



“Let the children come to me,
do not hinder them; for to such
belongs the kingdom of God.”
(Mark 10:14)

Small Blessings Christian Preschool

An outreach of the First United Methodist Church of Carson City

212 N. Division Street, Carson City, NV 89703
775-884-1600 preschool 775-882-1436 church
email: smallblessingspreschool@gmail.com
website: smallblessingschristianpreschool.com

Preschool Board of Directors

Ali Cooper, Director
Lindsey George
Pam Houghton
Rachel Maiello
Lori Millard-Streeter
Susan Pintar
Rev. Dr. Rob Jennings-Teats,
Pastor

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 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 finger printed and have submitted to and passed a background check. Also, all staff members are up-to-date with training in first aid and CPR. 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 Christian Preschool.

Mission Statement

At Small Blessings Preschool, an outreach of the First United Methodist Church, we believe that all children are miracles.

We value learning as a cooperative effort, which includes the partnerships of teachers, parents, children and the church. Our focus is to provide a safe, nurturing, and developmentally appropriate educational experience, promoting each child's social, intellectual, physical, and creative development.

We are preparing God's people to share God's love throughout God's world with the spirit of Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors.

Philosophy Statement

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

The preschool is committed to providing an atmosphere where consistent Christian values are taught and practiced through interactions of respect, love, warmth, positive support, and individuality. The curriculum will provide children with a basic foundation of Christian teachings and a relationship with God through the use of Bible stories, prayer, and music. These teachings will be designed to reinforce values, concepts, and ideas that the child may already be learning at home and in church.

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 Christian centered environment where children can develop inner resources 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- and teacher-led opportunities in verbal and listening skills, fine and gross motor activities, social skills, creativity, music, and other skills also outlined in the Nevada Pre-Kindergarten Standards.
3. We will provide for parental involvement utilizing an open door policy: any person responsible for the child may come to the preschool to observe or speak to the director and if not available any of the staff.
4. We will keep channels of communication open through use of weekly newsletters, yearly and monthly calendars 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 quality interaction and 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 and 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 adequate nutrition to meet the needs of growing children. Nutritional information will be provided and good eating habits promoted.

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). We will use this information to better tailor our educational programming to the specific needs of your child and his/her classmates.

If you ever have a concern about some element of your child's development (speech, social, intellectual, behavioral), please discuss your concerns with us. We are able to 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.

Whole Group

During this daily activity, children will be introduced to Christian values such as love, forgiveness, caring, sharing, and respecting others through Bible stories, songs, 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 offers a chance for children to express questions, curiosities, and fears about life and the world around them. A greeting song along with calendar, singing, dancing, and a book may finish out this whole group activity time.

Free Choice Learning Centers

Age appropriate activities will be planned by staff members to relate to the corresponding 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 social emotional relationships. Student choice allows a relaxing 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.

Academic 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 students 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 "free choice" 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 sand and water center focuses on awareness of the world around us, 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 doesn't 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. In addition to our daily outdoor play time, we are committed to including additional physical activity, skill development, music and movement as an integral part of our daily routine.

Administration

The preschool staff is responsible to the Preschool Board which is selected by the governing body of the First United Methodist Church, Carson City. The Preschool Board meets monthly and all parents/grandparents 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 supported by tuitions, donations and contributions from the FUMC. The preschool building and property is designated a NO SMOKING AREA.

Qualifications for Enrollment

- A. Children accepted for the Tuesday/Thursday morning and afternoon preschool programs must be 3 years old by September 30th in the year of enrollment.
- B. Children accepted for the Monday/Wednesday/Friday morning and afternoon pre-kindergarten programs must be at least 4 years old by September 30th in the year of enrollment.

- C. Children accepted for the Monday through Friday afternoon program must be at least 4 years old by September 30th in the year of enrollment.
- D. All students MUST be toilet trained.
- E. Small Blessings Christian Preschool will not discriminate in providing services to children and their families on the basis of gender, race, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, national origin, disability, marital status, or sexual orientation.
- F. 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.
- G. 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. If the program is full, your child may be placed on a waiting list. Enrollment will be granted to: 1. members of First United Methodist Church, 2. siblings of children previously enrolled, and 3. members of the community at large on a first come first serve basis.
- B. Once the non-refundable deposit has been accepted the enrollment is firm.
- C. Parents wishing to withdraw their child from our program must give us two weeks notice. Payment is due for the notice period, whether the child is attending school or not.
- D. In the event of withdrawal from preschool, tuition that has been pre-paid may be refunded if the child has attended no school sessions for that month.
- E. 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 if one exists. Children on the waiting list for placement later in the year will be placed according to our age policy stated in qualifications for enrollment.

Registration and Health Records

- A. Prior to attendance, parents must complete and turn in the Enrollment Packet.
- B. The Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health requires child care 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 24 hours. Symptoms of contagious illness may include:
1. Fever of 101 or greater
 2. Diarrhea
 3. Vomiting
 4. Difficulty in or rapid breathing
 5. Sore, red throat
 6. Severe cough
 7. Yellowish skin or eyes
 8. Pink eye
 9. Undiagnosed rash
 10. Chicken pox or herpes simplex and is still contagious
 11. Has been diagnosed as having any contagious conditions

If your child contracts a contagious childhood disease, please let us know as soon as possible so we can forewarn 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 telephone/text/email if your child will be absent (775-884-1600 or 775-762-3357 or smallblessingspreschool@gmail.com).** If a child becomes ill while at school his/her parents will be notified and asked to pick up their child. He/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/she is well enough to go outside.

