you and your child with an optimum preschool learning environment.

This handbook is designed to acquaint you with our policies and procedures. In addition to our own policies, we are licensed by the state of Nevada and abide by the state rules and regulations.

Please read and refer to this handbook as needed and be sure to ask a staff member to answer any questions you may have. This handbook is only an informational guide and is not meant to supersede the Child Safety Policy of the First United Methodist Church of Carson City.

Our teachers and aides are highly qualified through Nevada Registry and have had early childhood education classes and experience working with young children. All staff members are fingerprinted and have submitted to and passed a background check. Also, all staff members are up to date with training in first aid, CPR and are trained and prepared to respond to emergency situations. The director is responsible for the fiscal management, daily operations and fulfillment of licensing requirements of the school as well as supervising the overall educational program. Please see the director if you have any questions or concerns.

Small Blessings has an open-door policy. We invite you to drop in and see us anytime.

Again, thank you for choosing Small Blessings Preschool as a partner in your child's development.

Mission Statement

Small Blessings Christian Preschool ignites the love of learning in every child.

Our developmentally appropriate environment encourages children to explore and experiment, create and construct, form friendships and imagine a world of their own.

Our joyful and respectful interactions embolden positive relationships between children, teachers, families and the community, while sharing God's light and love.

Philosophy Statement

Small Blessings features a child-centered curriculum with teacher support that includes whole group time, Bible time, learning centers, snack, art and music, outdoor play, walking field trips, and special classroom visitors.

The preschool is committed to providing an atmosphere where consistent positive values are taught and practiced through interactions of respect, love, warmth, emotional support, and individual needs. The curriculum will provide children with a foundation of Christian teachings and a relationship with God through the use of Bible stories, prayer, music and all areas of content outlined in the Nevada Pre-K Standards. Our lessons will be designed to reinforce values, concepts, and ideas that the child may already be learning at home.

We also believe that communication between school staff and parents is vital to the learning process of young children. All communication between school staff and families will be confidential and respected.

Learning Objectives

The preschool recognizes that some children have special needs, and we will attempt to meet the needs of all children. In order to meet the school's philosophy, meet the spiritual education of children, and address the developmental and emotional needs of our students we will strive to meet the following objectives:

1. We will provide a loving environment where children can develop inner sources of confidence, independence, and creativity through loving relationships with peers and staff.
2. We will provide a developmentally appropriate program that offers a balance of child-led and teacher-led opportunities in verbal and listening skills, fine and gross motor activities, social skills, creativity, music, and other skills outlined in the Nevada Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards.
3. We will provide for parental involvement utilizing an open-door policy for enrolled families only; any person responsible for an enrolled child may come to the preschool to observe or speak to the director and if she's not available, any of the staff.
4. We will keep channels of communication open through use of weekly newsletters, parent engagement, Brightwheel app, yearly calendars, parent-teacher conferences and encouragement of parent volunteer hours in the classroom.
5. We will provide a program that is sufficiently staffed with mature individuals who are familiar with positive guidance techniques, developmentally appropriate practices, and healthy interactions with children.

6. We will provide a program that offers both indoor and outdoor physical environments that promote growth and development through opportunities of exploration and learning.
7. We will provide a program designed to prevent accidents, illness and be prepared to deal with emergencies should they arise. Children will be educated through positive behavior support concerning health, hygiene and safety policies.
8. We will provide nutritional information and promote good eating habits.

Assessments & Referrals

Throughout the year, we will be gathering information to help assess your child's growth and development. Some of these assessments will be informal (notes, portfolio artifacts and observations) and others will be more formal developmental screening tools that we will send home and have you work through with your child (Ages & Stages Questionnaires).

State law requires all childcare programs to screen children for developmental delays twice a year. The information we gather using the screening tools help us develop our curriculum to meet your child's individual social-emotional and academic needs. These screens can include the Brigance Early Childhood Screen III, the Ages and Stages Questionnaire 3 (ASQ-3) or the Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social-Emotional (ASQ:SE). All information is strictly confidential.

If you ever have a concern about any domain of your child's development (motor/physical, cognitive, social/emotional, communication/language, and self-help) please discuss your concerns with us. We can help locate resources and programs that may be of some assistance to you and your family. If your child is already receiving services, please let us know so we can help support their growth.

Whole Group

Coming together as a whole group helps develop a sense of community in our classroom. During this daily activity, children will be introduced to positive values such as love, forgiveness, caring, sharing, problem solving, and respecting others through Bible stories, songs, role-playing and flannel board activities. This time is also used to read, discuss and learn content information pertinent to whatever thematic unit we are studying at this time. This part of our day offers a chance for children to express questions, curiosities, and fears about life and the world around them.

Free Choice Learning Centers

Age-appropriate activities will be planned by teachers which relate to the current thematic unit and learning goals. Learning centers and several activities in each center will be open daily to allow children to explore and grow with guidance and instruction from adults as needed. These centers will be rotated daily or weekly to increase exposure to a variety of experiences. Teachers will be present and available to help guide learning opportunities and build relationships. Student choice provides a relaxed environment for social situations dealing

with emotions, conflicts, sharing, caring, etc. Children are encouraged to participate in parallel and interactive play as well as engaging in conversation about their choices.

Active Learning Center: This center focuses on appreciation for the printed word, language development, and foundation for reading readiness, being able to attend and listen, expand experiences through unfamiliar people, places, or things. Math and Science concepts such as classifying, sorting, patterning, associations of same and different, cause and effect, transfer and generalizing learning experiences will also be shared at this center. Teachers will base learning experiences on developmental needs of the children in the class and differentiate experiences to best accommodate each child.

Build Center: This independent learning center focuses on physical development of fine and gross motor movements, mathematic and scientific concepts such as size, shape, and measurement, patterns and making observations. Children play with blocks, puzzles, lacing beads, pony beads and other manipulatives in this center.

Create Center: This center focuses on children's individual expression utilizing a wide variety of art materials. Art activities encourage fine motor development; give children time to experiment with colors, shapes, lines; and allow children time to develop their own sense of creative expression. This center will offer a teacher-led activity, independent art opportunities, easels and a play dough activity.

Dramatic Play Center: This center will offer the experience of real-life social situations on a child sized scale. It allows children to explore fantasy, role-playing (doctor, parents, bus driver, etc.), language skills, self-concept and self-confidence, interaction with others, multicultural awareness, and acceptance of differences. Props in this center will be rotated and we will aim to complement the thematic unit of the week or month.

Explore Center: This sensory center uses sand, water and other pourable materials to help children discover the world around us. These activities help children understand concepts of weight, texture, size, math, measurement, temperature, classification of information, language skills, sequencing, and problem-solving skills. Children will investigate various funnels, sponges, containers, toys, properties of water such as displacement, buoyancy, momentum, absorbency, weight, and volume, relaxing, cooperative play, mathematic concepts such as empty, full, and half-full.

Physical Activity

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommend that children and teens should be "physically active for at least 60 minutes per day," although they stress that it does not have to be 60 minutes of continuous activity. Our program recognizes the physical, social and developmental benefits of regular physical activity and fundamental movement skills (gross motor development) for young children. During our daily 30 minutes of outdoor play time and indoor play, we are committed to including physical activity, skill development, music and movement as an integral part of our daily routine. If for some reason we are unable to go outside for outdoor play, we will be sure to include gross motor activities during our indoor play time.

Administration

The preschool staff is responsible to the Preschool Board of Directors which is selected by the governing body of the First United Methodist Church, Carson City. The Preschool Board meets monthly, and all parents or guardians are welcome to attend. The meeting times and dates will be posted at the preschool one week prior to the meeting date. The preschool is financially supported by tuitions, donations and contributions from the FUMC. The preschool building and property are designated NO SMOKING AREAS. There is no smoking permitted on any of our properties.