Going Outside in Cold Weather

The following are guidelines for outdoor 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.

Tuition & Fees

- A. Tuition will be paid one month in advance and is due no later than the 15th of each month unless other arrangements have been made with the director. The first payment for the preschool year (September tuition) is due August 15th; the final payment for the preschool year (May tuition) is due April 15th.

- B. A non-refundable registration fee of \$75.00 will be paid yearly 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.
- C. Monthly tuition costs for the preschool program are:
1. Tuesday/Thursday AM or PM Class **\$135.00** per month
 2. Monday, Wednesday, Friday AM or PM **\$190.00** per month
 3. Monday through Friday PM **\$325.00** 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 gratefully appreciated.
- D. 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 preschool in writing before the third week of absence in order to avoid additional tuition charges.
- E. We reserve the right to increase tuition yearly. Tuition increases are only considered when absolutely necessary to keep class sizes down, offer our teachers competitive wages and cover the operating expenses for the preschool.
- F. 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.
- G. Failure to pay tuition may result in the exclusion of the child from the program.
- H. Receipts will be written for cash payments. Checks should be made out to Small Blessings Preschool with child's name in memo, automatic payments can be sent to Small Blessings Preschool, 400 W. King St #100, Carson City, NV 89703.

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
- I. Departure Time:
1. Morning classes will be dismissed at 11:30 AM
 2. Afternoon classes will be dismissed at 3:30 PM
- J. Only authorized persons listed on the Enrollment Packet 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 guardians. Children are NEVER allowed to leave the building unattended.

Parking

Please do not park on the east side of Division Street to pick up or drop off your child. It is not the safest option and our neighbors complain about it. Please park in our small dirt parking lot or on the side streets Proctor and Minnesota. There is a side gate on the north side of the preschool you can use to enter the front yard. 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. Each family is expected to provide nutritious snack foods for the classroom on self-assigned basis. Parent donated snacks will be offered to children with water on a daily basis. If milk is served, it will be 1% milk.
- D. When parents bring in snack, we request that you bring in items from two food groups (protein, dairy, grains, fruits or vegetables). If you are unable to bring more than one, the preschool will be happy to supplement snack with an option from another food group.
- E. Observance of birthdays and special holidays is encouraged. Please make arrangements with the staff in advance. Small treats are greatly appreciated (ie, mini cupcakes, muffins, rice krispie treats)

Parent Participation & Field Trips

Parents are always welcome and encouraged to drop in and observe the preschool in operation. We ask that you become involved in the classroom activities as you feel comfortable doing so. When you are in the classroom, we ask that you please remember that great care has been taken to make our environment child centered. Small gestures like kneeling down when talking with a child, taking grown up conversations into the kitchen or a room without children present and using a calm and friendly tone when talking with the children all help to add to our “child-centered” environment. All volunteers in the classroom or working in direct contact with children need to be cleared through a background check completed by the church.

Contact between parent and teacher is very important. When you wish to discuss anything regarding your child, please speak with his or her lead teacher or director. You are also welcome to use the parent communication notebook (located in the foyer) to ask questions, offer suggestions or communicate concerns; the notebook will be checked daily. Conferences are scheduled routinely in the fall and spring. If you would like an additional conference, please call or email the preschool and a conference will be arranged.

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 including volunteer opportunities. 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. In order for a person to be able to drive our students anywhere, they have to have extensive clearance and requirements through the state. Because of these guidelines, we have decided to bring field trips (guest speakers and activities) to the classroom instead. If you have suggestions or ideas, please feel free to share with teachers and the director.

Clothing and Personal Belongings

- A. 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 very uncomfortable.
- B. To avoid broken or lost toys and disappointed children, please keep toys from home at home. We will have special share days from time to time when a toy from home will be permitted.

Discipline and Behavior

- A. Discipline will consist primarily of positive reinforcement. If a child is being harmful to him/herself or others “think time” will be used. The use of physical punishment is never permitted.
- 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. The lead teacher or director will keep parents informed of any behavioral problems that may occur with your child.
- D. If a child is struggling with uncontrollable aggression or any other behavior we feel is unsafe to the children or staff, the parent may be called to take him/her home for the remainder of that day. If behavior that is harmful to the rest of the class persists, a student may be asked to miss the next day or week of school. A meeting will be scheduled to discuss any ongoing behavioral issues and how to best meet the needs of the struggling student.
- E. Every effort will be made to resolve any medical or behavioral problems that may arise; this includes meeting with the family and bringing in assistance from an outside agency, if needed. The preschool reserves the right to ask the child’s parents or guardians to make alternative arrangements for the education of their child if we do not feel we can accommodate the needs of the 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/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.

Daily Schedule

(Varies by class)

1. **Arrival:**

A variety of activities are set out for your child to engage in with other children and help them transition to the preschool for the day.

2. **Opening Whole Group:**

Good morning, songs, finger plays, dancing, read aloud, introduction of center choices

3. **Centers:**

Open centers, varies depending on age; activities include: art, blocks, nature, science, fine motor, music, sand, water, dramatic play, math and numbers

4. **Music and Movement:**

Active movement songs, use of instruments

4. **Snack:**

Parent donated snacks will be offered with water, helps build community & relationships

5. **Outdoor Play:**

Variety of activities, games and free play will be explored outside focusing on development of social skills and gross motor skills

6. **Closing Whole Group:**

Bible story, review of the day, goodbye

Small Blessings Christian Preschool Handbook Policy Sign-off

I have read and agree to follow this handbook and the child safety policy of the First United Methodist Church of Carson City, Nevada.

Child's Name

Print Parent/Guardian Name

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date