Qualifications for Enrollment

- A. Children accepted for our program must be at least 3 years old by August 1st in the year of enrollment.
- B. Families can choose 2 or 3 class sessions from a morning class schedule or an afternoon class schedule. Each class session is 3 hours long, 8:30 am to 11:30 am, or 12:30 pm to 3:30 pm.
- C. All students MUST be toilet trained.
- D. Small Blessings Christian Preschool will not discriminate in providing services to children and their families based on gender, race, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, national origin, disability, marital status, or sexual orientation.
- E. We are a full inclusion preschool, which means that we accept children with special needs. This is an opportunity for children with special needs to mainstream into a program with typical children. There are many benefits for the typical child, including the opportunity to learn about differences, which helps to instill standards and values that promote compassion, patience and acceptance.
- F. We encourage parents to keep us informed of any special services a child may be receiving (speech, occupational therapy, physical therapy). We would be happy to attend any IFSP/IEP meetings scheduled for our students and kindly request a copy of the IFSP/IEP for the child's file, so we can be aware of accommodations and specific areas we can help support the child.

Enrollment & Withdrawal Policy

- A. Enrollment will be granted to children and families on a first come, first-served basis. Priority will be granted to children of parents of the Armed Forces (currently on active duty, died/killed in action, prisoner of war or missing in action).
- B. Current and prospective families have the right to observe the program prior to enrollment.
- C. If the program is full, your child may be placed on a waiting list. Priority for available spots is given to families already enrolled and to children of parents of the Armed Forces (currently on active duty, died/killed in action, prisoner of war or missing in action).
- D. Once the non-refundable deposit has been accepted the enrollment is firm.
- E. Parents wishing to withdraw their child from our program must give us two weeks of notice. Payment is due for the notice period, whether the child is attending school or not.
- F. In the event of withdrawal from preschool, tuition that has been pre-paid may be refunded if the child has not attended any sessions for that month.
- G. In a case of withdrawal from the preschool, and subsequent desire to re-enroll, the child's name will be placed on the waiting list.

Registration, Screenings and Health Records

- A. Prior to attendance, parents must complete the online registration link and the paper child record packet.
- B. The Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health requires childcare centers to keep complete record of each child's immunization as well as proof of physical exam by a doctor (health statement) before attendance begins. All children are required to have all immunizations required for their age as determined by the Carson City Health Department.
- C. According to Nevada State Law, all medication, including over the counter and prescriptions, given to the child at the preschool MUST be authorized by a written statement from the physician. All medication must be in the original container, indicating the child's name and date of the prescribed medication, as well as the amount and time of dosage. When medication is brought to the center, it is to be given to a lead teacher or director so that it can be properly stored. A medication sheet must be completed by the parent at this time.
- D. If your child has any specific medical concerns, please notify the director upon enrollment, so we can prepare an individual health plan or action plan addressing medical concerns (asthma, allergies, etc).

Illness

- A. We request that your child remain at home if he or she has experienced any of the following within the last 48 hours, unmedicated. Symptoms of contagious illness may include:
 - 1. Fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher
 - 2. Dry cough
 - 3. Shortness of Breath
 - 4. Chills
 - 5. Loss of taste or smell
 - 6. Sore Throat
 - 7. Muscle aches
 - 8. Diarrhea
 - 9. Vomiting
 - 10. Difficulty in or rapid breathing
 - 11. Sore, red throat
 - 12. Yellowish skin or eyes
 - 13. Pink eye
 - 14. Undiagnosed rash
 - 15. Chicken pox or herpes simplex and is still contagious
 - 16. Has been diagnosed as having any contagious conditions

If your child contracts a contagious disease, please let us know as soon as possible so we can inform health officials and parents of the other children in a confidential manner.

- B. If, in the opinion of the director, your child displays any symptoms of contagious illness you may be called to pick up your child.

- C. **Please notify the preschool director by Brightwheel.** If a child becomes ill while at school, parents will be notified and asked to pick up their child. He or she will be supervised in the preschool office to avoid contact with other children until the parents arrive.
- D. Since outside time is an important part of our daily schedule, please do not send your child unless he or she is well enough to go outside.

Going Outside in Cold Weather

The following are guidelines for outdoor physical play that will enhance the good health for all our children. These are recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics:

- 1. Children can play outdoors as long as time allows (typically 20-30min) during weather that is 40-80 degrees F.
- 2. Children can stay outside for 10-20 min in temperatures that are 40 degrees or less, dressed in warm, dry clothes.

Please dress your child appropriately for school each day. Please apply sunscreen before they come to preschool.

Tuition & Fees

- A. Tuition will be paid one month in advance and is due no later than the 20th of each month unless other arrangements have been made with the director. The first payment for the preschool year (September tuition) is due August 20th; the final payment for the preschool year (May tuition) is due April 20th.
- B. Tuition Express is our tuition processing payment service. This service makes paying tuition easier for all parties involved and allows you to access your accounts and make payments using a credit/debit card or set up ACH withdrawals from your checking or savings account.
- C. A non-refundable registration fee of \$100.00 will be paid annually when the child is enrolled in the preschool. This non-refundable deposit will not be collected until we can ensure placement in desired class and likewise, a spot in the class will not be held without payment of the registration fee.
- D. Monthly tuition costs for the preschool program for 2023-24 are:
 - 2 sessions per week \$165 per month
 - 3 sessions per week \$245 per month
 These are not calculated by an hourly or weekly charge, but a cost per child for a 9- month program. Any donations over these amounts are greatly appreciated.
- E. Adjustments:
 - 1. There is no financial provision for making up missed days.
 - 2. In case of prolonged absence for any reason (more than two weeks), the first two weeks are charged full tuition. Arrangements must be made with the director of the preschool in writing before the third week of absence in order to avoid additional tuition charges.
- F. We reserve the right to increase tuition yearly. Tuition increases are only considered when necessary to keep class sizes down, offer our teachers fair wages and cover the operating expenses for the preschool.
- G. Students must be picked up on time. We will allow a five-minute grace period, which translates to 11:35 for morning classes and 3:35 for afternoon classes. If students are not picked up by these times, there may be a late charge assessed: \$10 for the first five minutes and \$1 per minute thereafter.

- H. Failure to pay tuition may result in the exclusion of the child from the program. Accounts must be paid in full if a family wishes to enroll their child for the next school year.

Transportation

- A. Transportation to and from the preschool is the responsibility of each family.
- B. The names of persons authorized to take a child from the preschool must be on file at the preschool without exception (including parents and guardians). A photo identification must be provided when an authorized person unfamiliar to the staff picks up a child.
- C. Arrival Time:
 - 1. Every morning the preschool doors will open at 8:30 AM
 - 2. Every afternoon the preschool doors will open at 12:30 PM
- D. Departure Time:
 - 3. Morning classes will be dismissed at 11:30 AM
 - 4. Afternoon classes will be dismissed at 3:30 PM
- E. Only authorized persons listed on the child record or listed in Brightwheel app may pick up the child. Authorized persons should wait in the front yard of the preschool until the door or playground gate is opened. At that time, staff will dismiss the children to their parents or approved pickup person. People who are not regularly picking up, should come prepared to show identification. Children are NEVER allowed to leave the building unattended.

Parking

Please do not park your vehicle on Division Street to pick up or drop off your child. It is not a safe option. Please park in our small parking lot or on the side streets Proctor, Musser and Minnesota. Thank you!

Food Policies

- A. If for any reason your child should not have a specific food, especially allergies, please inform the preschool director and staff in writing as soon as possible. We will accommodate accordingly.
- B. Children are expected to receive a breakfast and lunch at home each day before preschool.
- C. Parents must bring a healthy snack and water bottle to preschool for their child each day. Please label all water bottles with child's name.
- D. When parents bring in snack, we request that you bring in items from two different food groups (protein, dairy, grains, fruits or vegetables).
- E. If you include food items that require refrigeration, please pack an ice pack to keep food chilled until snack time.
- F. Observance of birthdays and special holidays is encouraged. Please make plans with preschool staff in advance.

Parent Participation & Field Trips

Contact between parent and teacher is especially important. When you wish to discuss anything regarding your child, please speak with the lead teacher or director. Also feel free to use the messaging feature on the Brightwheel app to ask questions, offer suggestions or communicate concerns. Conferences are scheduled routinely in the fall for new children and spring for children heading to kindergarten. If you would like an additional conference, please call or email the preschool and a conference will be arranged. We may also request a conference if we feel we could benefit from valuable information and advice from the family of a child.

If there are changes in your child's home life or situations that arise with your child that you think the school should be aware of, please inform a teacher or the director so that we can better anticipate the needs of your child and help them adjust to new situations.

It is our sincere intent and practice to ensure that all families, regardless of family structure, socioeconomic status, racial, religious and cultural backgrounds, gender, abilities or preferred language, are included in all aspects of our program. These opportunities take into consideration family interests and skills combined with the need of our program. If you would like to share an interest, skill, cultural or family tradition, we welcome your involvement. Please talk with a teacher or director about logistics, such as time frame, materials needed, group size and scheduling.

We will only participate in field trips we can walk to. We require written parental permission for children to participate in our walking field trips. This permission is included in the child record you fill out at the time of enrollment. If you have suggestions or ideas for a fun field trip, please feel free to share with teachers and the director.

Clothing and Personal Belongings

- A. Preschool is messy! We advise simple clothing that is washable and will allow your child to be actively involved in playground, sensory and art activities. Children also need regular outdoor physical activity, please be sure to provide your child with appropriate clothing and (sweater, jacket, hats, mittens, etc.) and apply sunscreen before school. Shoes should also be appropriate for outdoor play. Sandals are strongly discouraged, as they make play in the playground wood chips extremely uncomfortable.
- B. To avoid broken or lost toys and disappointed children, please keep toys from home at home.
- C. At any time, children are encouraged to bring in items from nature to share with their classmates.

Discipline and Behavior

- A. Teachers use many techniques to help children make safe choices and to help them learn from their mistakes using positive reinforcement. These techniques include redirection, setting clear boundaries, logical consequences and helping children understand how their classmates are feeling. The use of physical punishment is never permitted. A method of discipline which frightens, demeans, or humiliates a child is strictly prohibited. Our discipline plan abides with NAC432.300.1 (a)-(g).
- B. If your child is experiencing any stress in the home environment that may result in changes in behavior at school, please notify the staff.

- C. There could be times that a child's behavior may start to jeopardize the wellbeing of other children and/or staff. If this should occur the following procedure will be followed.
- a. Teachers will work to identify the problem and will document the child's behavior in a journal which will be shared with parents/guardians.
 - b. All incidents will be reported to the director. Director, teachers and families will work together to come up with next steps and strategies. A written plan will be put in place.
 - c. Staff will observe the child to identify any triggers of the behavior.
 - d. Staff will use positive behavior approaches to help the child.
 - e. Child's family will be kept up to date on child's behavior.
 - f. If behavior continues with no positive change, then outside professional help may be sought.
 - g. In rare circumstances, if the behavior continues with no improvement, it may be decided that our program may not be the best suited environment for the child. In those circumstances, we will help parents/guardians find other suitable arrangements for their child.

Reporting

Be advised that every staff member is also a **mandated reporter of child abuse and neglect**. According to **NRS 432B.220** any staff "who has reason to believe child abuse or neglect may be occurring in the facility, in the child's home, or elsewhere shall report his belief to the Department and to appropriate authority immediately (as defined as within one hour)."

Please be aware you have the right to request and view any complaints this facility has received for the month your child(ren) enroll in and the previous 12 months.

Small Blessings Christian Preschool Handbook Policy Sign-off

I have read and agree to follow the guidelines set forth in this handbook. I understand that parents and Nevada Child Care Licensing will be notified in writing of any significant changes in services offered by Small Blessings Preschool.

Child's Name

Print Parent/Guardian Name

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date